

FOUNDATIONS OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

BY HOUSTON STEWART CHAMBERLAIN
A TRANSLATION FROM THE GERMAN BY JOHN LEES, M.A., D.LIT. (EDIN.)

WITH AN INTRODUCTION
BY LORD REDESDALE, G.C.V.O., K.C.B., ETC.
IN TWO VOLUMES: VOLUME I



LONDON: JOHN LANE, THE BODLEY HEAD
NEW YORK: JOHN LANE COMPANY: MCMXII

First Impression November 1910
Second Impression January 1912

Printed by BALLANTYNE & CO. LIMITED
Tavistock Street, Covent Garden, London

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION BY LORD REDESDALE	i v
AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION	i lix
DIVISION I: THE LEGACY OF THE ANCIENT WORLD	
INTRODUCTORY	i 3
FIRST CHAPTER: HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY	i 14
SECOND CHAPTER: ROMAN LAW	i 93
THIRD CHAPTER: THE REVELATION OF CHRIST	i 174
DIVISION II: THE HEIRS	
INTRODUCTORY	i 251
FOURTH CHAPTER: THE CHAOS	i 258
FIFTH CHAPTER: THE ENTRANCE OF THE JEWS INTO WESTERN HISTORY	i 329
SIXTH CHAPTER: THE ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE INTO HISTORY	i 494
DIVISION III: THE STRUGGLE	
INTRODUCTORY	ii 3
SEVENTH CHAPTER: RELIGION	ii 13
EIGHTH CHAPTER: STATE	ii 139
NINTH CHAPTER: FROM THE YEAR 1200 TO THE YEAR 1800	ii
<i>A. The Teutons as Creators of a New Culture</i>	187
<i>B. Historical Survey</i>	ii 233
1. DISCOVERY	ii 261
2. SCIENCE	ii 293
3. INDUSTRY	ii 329
4. POLITICAL ECONOMY	ii 344
5. POLITICS AND CHURCH	ii 365
6. PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION	ii 389
7. ART	ii 495
INDEX	ii 565

INTRODUCTION

SOME ten years ago there appeared in Germany a work of the highest importance which at once arrested the attention of the literary world, and was speedily declared to be one of the masterpieces of the century. The deep learning, the sympathy with knowledge in its most various forms, a style sometimes playful, sometimes ironical, always persuasive, always logical, pages adorned with brilliant passages of the loftiest eloquence — these features were a passport to immediate recognition. Three editions were exhausted in as many years, and now when it has gone through eight editions, and, in spite of the expense of the two bulky volumes, no fewer than sixty thousand copies have been sold in Germany, it is surely time that England should see the book clothed in the native language of its author.

Houston Stewart Chamberlain was born at Southsea in 1855, the son of Admiral William Charles Chamberlain. Two of his uncles were generals in the English army, a third was the well-known Field-Marshal Sir Neville Chamberlain. His mother was a daughter of Captain Basil Hall, R.N., whose travels were the joy of the boyhood of my generation, while his scientific observations

vi INTRODUCTION

won for him the honour of Fellowship of the Royal Society. Captain Basil Hall's father, Sir James Hall, was himself eminent in science, being the founder of experimental geology. As a man of science therefore (and natural science was his first love), Houston Chamberlain may be regarded as an instance of atavism, or, to use the hideous word coined by Galton, "eugenics."

His education was almost entirely foreign. It began in a Lycée at Versailles. Being destined for the army he was afterwards sent to Cheltenham College: but the benign cruelty of fate intervened; his health broke down, he was removed from school, and all idea of entering the army was given up: and so it came to pass that the time which would have been spent upon mastering the goose-step and the subtleties of drill was devoted under the direction of an eminent German tutor, Herr Otto Kuntze, to sowing the seed of that marvellous harvest of learning and scholarship the full fruit of which, in the book before us, has ripened for the good of the world. After a while he went to Geneva, where under Vogt, Graebe, Müller Argovensis, Thury, Plantamour and other great professors he studied systematic botany, geology, astronomy, and later the anatomy

and physiology of the human body. But the strain of work was too great and laid too heavy a tax upon his strength; so, for a time at any rate, natural science had to be abandoned and he migrated to Dresden, a forced change which was another blessing in disguise; for at Dresden he plunged heart and soul into the mysterious depths of the Wagnerian music and philosophy, the metaphysical works of the master probably exercising as strong an influence upon him as the musical dramas.

vii INTRODUCTION

Chamberlain's first published work was in French, *Notes sur Lohengrin*. This was followed by various essays in German on Wagnerian subjects: but they were not a success, and so, disgusted with the petty jealousies and unrealities of art-criticism, he fell back once more upon natural science and left Dresden for Vienna, where he placed himself under the guidance of [Professor Wiesner](#). Again the miseries of health necessitated a change. Out of the wreck of his botanical studies he saved the materials for his *Recherches sur la sève ascendante*, a recognised authority among continental botanists, and natural science was laid aside, probably for ever.

Happily the spell of the great magician was upon him. In 1892 there appeared [Das Drama Richard Wagners](#), which, frozen almost out of existence at first (five copies were sold in the twelvemonth, of which the author was himself the buyer), has since run into four greedily purchased editions. Then came that fine book, the *Life of Wagner*, which has been translated into English by Mr. Hight, and Chamberlain's reputation was made, to be enhanced by the colossal success of the *Grundlagen des Neunzehnten Jahrhunderts* which followed in 1899. Naturally enough, criticism was not spared. The book was highly controversial and no doubt lent itself to some misunderstanding: moreover the nationality of the author could hardly fail to be in a sense provocative of some slight jealousy or even hostility. One critic did not hesitate to accuse him of plagiarism — plagiarism, above all, from Richard Wagner, the very man whose disciple and historian he was proud to be, whose daughter he was; years afterwards, to marry. But this attack is one for which Chamberlain might well be thankful,

viii INTRODUCTION

for it gave him the chance, in the preface to the third edition, of showing all his skill in fence, a skill proof even against the *coup de Jarnac*. His answer to his critics on his theory of Race, and his criticism of Delitzsch in the preface to the fourth edition are fine pieces of polemical writing.

What is the Book? How should it be defined? Is it history, a philosophical treatise, a metaphysical inquiry? I confess, I know not: probably it is all three. I am neither an historian, alas! nor a philosopher,

nor a metaphysician. To me the book has been a simple delight — the companion of months — fulfilling the highest function of which a teacher is capable, that of awakening thought and driving it into new channels. That is the charm of the book. The charm of the man is his obviously transparent truthfulness. Anything fringing upon fraud is abhorrent to him, something to be scourged with scorpions. As in one passage he himself says, the enviable gift of lying has been denied to him. Take his answer to Professor Delitzsch's famous pamphlet *Babel und Bibel*, to which I have alluded above.

No writer is so dangerous as the really learned scholar who uses his learning, as a special pleader might, in support of that which is not true. Now, Professor Delitzsch is an authority in Assyriology and the knowledge of the cuneiform inscriptions. The object of his brilliant and cleverly named pamphlet was to arouse interest in the researches of the German Orientalischer Verein. In this sense any discovery which can be brought into line with the story of the Old Testament is an engine the price of which is above pearls. Accordingly, Professor Delitzsch, eager to furnish proof of Semitic monotheism,

ix INTRODUCTION

brings out the statement that the Semitic tribes of Canaan which, at the time of Khammurabi, two thousand years before Christ, flooded Assyria, were worshippers of one God, and that the name of that God was Jahve (Jehovah), and in support of that statement he translates the inscriptions on two tablets, or fragments of tablets, in the British Museum. Now it must be obvious to the poorest intelligence that an obscure script like that in the cuneiform character can only be read with any approach to certainty where there is the opportunity of comparison, that is to say, where the same groups of wedges or arrowheads, as they used to be called, are found repeated in various connections: even so, the patience and skill which have been spent upon deciphering the inscriptions, from the days of Hincks and Rawlinson until now, are something phenomenal. Where a proper name occurs only once, the difficulty is increased a hundredfold. Yet this did not deter Delitzsch from making his astounding monotheistic assertion on the strength of an arbitrary interpretation of a single example of a group of signs, which signs moreover are capable of being read, as is proved by the evidence of the greatest Assyriologists, in six if not eleven different ways. Truly a fine case for doctors to disagree upon! Chamberlain, with that instinctive shying at a fraud which distinguishes him, at once detected the imposition. He is no Assyriologist, but his work brings him into contact with the masters of many crafts, and so with the pertinacity of a sleuth-hound he runs the lie to earth. In a spirit of delicate banter, through which the fierce indignation of the truth-lover often pierces, he tears the imposture to tatters; his attack is a fighting masterpiece, to which I

cannot but

x INTRODUCTION

allude, if only in the sketchiest way, as giving a good example of Chamberlain's methods. So much for Tablet No. I.

The interpretation of the second tablet upon which Professor Delitzsch reads the solemn declaration "Jahve is God" fares no better at our author's hands; for he brings forward two unimpeachable witnesses, Hommel and König, who declare that Delitzsch has misread the signs which really signify "The moon is God."

It is well known — a fact scientifically proved by much documentary evidence — that Khammurabi and his contemporaries were worshippers of the sun, the moon and the stars; the name of his father was Sin-mubalit, "the moon gives life," his son was Shamshuiluna, "the sun is our God." But no evidence is sufficient to check Professor Delitzsch's enthusiasm over his monotheistic Khammurabi! That much in the deciphering of Assyrian inscriptions is to a great extent problematical is evident. One thing, however, is certain in these readings of Professor Delitzsch: in the face of the authority of other men of learning, his whole fabric, "a very Tower of Babel, but built on paper, crumbles to pieces; and instead of the pompously announced, unsuspected aspect of the growth of monotheism, nothing remains to us but a surely very unexpected insight into the workshop of lax philology and fanciful history-mongering."

It seems to me that Khammurabi has been made a victim in this controversy. Even if he was a worshipper of the sun and the stars and the moon, he was, unless we ignorant folk have been cruelly misled, a very great man: for he appears to have been the first king who recognised the fact that if a people has duties to its

xi INTRODUCTION

sovereign, the sovereign on the other hand has duties to his people — and that, for a monarch who reigned so many centuries before Moses, must be admitted to show a very high sense of kingly responsibility. But Delitzsch, in trying to prove too much, has done him the dis-service of exposing him to what almost amounts to a sneer from the Anti-Semites. I have submitted what I have written above to Dr. Budge of the British Museum, who authorises me to say that he concurs in Chamberlain's views of Professor Delitzsch's translation.

But it is time that we should leave these battles of the learned in order to consider the scheme, the scope and the conduct of the book. To write the story of the Foundations of the Nineteenth Century was a colossal task, for which the strength of a literary Hercules would alone be of any avail. Mr. Chamberlain, however, has brought to the undertaking such a

wealth of various knowledge and reading, set out with unrivalled dialectical power, that even those who may disagree with some of his conclusions must perforce incline themselves before the presence of a great master. That his book should be popular with those scholars who are wedded to old traditions was not to be expected. He has shattered too many idols, dispelled too many dearly treasured illusions. And the worst of it is that the foundations of his beliefs — perhaps I should rather say of his disbeliefs — are built upon rocks so solid that they will defy the cunningest mines that can be laid against them. This is no mere “chronicle of ruling houses, no record of butcheries.” It is the story of the rise of thought, of religion, of poetry, of learning, of civilisation, of art; the story of all those elements of which the complex life of the Indo-European

xii INTRODUCTION

of to-day is composed — the story of what he calls “Der Germane.”

And here let me explain once for all what Chamberlain means by “Der Germane”: obviously not the German, for that would have been “Der Deutsche.” To some people the name may be misleading; but he has adopted it, and I may have to use it again, so let us take his own explanation of it. In this term he includes the Kelts, the Germans, the Slavs, and all those races of northern Europe from which the peoples of modern Europe have sprung (evidently also the people of the United States of America). The French are not specifically mentioned, but it is clear from more than one passage that they too are included. As indeed how should they be left out? Yet it strikes one almost as a paradox to find Louis XIV. claimed as a “genuine Germane” for resisting the encroachments of the Papacy, and bearding the Pope as no other Catholic sovereign ever did; and blamed as a Germane false to his “Germanentum” for his shameless persecution of the Protestants! In the Germane, then, he describes the dominant race of the nineteenth century. Strange indeed is the beginning of the history of that race.

Far away in Asia, behind the great mountain fastnesses of India, in times so remote that even tradition and fable are silent about them, there dwelt a race of white men. They were herdsmen, shepherds, tillers of the soil, poets and thinkers. They were called Aryas — noblemen or householders — and from them are descended the dominant caste of India, the Persians, and the great nations of Europe. The history of the Aryan migrations, their dates, their causes, is lost in the clouds of a mysterious

xiii INTRODUCTION

past. All that we know is that there were at least three great wanderings: two southward to India and Persia, one, or perhaps several, across the great Asiatic continent to Europe. What drove these highly gifted people

from their farms and pastures? Was it the search for change of climate? Was it pressure from the Mongols? There are some reasons for supposing that religious dissent may have had something to do with it. For instance, the evil spirits of the Zendavesta, the scriptures of the Zoroastrians are the gods of the Rigveda, the sacred poems of the Indian Aryans, and *vice versa*. Be that as it may, wherever the Aryans went they became masters. The Greek, the Latin, the Kelt, the Teuton, the Slav — all these were Aryans: of the aborigines of the countries which they overran, scarcely a trace remains. So, too, in India it was “Varna,” colour, which distinguished the white conquering Arya from the defeated black man, the Dasyu, and so laid the foundation of caste. It is to the Teuton branch of the Aryan family that the first place in the world belongs, and the story of the Nineteenth Century is the story of the Teuton's triumph.

While by no means ignoring, or failing to throw light upon, the Assyrian or Egyptian civilisations, this all-embracing book ascribes the laying of the Foundations of the Nineteenth Century to the life-work of three peoples: two of these, the Greek and Roman, being of Aryan extraction, the third, the Jew, Semitic.

Of Greek poetry and art Chamberlain writes with all the passionate rapture of a lover. “Every inch of Greek soil is sacred.” Homer, the founder of a religion, the maker of gods, stands on a pinnacle by himself. He was, as it were, the Warwick of Olympus. “That any

xiv INTRODUCTION

one should have doubted the existence of the poet Homer will not give to future generations a favourable impression of the perspicacity of our times.” It is just a hundred years since Wolf started his theory that there was no such poet as Homer — that the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were a parcel of folk-songs of many dates and many poets pasted together. By whom? asks Chamberlain. Why are there no more such “able editors”? Is it paste that is lacking or brain-paste? Schiller at once denounced the idea as “simply barbarous” and proclaimed Wolf to be a “stupid devil.” Goethe at first was caught by the idea, but when he examined the poems more closely, from the point of view of the poet, recanted, and came to the conclusion that there could be only one Homer. And now “Homer enters the twentieth century, the fourth millennium of his fame, greater than ever.” No great work of art, as Chamberlain points out, was ever produced by the collaboration of a number of little men. The man who made the faith of a people was, as Aristotle put it, “divine before all other poets.” If Greek poetry and Greek art were in those two branches of human culture the chief inheritance of the nineteenth century, then we may safely assert that Homer in that direction dominated all other influence and was the first prophet of our Indo-European culture.

Never, indeed, did the sacred fire of poetry and art burn with a purer flame than it did in ancient Greece. Homer was followed by a radiant

galaxy of poets. The tragic dramas of Aeschylus and Sophocles, the farces of Aristophanes, the idylls of Theocritus, the odes of Pindar, the dainty lyrics of Anacreon, have made the Greek genius the test by which all subsequent work must be

xv INTRODUCTION

judged. In architecture and sculpture the Greeks have never been equalled; of their painting we know less; but the men who were under the influence of a Phidias and a Praxiteles, we may safely say, would not have borne with a mere dauber. Poetry and art then were the very essence of Greek life; they penetrated the soul and thrilled every fibre of the ancient Hellenes. Their philosophy, the deep thoughts that vibrated in their brain, were poetry. Plato himself was, as Montesquieu said of him, one of the four great poets of mankind. He was the Homer of thought, too great a poet, according to Zeller, to be quite a philosopher. But Plato was Himself; and his spirit is as young and as fresh to-day as it was when he was so penetrated with the sense of beauty that he made his Socrates lecture only in the fairest scenes, and pray to the great god Pan that he might be beautiful in his inner self, and that his outer self should be in tune with it. "Much that has come between has sunk in oblivion; while Plato and Aristotle, Democritus, Euclid and Archimedes live on in our midst stimulating and instructing, and the half-fabulous figure of Pythagoras grows greater with every century."

But — and it is a big "but" — when we come to metaphysics Chamberlain cries, Halt! With all his reverence for Plato as statesman, moralist and practical reformer; for Aristotle as the first encyclopedist; full of admiration for the philosophers of the great epoch so far as they represent a "creative manifestation" of the mind of man closely allied to the poetic art, in the history of human thought he dethrones them from the high place which has hitherto been assigned to them, he denies them the honour of having been the first thinkers. To Aristotle,

xvi INTRODUCTION

indeed, with all his gifts, he traces the decadence of the Hellenic spirit.

It has been the fashion among the schoolmen to hold the Greeks up to admiration as being historically the first thinkers. Nothing could be further from the truth. They laid the foundations of our science, of geography, natural history, logic, ethics, mathematics — of metaphysics they were not the founders, though they taught us to think. Bacon indeed condemned their philosophy as "childish, garrulous, impotent and immature in creative power." Centuries before the birth of the great Greeks, India had produced philosophers who in the realms of thought reached heights which never were attained by Plato or Aristotle. The doctrine of the transmigration of souls was brought by Pythagoras from

India. In Greece, until it was published by Plato, it was regarded as the mystery of mysteries, only to be revealed to the elect — to the high priests of thought: but in India it was the common belief of the vulgar; whereas to the philosophers, a small body of deep thinkers, it was and is an allegorical representation of a truth only to be grasped by deep metaphysical pondering. The common creed of the Indian coolie, invested by Plato with the halo of his sublime poetry, became glorified as the highest expression of Greek thought!

Alas! for the long years wasted in the worship of false gods! Alas! for the idols with feet of clay, ruthlessly hurled from their pedestals! That the ancient Greek was the type of all that was chivalrous and noble was the accepted belief taught by the old-fashioned, narrow-minded pedagogues of two generations ago. They took the Greeks at their own valuation, accepting all their

xvii INTRODUCTION

figures and facts without a question. Their battles were always fought against fearful odds; they performed prodigies of valour; their victories decided the fate of the world. To the student brought up in the faith of such books as Creasy's *Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World*, it comes as a shock to be told that Marathon was a mere skirmish without result, in which, as a matter of fact, the Athenians had if anything rather the worst of it. Even Herodotus inconveniently let out the fact that Miltiades hurried on the battle knowing that his brave Hoplites were half minded to go over to the enemy, and that delay might cause this treacherous thought to be carried into effect. Another half-hour and the "heroes of Marathon" would have been seen marching against Athens side by side with the Persians. As it was, the latter quietly sailed back to Ionia in their Grecian ships, carrying with them several thousand prisoners and a great store of booty. Gobineau has shown that Salamis was no better, and he describes Grecian history as "la plus élaborée des fictions du plus artiste des peuples."

In view of writers like Gobineau and Chamberlain the ancient Greek was a fraud, a rogue and a coward, a slave-driver, cruel to his enemies, faithless to his friends, without one shred of patriotism or of honour. Alcibiades changing colour like a chameleon, Solon forsaking his life's work and going over to Pisistratus, Themistocles haggling over the price for which he should betray Athens before Salamis, and living at the Court of Artaxerxes as the declared enemy of Greece, despised by the Persians "as a wily Greek snake," these and others are sickening pictures which Chamberlain draws of the Hellene when viewed as a man apart from his poetry and his art.

xviii INTRODUCTION

Probably in these days of critical investigation the fanciful teaching of previous generations will be modified. The Greeks have enough really to their credit, they have a sufficient title to our gratitude for what they were, without being held up to our admiration for that which they distinctly were not. It seems laughable that Grote should have accepted as gospel truth, and held up as an example for future ages, what Juvenal had summed up, eighteen hundred years before, as “all that lying Greece dares in history.”

No two people could be in sharper contrast to one another than the Greeks and the Romans. From the creative genius of the Greeks we have inherited Olympus, the Gods, and Homer who made them, poetry, architecture, sculpture, philosophy, all that makes up the joy of life: not our religion — that comes from a higher source — and yet, even here perhaps something, some measure of religiosity which fitted us to receive the Divine Message. The gift of the matter-of-fact Roman, on the other hand, has been law, order, statecraft, the idea of citizenship, the sanctity of the family and of property. Borne on the pinions of imagination the Greek soared heavenward. The Roman struck his roots deep into the soil. In all that contributes to the welfare and prosperity of the State and of the man the Roman was past-master. In poetry, in the fine arts, in all that constitutes culture, he was an imitator, a follower — at a great distance — of the Greeks. A poet in the true sense of the word, he certainly was not. A poet means one who creates. Consider the translations and imitations wrought with consummate skill by Virgil, at the imperial command, into an epic in honour of a dynasty and a people. Compare these, masterpieces

xix INTRODUCTION

of their kind though they be, with the heaven-inspired creations of Homer, and you will see what Chamberlain means when he says that “to unite Greek poetry with Latin poetry in the one conception of classical literature, is a proof of incredible barbarism in taste, and of a lamentable ignorance of the essence and value of artistic genius.” The Roman was no true poet, no creator. Horace, with all his charm — the most quotable of writers because his dainty wit had the secret of rendering with delicate fancy the ideas which occur at every step, on every occasion of our lives — was after all only the first and foremost of all society verse-writers. Chamberlain is inclined to make an exception in favour of Lucretius, of whom in a footnote he says that he is worthy of admiration both as thinker and bard. (I hesitate here to translate the word *Dichter* by “poet.”) Yet in the same note he goes on to say that his thoughts are altogether Greek, and his materials preponderatingly so. “Moreover there lies over his whole work the deadly shadow of that scepticism that sooner or later leads to barrenness, and which must be carefully distinguished from the deep intuition of truly religious spirits that preserve the

figurative in that which they set forth without thereby casting doubt upon the lofty truth of their inmost forebodings, their inscrutable mysteries." For Lucretius, Epicurus, the man who denied the existence of God, was the greatest of mortals. And yet there came a day when even Epicurus must needs fall down before Zeus. "Never," cried Diokles, who found him in the Temple, "did I see Zeus greater than when Epicurus lay there at his feet." Footnotes are apt to be skipped, and I have felt it right to dwell upon this one because of its

xx INTRODUCTION

importance as bearing upon Chamberlain's views of the "deadly shadow of scepticism."

The poetry of Greece was the dawn of all that is beautiful, the bounteous fountain of all good gifts, at which, century after century, country after country, have quaffed the joyous cup, seeking inspiration that in their turn they might achieve something lovely.

The influence which Rome has exercised upon our development has been in a totally different direction. From the beginning of time the races of Aryan extraction have been deeply imbued with the conviction of the importance of law. Yet it was reserved for the Romans to develop this instinct, and they succeeded because to them alone among the Aryans was possible the consolidation of the State. The law was the foundation of personal right; the State was based upon the sacrifice of that personal right, and the delegation of personal power for the common weal. If we realise that, we recognise the immense value of the inheritance bequeathed to us by the Romans. Without the great quality of patriotism this would have been impossible.

The spot, upon which the Roman had settled had little physically to recommend it. There was no romantic scenery, there were no lofty mountains, no rushing rivers. The seven mean hills, the yellow mud of the Tiber, the fever-stricken marshes, a soil poor and unproductive, were not features to captivate the imagination. But the Roman loved it and cherished it in his heart of hearts. Surrounded by hostile tribes, his early history was one long struggle for life, in which his great qualities always won the day. Once defeated, he would have been wiped off the face of the earth: strength of character, deter-

xxi INTRODUCTION

mination, courage above proof, saved him, and in the end made him the conqueror of the world. There was no need in his case to pass laws enforcing valour as in the case of Sparta, making men brave, as it were, by act of Parliament. There was no fear of his turning traitor; he was loyal to the core. His home, his family, his fatherland were sacred, the deeply treasured objects of his worship, a religion in themselves. Self was

laid on one side — the good of the community was everything. It was the idea of the family carried into statecraft. One word represented it, Patria, the fatherland, and the man who worked for the Patria was the ideal statesman.

Is it fair, asks Chamberlain, to call the Roman a conqueror or invader? He thinks not. He was driven to war not by the desire of conquest or of aggrandisement, but by the desperate determination to maintain his home or die. With the defeat and disappearance of the surrounding tribes, he found himself ever compelled to push his outposts farther and farther still; it was self-preservation, not the lust of conquest, which armed the Roman. For him war was a political necessity, and no people ever possessed the political instinct in so high a degree.

The struggle with Carthage was a case in point. Historians from the earliest times, from Polybius to Mommsen, have denounced the barbarity shown by the Romans in the extermination of Carthage. Chamberlain in a few convincing paragraphs teaches us what was the real issue. He shows us that annihilation was an absolute necessity. Rome and Carthage could not exist together. The fight was for the supremacy in the Mediterranean, and therefore for the mastery of the world. On the one side was the civilising influence of Rome, colonising under

xxii INTRODUCTION

laws so beneficent that nations even came to petition that they might be placed under her rule: on the other side a system of piratical colonisation undertaken in the sole cause of gain, the abolition of all freedom, the creation of artificial wants in the interest of trade, no attempt at legal organisation beyond the imposition of taxes, slavery, a religion of the very basest in which human sacrifices were a common practice. The Roman felt that it must be war to the knife without quarter. In his own interest, and, though he knew it not, in that of the world, there could be nothing short of extermination. “Delenda est Carthago” was the cry. Had he failed, had the piracy of the Semitic combination of Phoenicians and Babylonians won the day against the law and order of the Aryan, it is not too much to say that culture and civilisation would have come to a standstill, and the development of the nineteenth century would have been an impossibility, or at any rate hopelessly retarded. “It is refreshing,” writes Chamberlain, “for once to come across an author who, like Bossuet, simply says, ‘Carthage was taken and destroyed by Scipio, who herein proved himself worthy of his great ancestor,’ without any outburst of moral indignation, without the conventional phrase, ‘all the misery that later burst upon Rome was retribution for this crime.’” Caesar rebuilt Carthage, and it became a congeries of all the worst criminals, Romans, Greeks, Vandals, all rotten to the very marrow of their bones. It must have been something like Port Said in the early days some forty years ago, which seemed to be the trysting-place of the world's

rascaldom: those who remember it can form some idea of what that second Carthage of Caesar's must have been.

xxiii INTRODUCTION

In the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans one sees the hand of Providence. It was largely the act of the Jew himself, the born rebel against State law, or any law save that which he deemed to be his own sacred inheritance. It was immaterial that he had himself petitioned Rome to save him from his own Semitic kings and to take him under her charge. He was a continual thorn in the side of his chosen rulers, and his final subjugation and dispersal became a necessity. Had the Jew remained in Jerusalem, Christianity would have become a mere sect of the Jews. Long before our era the Diaspora had taken place. Originally the Diaspora meant the Jews who, after the Babylonian captivity, refused to go back to Palestine because of the prosperity which they enjoyed in their place of exile. Later it embraced all those Jews who, for various reasons of trade, or convenience, or missionary enterprise, went forth into the world. In Alexandria alone these numbered over one million. The making of proselytes was universal. But wherever they might be, to Jerusalem they looked as to their home. To Jerusalem they sent tribute, in the interests of Jerusalem they worked as one man. The influence of Jerusalem was all-pervading. Even the first Christians, in spite of St. Paul, held to the rites of Judaism; those who did not were branded by St. John as "them of the Synagogue of Satan." In destroying the stronghold of Judaism the Romans, though here again they knew it not, were working for the triumph of Christianity. As it is, much of Judaism pervades our faith. Had Jerusalem stood, the "religious monopoly of the Jews," says Chamberlain, "would have been worse than the trade monopoly of the Phoenicians. Under the leaden

xxiv INTRODUCTION

pressure of these born dogmatists and fanatics, all freedom of thought and of belief would have vanished from the world: the flat materialistic conception of God would have been our religion, pettifoggery our philosophy. This is no fancy picture, there are too many facts crying aloud: for what is that stiff, narrow-minded, spiritually cramped dogmatising of the Christian Church, such as no Aryan people ever dreamt of; what is that bloodthirsty fanaticism disgracing the centuries down to the nineteenth, that curse of hatred fastening on to the religion of love from the very beginning, from which Greek and Roman, Indian and Chinese, Persian and Teuton, turn with a shudder? What is it if not the shadow of that Temple in which sacrifice was offered to the God of wrath and of revenge, a black shadow cast over the young generation of heroes striving out of the Darkness into the Light?"

With the help of Rome, Europe escaped from the chaos of Asia. The imaginative Greek was ever looking towards Asia — to him the East called. The practical Roman transferred the centre of gravity of culture to find an eternal home in the West, so that Europe “became the beating heart and the thinking brain of all mankind.” The Aryan had mastered the Semite for all time.

It comes somewhat as a surprise to find Rome, the ideal Republic, pointed to as the fountain-head from which the conception of Constitutional Monarchy is drawn. The principle of Roman Law and the Roman State was, as we have seen, that of the rights of the individual and his power to choose representatives. In the course of time when Rome ceased to be Rome, when she fell under the rule of half-breeds from Africa, aliens from Asia Minor,

xxv INTRODUCTION

baseborn men from Illyria, not chosen by the people, but elected by the army; when she had ceased even to be the capital of her own Empire; one would have thought that the decay of the Republic would have been the end of all the constitutional principles which it had established. But it was not so. The jurists in the service of Diocletian, an Illyrian shepherd, of Galerius, an Illyrian cowherd, of Maximinus, an Illyrian swineherd, were the men who based the imperial conception upon the theory of the will of the people, upon the same power which had elected the consuls and the other officers of the ancient State. Never before had the world beheld such a phenomenon. “Despots had ruled as direct descendants of the Gods, as in the case of the Egyptians and the Japanese of to-day, or as in Israel as representatives of the Godhead, or again by the *Jus Gladii* — the right of the sword.” The soldier-emperors who had made themselves masters of the Roman Empire founded their rights as autocrats upon the constitutional law of the Republic. There was no usurpation, only delegation pure and simple. To this we owe the conception of the Sovereign and the Subject.

In the meantime Christianity had become a power; and with it had taken place the abolition of slavery in Europe. Only a Sovereign could abolish slavery — that we saw in Russia in 1862. The nobles would never have given up their slaves, who were their property, their goods and chattels; far rather would they have made free men into bondsmen. But the establishment of the monarchical principle has been the main pillar of law and order and of that civic freedom from which, as we see, it originally sprang: it is one proof of the great debt of gratitude which Europe owes to ancient Rome. It is not the only one.

xxvi INTRODUCTION

It would be an impertinence were I to attempt to discuss Roman Law. The treatment of the subtleties and intricacies of a highly technical subject must be left to those who have made of them a special study. Yet it is impossible to pass over in silence the effect of the great legacy which the world has inherited from Rome. The effect is an historical fact and must be as patent to the layman as to the professed jurist. What Greece did for the higher aesthetic culture, that Rome did for law, good government and statecraft. The one made life beautiful, the other made it secure. As a poet, or as a philosopher, the Roman was insignificant; he had not even an equivalent for either word in his language; he must borrow the name, as he borrowed the idea, from the Greek. But in the practical direction of the life of the individual, of the life of the State, he remains, after more than twenty centuries, the unrivalled master. The pages in which Chamberlain brings into relief the noble qualities of the Roman character are, to my thinking, among the best and most eloquent in his book, and they should be read not without profit in an age which is singularly impatient of discipline. For after listening to Chamberlain we must come away convinced that it was discipline which made the Roman what he was. He learnt to obey that he might learn to command, and so he became the ruler of the world. That his conception of the law has become the model upon which all jurisprudence has been moulded, the State as he founded it being based upon the great principles of reciprocity and self-sacrifice on the one side and of protection of the sanctity of private rights on the other, is a fact which bears lasting testimony to the force of Roman character. There have

xxvii INTRODUCTION

been great jurists in many nations — professors learned in the law — laws have been amplified and changed to meet circumstances; but no single nation has ever raised such a legal monument as that of the Romans, which, according to Professor Leist, is “the everlasting teacher for the civilised world and will so remain.”

It is interesting to consider wherein lay the difference between Greek and Roman legislation. How came it, asks Chamberlain, that the Greeks, mentally so incomparably superior to the Romans, were able to achieve nothing lasting, nothing perfect, in the domain of law? The reason he gives is simple enough — simple and convincing. The Roman started with the principle of the family, and on the basis of the family he raised the structure of State and Law. The Greek, on the contrary, ignored the family, and took the State as his starting-point. Even the law of inheritance was so vague that questions in connection with it were left by Solon to the decision of the Courts. In Rome the position of the Father as King in his own house, the rank assigned to the Wife as house-mistress, the reverential respect for matrimony, these were great principles of which the Greeks knew nothing; but they were the principles upon which

the existence of the private man depended, upon which the *Res Publica* was founded. The *Jus Privatum* and the *Jus Publicum* were inseparable, and from them sprang the *Jus Gentium*, the law of nations. The laws of Solon, of Lycurgus and others have withered and died; but the laws of Rome remain a stately and fruit-bearing tree, under whose wholesome shade the civilisation of Europe has sprung up and flourished.

Few men have approached a great subject in a loftier

xxviii INTRODUCTION

spirit of reverence than that in which Chamberlain deals with what, to him, as to all of us, is the one great and incomparable event in the whole story of our planet. “No battle, no change of dynasty, no natural phenomenon, no discovery possesses a significance which can be compared with that of the short life upon earth of the Galilean. His birth is, in a sense, the beginning of history. The nations that are not Christian, such as the Chinese, the Turks and others have no history; their story is but a chronicle on the one hand of ruling houses, butcheries and the like, and on the other, represents the dull, humble, almost bestially happy life of millions that sink in the night of time without leaving a trace.”

With the dogmas of the Church or Churches, Chamberlain has scant sympathy, and on that account he will doubtless be attacked by swarms as spiteful as wasps and as thoughtless. And yet how thoroughly imbued with the true spirit of Religion, as apart from Churchcraft, is every line that he has written! Christ was no Prophet, as Mahomet dubbed him. He was no Jew. The genealogies of St. Matthew and St. Luke trace to Joseph, but Joseph was not His father. The essence of Christ's significance lies in the fact that in Him God was made man. Christ is God, or rather since, as St. Thomas Aquinas has shown, it is easier to say what God is not than what He is, it is better to invert the words and say God is Christ, and so to avoid explaining what is known by what is not known. Such are but a few ideas of the author culled at random and from memory. But (and here is the stone of offence against which the Churchman will stumble) “it is not the Churches that form the strength of Christianity, but that Fountain

xxix INTRODUCTION

from which they themselves draw their power, the vision of the Son of Man upon the Cross.”

In two or three masterly pages written with such inspiration that it is difficult to read them without emotion, Chamberlain has drawn a parallel between Christ and Buddha, between the love and life-breathing doctrine of the One and the withering renunciation of the other. Buddha tears from his heart all that is dear to man — parents, wife, child, love, hope,

the religion of his fathers — all are left behind when he wanders forth alone into the wilderness to live a living suicide and wait for death, an extinction that can only be perfect, in the face of the doctrine of metempsychosis, if it is so spiritually complete that the dread reaper can harvest no seed for a new birth. How different is it with the teaching of Christ, whose death means no selfish, solitary absorption into a Nirvana, a passionless abstraction, but the Birth of the whole world into a new life. Buddha dies that there may be no resurrection. Christ dies that all men may live, that all men may inherit the Kingdom of Heaven. And this Kingdom of Heaven, what is it? Clearly no Nirvana, no sensuous Paradise like that of Mahomet. He gives the answer Himself in a saying which must be authentic, for His hearers could not understand it, much less could they have invented it. The Kingdom of God is within you. “In these sayings of Christ we seem to hear a voice: we know not His exact words but there is an unmistakable, unforgettable tone which strikes our ear and so forces its way to the heart. And then we open our eyes and we see this Form, this Life. Across the centuries we hear the words, Learn from me! and at last we understand what that means:

xxx INTRODUCTION

to be as Christ was, to live as Christ lived, to strive as Christ died, that is the Kingdom of Heaven, that is eternal Life.“

As I sit writing I can see on a shelf a whole row of books written on Buddhism by eminent scholars and missionaries, comparing its doctrines with those of the Saviour. It is not too much to say that the sum of all the wisdom and learning of that little library of Buddhism is contained in the few paragraphs of which I have given the kernel. Chamberlain in burning words points out how radiant is the doctrine of hope preached by the Saviour — where is there room for pessimism since the Kingdom of God is within us? — and he contrasts, the teaching of our Lord with the dreary forebodings of the Old Testament, where all is vanity, life is a shadow, we wither like grass. The Jewish writers took as gloomy a view of the world as the Buddhists. But our Lord who went about among the people and loved them, taking part in their joys and in their sorrows — His was a teaching of love and sympathy, and above all of hope. Christ did not retire into the wilderness to seek death and annihilation. He came out of the wilderness to bring life eternal. Buddha represents the senile decay of a culture that has finished its life: Christ represents the Birth of a new day, of a new civilisation dawning under the sign of the Cross, raised upon the ruins of the old world, a civilisation at which we must work for many a long day before it may be worthy to be called by His name.

Chamberlain is careful to tell us that he does not intend to lift the veil which screens the Holy of Holies of his own belief. But it must be clear from such utterances as those upon which I have drawn above, how

xxxix INTRODUCTION

noble and how exalted is the conception of Christ and of His teaching which is borne in on the mind of one of the foremost thinkers of our day. He draws his inspiration at the fountain head. For the dogmas of oecumenical councils, for the superstitions and fables of monks, he has an adequate respect: he preaches Christ and Him crucified: that is to him all-sufficing. Can there be a purer ideal?

It is this same lofty conception which accounts for the contrast which this protestant layman draws between Catholicism and the hierarchy of Rome. For the former he has every sympathy: upon the latter he looks as a hindrance to civilisation and to the essential truths of Religion. How could it be otherwise with an institution which until the year 1822 kept under the ban of the Index every book which should dare to contest the sublime truth that the sun goes round the Earth? The whole Roman system, hierarchical and political, is in direct opposition to the development of Indo-European culture, of which the "Germane" constitutes the highest expression. The Catholic, on the other hand, when not choked by the mephitic vapours of Roman dogma and Roman imperialism, left free to follow the simple teaching of the cross, and to practise so far as in him lies the example of the Saviour, is worthy of all the respect which is due to the true Christian of whatsoever denomination he may be. He at any rate is no enemy to the Truth.

Very striking are the passages in which Chamberlain points out the ambiguous attitude of our Lord towards Jewish thought and the religion of which His teaching was the antithesis. How he brushed aside the narrow

xxxix INTRODUCTION

prescriptions of the Law, as for example in the great saying, "the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath"; — and yet how, born in the midst of Jewish ideas and bigotry, the bearer of the new Glad Tidings, the Teacher who was to revolutionise the world, never altogether shook off the old traditions. Chamberlain's argument leads us a step farther. It is impossible not to feel how much more completely St. Paul, a Pharisee after the strictest sect of his religion, cut himself adrift from Judaism. There was no beating about the bush, no hesitation, no searching of the soul. A convert, he at once threw into his new faith all the zeal and energy with which up to that very moment he had persecuted it. He ceased to be a Jew: he became the Apostle to the Gentiles, and bade his followers refuse all "old wives' fables" (I *Tim.* iv. 7), while to Titus he says, "rebuke them sharply, not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men, that turn from the truth" (*Titus* i. 14). Christ's life upon earth was spent among the Jews: it was to them that

His “good tidings“ were addressed. To touch the hearts of men you must speak to them in a language that they understand. St. Paul, on the other hand, who lived and worked among the Gentiles, was unfettered by any preconceived ideas on the part of his hearers. His doctrine was to them absolutely new, standing on its own foundation, the rock of Christianity — and yet, as Chamberlain points out in a later part of the book, it was St. Paul, the very man who after his conversion avoided the Jews and separated himself from them as much as he could, who did more than any of the first preachers of Christianity to weld into the new faith the traditions of the Old Testament.

xxxiii INTRODUCTION

In the Epistle to the Romans the fall of man is given as an historical event; our Lord born “from the seed of David according to the flesh“ is declared to be the son of God; Israel is the people of God, the good olive-tree into which the branches of the wild olive-tree, the Gentiles, may be “grafted.“ The death of the Messiah is an atoning sacrifice in the Jewish sense, &c. &c., all purely Jewish ideas preached by the man who hated the Jews. When we read these contradictions of the man's self we may say of St. Paul's epistles as St. Peter did, in another sense, “in which are some things hard to be understood.“

The influence of Judaism on Indo-European civilisation is a subject upon which the author of the *Grundlagen* dwells with special stress. He cannot withhold his admiration from the sight of that one small tribe standing out amid the chaos of nationalities, which was the legacy of the fallen Roman Empire, “like a sharply cut rock in the midst of a shapeless sea,“ maintaining its identity and characteristics in the midst of a fiery vortex where all other peoples were fused into a molten conglomerate destroying all definition. The Jew alone remained unchanged. His belief in Jehovah, his faith in the promises of the prophets, his conviction that to him was to be given the mastery of the world — these were the articles of his creed, a creed which might be summed up as belief in himself. Obviously to Chamberlain the Jew is the type of pure Race, and pure Race is what he looks upon as the most important factor in shaping the destinies of mankind. Here he joins issue with Buckle, who considered that climate and food have been the chief agents in mental and physical development. Rice as a staple

xxxiv INTRODUCTION

food Buckle held to be the explanation of the special aptitudes of the Indian Aryans. The error is grotesque. As Chamberlain points out, rice is equally the food of the Chinese, of the hard-and-fast materialists who are the very antipodes of the idealist, metaphysical Aryans. In the matter of climate Chamberlain might have brought the same witnesses into court.

There are more variations of climate in China than in Europe. The climate of Canton differs as much from that of Peking as from that of St. Petersburg. The Chinaman of the north speaks a different language from that of the south, though the ideographic script is the same: his food is different, the air that he breathes is different: but the racial characteristics remain identical.

Race and purity of blood are what constitute a type, and nowhere has this type been more carefully preserved than among the Jews. I remember once calling upon a distinguished Jewish gentleman. Mr. D'Israeli, as he was then, had just left him. "What did you talk about?" I asked at haphazard. "Oh," said my host, "the usual thing — the Race." No one was more deeply penetrated with the idea of the noble purity of "the Race" than Lord Beaconsfield. No one believed more fully in the influence of the Jew working alongside of the Indo-European. With what conviction does he insist upon this in *Coningsby*!

That Race, however, does not drop ready-made from the skies is certain; nature and history show us no single example either among men or beasts of a prominently noble and distinctly individual race which is not the result of a mixture. Once the race established it must be preserved. The English constitute a Race and

xxxv INTRODUCTION

a noble one, though their pedigree shows an infusion of Anglo-Saxon, Danish and Norman bloods. In spite of its history which is its religion, there is proof that at a remote stage of its existence the Jewish race was actually formed of several elements. Its stability, unchanged for thousands of years, is one of the wonders of the world. One rigidly observed law is sufficient for their purpose. The Israelite maiden may wed a Gentile: such an affiance tends not to the degeneracy of the race: but the Jewish man must not marry outside his own nation, the seed of the chosen people of Jehovah must not be contaminated by a foreign alliance. That Chamberlain is a strong Anti-Semite adds to the value of the testimony which he bears to the nobility of the Sephardim, the intensely aristocratic Jews of Spain and Portugal, the descendants of the men whom the Romans, dreading their influence, deported westward. "That is nobility in the fullest sense of the word, genuine nobility of race! Beautiful forms, noble heads, dignity in speech and in deportment.... That out of the midst of such men prophets and psalmists should go forth, that I understood at the first glance — something which I confess the closest observation of the many hundred 'Bochers' in the Friedrichstrasse in Berlin had failed to enable me to do." To the Ashkenazim, the so-called German Jews, Chamberlain is as it seems to me unjust. That they have played a greater part in the history of the nineteenth century than the Sephardim is hardly to be denied. They are born financiers and the acquisition of money has been their

characteristic talent. But of the treasure which they have laid up they have given freely. The charities of the great cities of Europe would be in a sad

xxxvi INTRODUCTION

plight were the support of the Jews to be withdrawn; indeed many noble foundations owe their existence to them. Politically too they have rendered great services: one instance which Chamberlain himself quotes is the settlement of the French indemnity after the war of 1870. Bismarck was represented by a Jew, and the French on their side appointed a Jew to meet him, and these two Jews belonged to the Ashkenazim, not to the noble Sephardim.

Who and what then is the Jew, this wonderful man who during the last hundred years has attained such a position in the whole civilised world?

Of all the histories of the ancient world there is none that is more convincing, none more easily to be realised, than that of the wanderings of the patriarch Abraham. It is a story of four thousand years ago, it is a story of yesterday, it is a story of to-day. A tribe of Bedouin Arabs with their womenkind and children and flocks flitting across the desert from one pasture to another is a sight still commonly seen — some of us have even found hospitality in the black tents of these pastoral nomads, where the calf and the foal and the child are huddled together as they must have been in Abraham's day. Such a tribe it was that wandered northward from the city of Ur on the fringe of the desert, on the right bank of the Euphrates, northward to Padan Aram at the foot of the Armenian Highlands; six hundred kilometres as the crow flies, fifteen hundred if we allow for the bends of the river and for the seeking of pasture. From Padan Aram the tribe travels westward to Canaan, thence south to Egypt and back again to Canaan. It is possible that the names of the patriarchs may have been

xxxvii INTRODUCTION

used to indicate periods, but however that may be, these journeys long in themselves, and complicated by the incumbrances of flocks and herds, occupied a great space in time; there were moreover long halts, residences lasting for centuries in the various countries which were traversed, during which intermarriages took place with the highly civilised peoples with whom the wanderers came in contact.

The Bible story, ethnology, the study of skulls and of racial types, all point to the fact that the Jewish people, the descendants of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, united in themselves the five great qualifications which Chamberlain holds to be necessary for the establishment of a powerful race. First, to start with, a strong stock. This the Jew possessed

in his Arab origin. No type, surely, was ever so persistent as that of the Bedouin Arab of the desert, the same to-day as he was thousands of years ago. Secondly, inbreeding. Thirdly, such inbreeding not to be at haphazard but carefully carried out, the best mating only with the best. Fourthly, intermarriage with another race or races. Fifthly, here again careful selection is essential. The Jewish race, built up under all these conditions, was, as we have seen, once formed, kept absolutely pure and uncontaminated. Of what happens where these laws are not observed the mongrels of the South American republics — notably of Peru — furnish a striking example.

In the days of the Roman Republic the influence of the Israelite was already felt. It is strange to read of Cicero, who could thunder out his denunciations of a Catiline, dropping his voice in the law courts when of the Jews he spoke with bated breath lest he should incur

xxxviii INTRODUCTION

their displeasure. In the Middle Ages high offices were conferred by Popes upon Jews, and in Catholic Spain they were even made bishops and archbishops. In France the Jews found the money for the Crusades — Rudolph of Habsburg exempted them from the ordinary laws. In all countries and ages the Jew has been a masterful man. Never was he more powerful than he is to-day. Well may Chamberlain count Judea as the third ancient country which with Greece and Rome has made itself felt in the development of our civilisation. It is not possible within the limits of this brief notice to give an idea of the extraordinary interest of Chamberlain's special [chapter upon the Jews and their entry into the history of the West](#). I have already hinted that with some of his conclusions I do not agree: but I go all lengths with him in his appreciation of the stubborn singleness of purpose and dogged consistency which have made the Jew what he is. The ancient Jew was not a soldier — foreigners furnished the bodyguard of his king. He was no sailor like his cousins the Phoenicians, indeed he had a horror of the sea. He was no artist — he had to import craftsmen to build his Temple — neither was he a farmer, nor a merchant. * What was it then that gave

* It was a common creed of the days of my youth that all the great musical composers were of Jewish extraction. The bubble has long since been pricked. Joachim, who was a Jew, and as proud of his nationality as Lord Beaconsfield himself, once expressed to Sir Charles Stanford his sorrow at the fact that there should never have been a Jewish composer of the first rank. Mendelssohn was the nearest approach to it, and after him, Meyerbeer. But in these days Mendelssohn, in spite of all his charm, is no longer counted in the first rank. Some people have thought that Brahms was a Jew, that his name was a corruption of Abrahams. But this is false. Brahms came of a Silesian family, and in the Silesian dialect Brahms means a reed. (See an interesting paper in *Truth* of January 13, 1909). In

him his wonderful self-confidence, his toughness of character, which could overcome every difficulty, and triumph over the hatred of other races? It was his belief in the sacred books of the law, the Thora: his faith in the promises of Jehovah: his certainty of belonging to the chosen people of God. The influence of the books of the Old Testament has been far-reaching indeed, but nowhere has it exercised more power than in the stablishing of the character of the Jew. If it means so much to the Christian, what must it not mean to him? It is his religion, the history of his race, and his individual pedigree all in one. Nay! it is more than all that: it is the attesting document of his covenant with his God.

Within the compass of a few pages Chamberlain has performed what amounts to a literary feat: he has made us understand the condition of Europe and of the chief countries of the Mediterranean littoral at the time of the first symptoms of decay in the power of Rome. It was the period of what he calls the “Völker-chaos,” a hurly-burly of nationalities in which Greeks and Romans, Syrians, African mongrels, Armenians, Gauls and Indo-Europeans of many tribes were all jumbled up together — a seething, heterogeneous conflicting mass of humanity in which all character, individuality, belief and customs were lost. In this witches' Sabbath only the Jew maintained his individuality, only the Teuton preserved the two great characteristics of his race, freedom and faith —

poetry, on the other hand, the Jew excelled. The Psalms, parts of Isaiah, the sweet idyll of Ruth are above praise. The Book of Job is extolled by Carlyle as the finest of all poems, and according to Chamberlain poetry is the finest of all arts. In the plastic arts, as in music, the Jew has been barren.

the Jew the witness of the past; the Teuton the power of the future.

They were a wonderful people, these tall men with the fair hair and blue eyes, warriors from their birth, fighting for fighting's sake, tribe against tribe, clan against clan, so that Tiberius, looking upon them as a danger, could think of no better policy than to leave them alone to destroy one another. But the people who held in their hands the fate of mankind were not to be got rid of like so many Kilkenny cats. Their battlesomeness made them a danger to the State — to a Roman Emperor, ever under the shadow of murder, their trustworthiness made them the one sure source from which he could recruit his bodyguard. But they were not mere fighting machines, though war was to them a joy and a delight. From their Aryan ancestors, from the men to whom the poems of the Rigveda were a holy writ, they had received, instilled in their blood, a passion for song and for music, an imagination which

revelled in all that is beautiful, and which loved to soar into the highest realms of thought. And so it came to pass that when in the fulness of time they absorbed the power of Europe, they knew how to make the most of the three great legacies which they had inherited: poetry and art from the Greeks, law and statecraft from the Romans, and, greatest of all, the teaching of Christ. By them, with these helps, was founded the culture of the nineteenth century.

In the descendants of such men it is not surprising to see the union of the practical with the ideal. A Teuton writes *The Criticism of Pure Reason*. A Teuton invents the steam-engine. "The century of Bessemer and Edison is equally the century of Beethoven and Richard Wagner.

xli INTRODUCTION

... Newton interrupts his mathematical inquiries to write a commentary on the Revelation of St. John. Crompton troubles himself with the invention of the spinning mule, that he may have more leisure to devote to his one love — music. Bismarck, the statesman of blood and iron, in the critical moments of his life causes the sonatas of Beethoven to be played to him. "Whoso does not realise all this, fails to understand the essence of the Teuton character, and is unable to judge of the part which it has played in the past and is still playing in the present.

The Goths, who of course were Teutons, have been, as Gibbon puts it, "injuriously accused of the ruin of antiquity." Their very name has passed into a byword for all that is barbarous and destructive; yet, as a matter of fact, it was Theodosius and his followers who, with the help of the Christian fanatics, destroyed the Capitol and the monuments of ancient art, whereas it was Theodoric, the Ostrogoth, on the contrary, who issued edicts for the preservation of the ancient glories of Rome. Yet "this man could not write; for his signature he had to use a metal stencil.... But that which was beautiful, that which the nobler spirits of the Chaos of Peoples hated as a work of the devil, that the Goth at once knew how to appreciate: to such a degree did the statues of Rome excite his admiration that he appointed a special official for their protection." Who will deny the gift of imagination in the race which produced a Dante (his name Alighieri a corruption of Aldiger, taken from his grandmother who was of a Goth family from Ferrara), a Shakespeare, a Milton, a Goethe, a Schiller, not to speak of many other great and lesser lights? Who

xlii INTRODUCTION

will dispute the powers of thought of a Locke, a Newton, a Kant, a Descartes? We have but to look around us in order to see how completely our civilisation and culture are the work of the Germane.

Freedom, above all things Freedom, was the watchword of the

Germane — Dante taking part with the Bianchi against the Neri and Pope Boniface; Wycliffe rebelling against the rule of the Church of Rome; Martin Luther leading a movement which was as much political as it was religious, or even more so; all these were apostles of Freedom. The right to think and to believe, and to live according to our belief, is that upon which the free man insists: our enjoyment of it is the legacy of those great men to us. Without the insistence of the Germane religious toleration would not exist to-day.

We have seen that Chamberlain takes the year one — the birth of our Lord — as the first great starting-point of our civilisation. The second epoch which he signalises as marking a fresh departure is the year 1200. The thirteenth century was a period of great developments. It was a period full of accomplishment and radiant with hope. In Germany the founding and perfecting of the great civic league known as the Hansa, in England the wresting of Magna Charta from King John by the Barons, laid the foundation of personal freedom and security. The great religious movement in which St. Francis of Assisi was the most powerful agent “denied the despotism of the Church as it did the despotism of the State, and annihilated the despotism of wealth.” It was the first assertion of freedom to think. Thomas Aquinas, Duns Scotus, Albertus Magnus and Roger Bacon were leaders, the first two in philosophical thought, the last two in

xliii INTRODUCTION

modern natural science. In poetry, and not in poetry alone but in statecraft, Dante towers above all those of his day; and yet there were many poets, singers whose names are still famous, while at the same time lived Adam de la Halle, the first great master in counterpoint. Among painters we find such names as Niccolo Pisani, Cimabue, Giotto, from whom sprang the new school of art. And while these men were all working each at his own craft, great churches and cathedrals and monuments were springing up, masterpieces of the Gothic architect's skill. Well did the thirteenth century deserve the title given to it by Fiske, “the glorious century.” *

When we reach these times we stand on fairly firm ground. The details of history, when we think how the battle rages round events which have taken place in our own times [for instance, the order for the heroic mistake of the Balaclava charge, where “some one had blundered”] may not always command respect, but the broad outlines are clear enough. We are no longer concerned with the deciphering of an ambiguous cuneiform inscription. The

* It is strange to see how great tidal waves of intellectual and creative power from time to time flood the world. Take as another example the sixteenth century, the era of the artistic revival in Italy, of the heroes of the Reformation. What a galaxy of genius is

there. To cite only a few names Ariosto, Tasso, Camoens, Magellan, Copernicus, Tycho Brahe, St. Francis Xavier, St. Ignatius Loyola, Rabelais, Shakespeare. Bacon. The best works of Indian art are produced under the reign of the Moghul Akbar, Damascus turns out its finest blades; the tiles of Persia, and the porcelain of China under the Ming Dynasty, reach their highest perfection; while in far Japan Miyōchin, her greatest artist in metal, is working at the same time as Benvenuto Cellini in Florence and Rome. Such epidemics of genius as those of the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries are mysteries indeed. This, however is but an aside, though as I think one worthy of note.

xliv INTRODUCTION

works of the great men testify, and their witness commands respect.

The second volume of the *Grundlagen* opens with a [chapter entitled "Religion"](#) — a chapter which leaves upon the mind of the reader a vivid impression of the superstitions and myths which gave birth to the dogmas of the Christian Church in its early years, dogmas the acceptance or rejection of which was decided by the votes of Councils of Bishops, many of whom could neither read nor write. It seems incredible that such sublime questions as those of the nature of the Godhead, the relation of the Father to the Son, Eternal Punishment and others, should have been settled by a majority of votes "like the imposition of taxes by our Parliaments." In the dark ages of Christianity, Judaism, Indian mythology, Egyptian mysteries and magic, were woven into a chequered woof, which was an essential contradiction of the touching simplicity of our Lord's teaching. It was a strange moment in the world's history, and one which lent itself to the welding together of utterly dissimilar elements. In the Chaos of Peoples, all mixed up in the weirdest confusion, the dogma-monger found his opportunity. Judaism, which up to that time had been absolutely confined to the Jews, was clutched at with eagerness by men who were tired of the quibbles, the riddles and the uncertainties of the philosophers. Here was something solid, concrete; a creed which preached facts, not theories, a religion which announced itself as history. In the international hodgepodge, a jumble in which all specific character, all feeling of race or country had been lost, the Asiatic and Egyptian elements of this un-Christian Christianity, this travesty of our Lord's teaching, found ready acceptance. The

xlv INTRODUCTION

seed bed was ready and the seed germinated and prospered greatly. In vain did the nobler spirits, the wiser and more holy-minded of the early Fathers raise their voices against gross superstitions borrowed from the mysteries of Isis and of Horus. The Jews and dogma triumphed. The religion of Christ was too pure for the vitiated minds of the Chaos of Peoples, and perhaps dogma was a necessity, a hideous evil, born that good might arise. Men needed a Lord who should speak to them as slaves: they found him in the God of Israel. They needed a discipline, a

ruling power; they found it in the Imperial Church of Rome.

Conversion to Christianity was in the days of the Empire far less a question of religious conviction than one of Law arbitrarily enforced for political reasons by autocrats who might or might not be Christians. Aurelian, a heathen, established the authority of the Bishop of Rome at the end of the third century. Theodosius made heresy and heathenism a crime of high treason. Lawyers and civil administrators were made Bishops — Ambrosius even before he was baptized — that they might enforce Christianity, as a useful handmaid in government and discipline. As the power of the Empire dwindled, that of the Church grew, until the Caesarism of the Papacy was crystallised in the words of Boniface VIII., “Ego sum Caesar, ego sum Imperator.”

In vain did men of genius, as time went on and the temporal claims of the Popes became intolerable, rise in revolt against it. Charlemagne, Dante, St. Francis, all tried to separate Church from State. But the Papacy stood its ground, firm as the Tarpeian Rock, immutable as the Seven Hills themselves. It held to the inheritance

xlvi INTRODUCTION

which came to it not from St. Peter, the poor fisherman of the Sea of Galilee, but from the Caesars, like whom the Bishops of Rome claimed to be Sovereigns over the world. How much more tolerant the early Popes were in religious matters than in temporal is a point which Chamberlain forcibly brings out: they might bear with compromise in the one; in the other they would not budge an inch. Like the Phoenix in the fable, out of its own ashes the Roman Empire arose in a new form, the Papacy.

It is not possible here to dwell upon our author's contrast between St. Paul and Augustine, that wonderful African product of the Chaos, in whom the sublime and the ridiculous went hand in hand, who believed in the heathen Gods and Goddesses as evil spirits, who took Apuleius and his transformation into an ass seriously, to whom witches and sorcerers, and a dozen other childish fancies of the brain, were realities. We must leave equally untouched his interesting sketches of Charlemagne and Dante and their efforts at Reformation. His main object in this chapter is to show the position of the Church at the beginning of the thirteenth century. The Papacy was in its glory. Its doctrines, its dogmas and its temporal supremacy had been enforced — politically it stood upon a pinnacle. The proudest title of the Caesars had been that of Pontifex Maximus. The Pontifex Maximus was now Caesar.

And the present position — what of to-day? The Church of Rome is as solid as ever it was. The Reformation achieved much politically. It achieved freedom. But as the parent of a new and consistent religion, Protestantism has been a failure. Picking and choosing, accepting and rejecting, it has cast aside some of the

xlvi INTRODUCTION

dogmas of the early days of the Chaos, but it remains a motley crowd of sects without discipline, all hostile to one another, all more or less saturated with the tenets of the very Church against which they rebelled. Rome alone remains consistent in its dogmas, as in its claims, and, purged by the Reformation of certain incongruous and irreconcilable elements, has in religion rather gained than lost strength. It is easy to see what difficulties the lack of unity creates for Protestant missionaries. Church men, Chapel men, Calvinists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Methodists, Congregationalists and Heaven knows how many more, all pulling against one another! and the Roman Catholic Church against them all! The religion of Christ as He taught it absolutely nowhere! Small wonder that the heathen should grin and be puzzled.

The building up of the ideal State as we know it to-day was the result of two mighty struggles which raged during the first twelve centuries of our era. The first, as we have seen, was the fight for power between the Caesars and the Popes for the Empire of the world in which now one, now the other, had the upper hand. The second was the struggle between "Universalism" and "Nationalism," that is to say, between the idea on the one hand of a boundless Empire, whether under Caesar or Pope, and on the other a spirit of nationality within sure bounds, and a stubborn determination to be free from either potentate, which ended in the organisation of independent States and the triumph of the Teuton. His rise meant the dawn of a new culture, not as we are bidden to remember a Renaissance in the sense of the calling back into life of a dead past, but a new birth into freedom, a new birth in which the cramping shackles, the

xlvi INTRODUCTION

levelling influences of the Imperium Romanum, of the Civitas Dei, were cast aside — in which at last, after long centuries of slavery, men might live, thinking and working and striving according to their impulses, believing according to the faith that was in them.

Independent statecraft then, as opposed to the all-absorbing Imperium, was the work of the rebellious Teuton, the poet warrior, the thinker, the free man. It was a mighty victory, yet one in which defeat has never been acknowledged. From his prison in the Vatican the Pope continues to issue Bulls and Briefs hurling defiance at the world and at common sense; new saints are canonised, new dogmas proclaimed by oecumenical councils summoned from all parts of the inhabited world; and there are good men and, in many respects, wise men, who bow their heads and tremble. No one can say that the Papacy, though shorn of its earthly dominions, is not still a Power to be reckoned with: its

consistency commands respect; but the Civitas Dei is a thing of the past: it is no more than a dream in the night, from which a weary old man awakens to find its sole remnant in the barren semblance of a medieval court, and the man-millinery of an out-of-date ceremonial. Truly a pathetic figure!

A new world has arisen. The thirteenth century was the turning-point. The building is even now not ended. But the Teuton was at work everywhere, and the foundations were well and truly laid. In Italy, north and south, the land was overrun with men of Indo-European race — Goths, Lombards, Norsemen, Celts. It was to them that was owing the formation of the municipalities and cities which still remain as witnesses of their labour.

xlix INTRODUCTION

It was their descendants, certainly not the hybrids of the Chaos, that worked out the so-called “Renaissance,” and when owing to the internecine feuds and petty wars, as well as to the too frequent intermixture with the hybrids, the Teuton element became weaker and weaker, the glory of Italy waned likewise. Happily for the world the race was maintained in greater purity elsewhere.

The leitmotiv which runs through the whole book is the assertion of the superiority of the Teuton family to all the other races of the world — and more especially, as we have seen, is this shown by the way in which the Germane threw off the shackles with which, under the guise of religion, the Papacy strove to fetter him. It is interesting to consider how Immanuel Kant, the greatest thinker that ever lived, treated this subject. He, the man who was so deeply penetrated with religious feeling that he held it to be “the duty of man to himself to have religion,” saw in the teaching of Christ a “perfect religion.” His demand was for a religion which should be one in spirit and in truth, and for the belief in a God whose kingdom is not of this world.” He by no means rejected the Bible, but he held that its value lay not so much in that which we read in it, as in that which we read into it, nor is he the enemy of Churches, “of which there may be many good forms.” But with superstition and dogma he will have no dealings. Nor is this to be wondered at when we consider how, by whom, and for what purpose dogmas, as we have seen above, were manufactured and what manner of men they were who degraded the early Church with their superstitions. In the mass of ignorant monks and bishops who were the

I INTRODUCTION

so-called “Fathers of the Church“ there are brilliant exceptions. Perhaps the greatest of these was St. Augustine. He was a good and a holy man, but even his great brain, as we have seen, was saturated with Hellenic

mythology, Egyptian magic and witchcraft, Neoplatonism, Judaism, Romish dogmatism. If we cite him as an irrefutable authority on a point of dogma, we should, to be consistent, go a step farther, and equally hold him as irrefutable when he inclines to a belief in Apuleius and his ass, and in his views as to Jupiter, Juno and the theocracy of Olympus. Religious dogmas, superstitions, so bred, could not be accepted by a man of Kant's intellect. They were noxious weeds to be rooted up and swept out of existence. Christ's teaching being, as he held it to be, perfect, could only be degraded by being loaded with heathen fables and tawdry inanities. It was the scum of the people who invented superstitions, the belief in witches and demons: it was the priestcraft who welded those false doctrines into the semblance of a religion to which they gave Christ's name. *

Kant said of himself that he was born too soon; that a century must elapse before his day should come. "The morning has dawned," as Chamberlain says in another book, † and "it is no mere chance that the first complete and exact edition of Kant's collected works and letters should have begun to appear for the first time in the

* The Christian religion, I would point out here, is not the only one which has suffered in this way. Nothing can be simpler, nothing purer in its way than Buddhism as the Buddha taught it. Yet see what the monks have made of it! The parallel is striking.

† [Immanuel Kant](#), by Chamberlain. Bruckmann, Munich, 1905. The book which Chamberlain tells me that he himself considers the "most important" of his works. It is published in German.

li INTRODUCTION

year 1900; the new century needed this strong guardian spirit, who thought himself justified in saying of his system of philosophy that it worked a revolution in the scheme of thought analogous to that of the Copernican system. There are to-day a few who know, and many who suspect, that this scheme of philosophy must form a pillar of the culture of the future. For every cultivated and civilised man Kant's thought possesses a symbolical significance; it wards off the two opposite dangers — the dogmatism of the Priests and the superstition of science — and it strengthens us in the devoted fulfilment of the duties of life." Now that thought is less cramped and Kant is beginning to be understood, the true religiosity of his august nature is surely being recognised, and the last charge that will be brought against him will be that of irreligion. If he destroyed, he also built; he was not one of those teachers who rob a man of what he possesses without giving anything in exchange. He completed the work which Martin Luther had begun. Luther was too much of a politician and too little of a theologian for his task; moreover he never was able altogether to throw off the monk's cowl. To the last he believed in the Real Presence in the Sacrament, and hardly knew what dogmas he

should accept and what he should reject. Kant was the master who taught Christianity in all its beauty of simplicity. The kingdom of God is in you! There was no cowl to smother Kant.

The foundation-stone of the nineteenth century was laid by Christ himself. For many centuries after His death upon the Cross, ignorant men, barbarians, under the cloak of religion, were at pains to hide that stone in an

lii INTRODUCTION

overwhelming heap of rubbish. Kant laid it bare, and revealed it to the world: his reward was the execration of men who were not worthy to unloose the latchet of his shoes: but the tables are turned now. His morning has indeed dawned, and the twentieth century is recognising the true worth of the man who, more than any other, has influenced the thought of the educated world. Goethe, indeed, said of Kant that he had so penetrated the minds of men that even those who had not read him were under his influence.

The [last section of Chamberlain's ninth chapter](#) is devoted to Art. He has kept one of his most fascinating subjects for the end. And who is better qualified to write upon it than he? Here is not the conventional aspect of Art contained in the technical dictionaries and encyclopaedias, "in which the last judgment of Michael Angelo, or a portrait of Rembrandt by himself, are to be seen cheek by jowl with the lid of a beer-mug or the back of an arm-chair." Art is here treated as the great creative Power, a Kingdom of which Poetry and Music, twin sisters, inseparable, are the enthroned Queens. To Chamberlain, as it was to Carlyle, the idea of divorcing Poetry from Music is inconceivable. "Music," wrote Carlyle, "is well said to be the speech of angels; in fact nothing among the utterances allowed to man is felt to be so divine. It brings us near to the Infinite." "I give Dante my highest praise when I say of his Divine Comedy that it is in all senses genuinely a song." Again: "All old Poems, Homer's and the rest, are authentically songs. I would say in strictness, that all right Poems are; that whatsoever is not sung is properly no Poem, but a piece of Prose cramped into jingling lines, to the

liii INTRODUCTION

great injury of the grammar, to the great grief of the reader for the most part!" so spoke Carlyle, and so speaks Chamberlain, with the masterly competence of a man who as critic and disciple, for he is both, has sat at the feet of the great Tone-Poet of our times. *

The hurry and bustle of this fussy age have largely robbed us of true enthusiasm, for which men substitute catchwords and commonplaces. All the more delight is there in meeting it in such sayings as this, coming straight from the heart of a man who is never in a hurry, whose

convictions are the result of measured thought. "A Leonardo gives us the form of Christ, a Johann Sebastian Bach his voice, even now present to us." The influence of Religion upon Art, and in reflex action, that of Art upon Religion has never been better shown than in these words. Religion inspired the artists, furnished them with their subject; the artists, so inspired, have touched the hearts of thousands, infusing them with some perception, some share of their own inspiration.

Who can say how many minds have been turned to piety by the frescoes of Cimabue and Giotto picturing the life of St. Francis at Assisi? Who can doubt the influence of the Saint upon the painters of the early Italian school? Who has not felt the religious influence of the architect, the painter, the sculptor? Two great principles are laid down for us by Chamberlain in regard to Art.

* It is curious to note that of the three greatest English poets of our day, Tennyson, whose songs are music itself, knew no tune, Swinburne, whose magic verses read with the lilt of a lovely melody, had not the gift of Ear, while Browning, the rugged thinker, the most unvocal of poets, never missed an opportunity of listening to music in its most exalted form.

liv INTRODUCTION

First: Art must be regarded as a whole: as a "pulsing blood-system of the higher spiritual life." Secondly: all Art is subordinated to poetry. But not that which has been written is alone poetry: the creative power of poetry is widespread. As Richard Wagner said, "the true inventor has ever been the people. The individual cannot invent, he can only make his own that which has been invented." This I take it is the true spirit of folk-lore. If you think of it, the epic of Homer, the "mystic unfathomable song," as Tieck called it, of Dante, the wonders of Shakespeare, all prove the truth of Wagner's saying. The matter is there: then comes the magician: he touches it with his wand, and it lives! That is true creative art, the art which in its turn inspires, fathering all that is greatest and noblest in the world. It is the art upon which the culture of the nineteenth century has been founded and built.

Rich indeed have been the gifts which have been showered upon mankind between the thirteenth and the nineteenth centuries. New worlds have been discovered, new forces in nature revealed. Paper has been introduced, printing invented. In political economy, in politics, in religion, in natural science and dynamics there have been great upheavals all paving the way for that further progress for which we are apt to take too much credit to ourselves, giving too little to those glorious pioneers who preceded us, to the true founders of the century.

I have endeavoured to give some idea of the scope of Chamberlain's great work. I am very sensible of my inadequacy to the task, but it was his wish that I should

lv INTRODUCTION

undertake it, and I could not refuse. I console myself with the thought that even had I been far better fitted for it, I could not within the limits of these few pages have given a satisfying account of a book which embraces so many and so various subjects, many of which I had of necessity to leave untouched. Indeed, I feel appalled at the range of reading which its production must have involved; but as to that the book is its own best witness. We are led to hope that some day the history of the Foundations of the Nineteenth Century may be followed by an equally fascinating analysis of the century itself from the same pen. It will be the fitting crown of a colossal undertaking. It may be doubted whether there is any other man equipped as Chamberlain is to erect such a monument in honour of a great epoch. To few men has been given in so bountiful a measure the power of seeing, of sifting the true from the false, the essential from the insignificant; comparison is the soul of observation, and the wide horizon of Chamberlain's outlook furnishes him with standards of comparison which are denied to those of shorter sight: his peculiar and cosmopolitan education, his long researches in natural history, his sympathy and intimate relations with all that has been noblest in the world of art — especially in its most divine expression, poetry and music — point to him as the one man above all others worthy to tell the further tale of a culture of which he has so well portrayed the nonage, and which is still struggling heavenward. But in addition to these qualifications he possesses, in a style which is wholly his own, the indescribable gift of charm, so that the pupil is unwittingly drawn into a close union with the teacher, in whom he sees an example of the truth

lvi INTRODUCTION

of Goethe's words, which Chamberlain himself more than once quotes:

Höchstes Glück der Erdenkinder
Ist nur die Persönlichkeit.

REDESDALE

BATSFORD PARK
January 8, 1909

NOTE. This introduction was in print before the writer had seen Dr. Lees' translation. There may, therefore, be some slight discrepancies in the passages quoted.

 TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

THE translator desires to express his great obligation to Miss Elizabeth A. J. Weir, M.A., for reading through the manuscript; to his colleagues, Dr. Schlapp of Edinburgh, Dr. Scholle of Aberdeen, and Dr. Smith of Glasgow, for correcting portions of the proof; and above all to Lord Redesdale for his brilliant and illuminating introduction. Apart, however, from this, it is only just to say that Lord Redesdale has carefully read and re-read every page and revised many important passages.

The publisher wishes to associate himself with the translator in making this entirely inadequate acknowledgment to Lord Redesdale for the invaluable assistance that he has so generously rendered.

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 AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

Alles beruht auf Inhalt, Gehalt und Tüchtigkeit eines zuerst aufgestellten Grundsatzes und auf der Reinheit des Vorsatzes.

GOETHE

PLAN OF THE WORK

THE work of which this is the first Book is one that is not to be made up of fragments patched together, but one that has been conceived and planned out from the beginning as a complete and finished whole. The object, therefore, of this general introduction must be to give an idea of the scheme of the whole work when it shall have been brought to an end. It is true that this first book is, in form, complete in itself; yet it would not be what it is if it had not come into existence as a part of a greater conception. It is this greater conception that must be the subject of the preface to the "part which, in the first instance, is the whole."

There is no need to dwell in detail upon the limitations which the individual must admit, when he stands face to face with an immeasurable world of facts. The mastery of such a task, scientifically, is impossible; it is only artistic power, aided by those secret parallels which

exist between the world of vision and of thought, by that tissue which — like ether — fills and connects the whole world, that can, if fortune is favourable, produce a unity here which is complete, and that, too, though only fragments be employed to make it. If the artist does succeed in this, then his work has not

lx AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

been superfluous: the immeasurable has been brought within the scope of vision, the shapeless has acquired a form. In such a task the individual has an advantage over a combination of men, however capable they may be, for a homogeneous whole can be the work only of an individual mind. But he must know how to turn this advantage to good account, for it is his only one. Art appears only as a whole, as something perfect in itself; science, on the other hand, is bound to be fragmentary. Art unites and science disconnects. Art gives form to things, science dissects forms. The man of science stands on an Archimedean point outside the world: therein lies his greatness, his so-called objectivity; but this very fact is also the cause of his manifest insufficiency; for no sooner does he leave the sphere of actual observation, to reduce the manifoldness of experience to the unity of conception and idea, than he finds himself hanging by the thin thread of abstraction in empty space. The artist, on the contrary, stands at the world's centre (that is, at the centre of his own world), and his creative power takes him as far as his senses can reach; for this creative power is but the manifestation of the individual mind acting and reacting upon its surroundings. But for that reason also he cannot be reproached for his "subjectivity": that is the fundamental condition of his creative work. In the case before us the subject has definite historical boundaries and is immutably fixed for ever. Untruth would be ridiculous, caprice unbearable; the author cannot say, like Michael Angelo, "Into this stone there comes nothing but what I put there":

in pietra od in candido foglio

che nulla ha dentro, et evvi ci ch'io vogilo!

On the contrary, unconditional respect for facts must be his guiding star. He must be artist, not in the sense of the creative genius, but only in the limited sense of one

lxi AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

who employs the methods of the artist. He should give shape, but only to that which is already there, not to that which his fancy may mirror. Philosophical history is a desert; fanciful history an idiot asylum. We must therefore demand that the artistic designer should have a positive tendency of mind and a strictly scientific conscience. Before he reasons, he must know: before he gives shape to a thing, he must test it. He

cannot look upon himself as master, he is but a servant, the servant of truth.

These remarks will probably suffice to give the reader some notion of the general principles which have been followed in planning this work. We must leave the airy heights of philosophic speculation and descend to the earth. If in such undertakings the moulding and shaping of the materials at hand is the only task which the individual can entrust to himself, how is he to set about it in the present case?

The *Nineteenth Century!* It seems an inexhaustible theme, and so it really is; and yet it is only by including more that it becomes comprehensible and possible of achievement. This appears paradoxical, but it is nevertheless true. As soon as our gaze rests long and lovingly upon the past, out of which the present age developed amid so much suffering, as soon as the great fundamental facts of history are brought vividly home to us and rouse in our hearts violent and conflicting emotions with regard to the present, fear and hope, loathing and enthusiasm, all pointing to a future which it must be our work to shape, towards which too we must henceforth look with longing and impatience — then the great immeasurable nineteenth century shrivels up to relatively insignificant dimensions; we have no time to linger over details, we wish to keep nothing but the important features vividly and clearly before our minds, in order that we may know who we are and whither

lxii AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

we are tending. This gives a definite aim with a fair prospect of attaining it: the individual can venture now to begin the undertaking. The lines of his work are so clearly traced for him that he only requires to follow them faithfully.

The following is the outline of my work. In the “Foundations” I discuss the first eighteen centuries of the Christian era with frequent reference to times more remote; I do not profess to give a history of the past, but merely of that past which is still living; as a matter of fact this involves so much, and an accurate and critical knowledge of it is so indispensable to every one who wishes to form an estimate of the present, that I am inclined to regard the study of the “Foundations” of the nineteenth century as almost the most important part of the whole undertaking. A second book would be devoted to this century itself: naturally only the leading ideas could be treated in such a work, and the task of doing so would be very much lightened and simplified by the “Foundations,” in which our attention had been continually directed to the nineteenth century. A supplement might serve to form an approximate idea of the importance of the century; that can only be done by comparing it with the past, and here the “Foundations” would have prepared the ground; by this procedure, moreover, we should be able to foreshadow the future — no capricious and fanciful picture, but a shadow cast by the present

in the light of the past. Then at last the century would stand out before our eyes clearly shaped and defined — not in the form of a chronicle or an encyclopaedia, but as a living “corporeal” thing.

So much for the general outline. But as I do not wish it to remain as shadowy as the future, I shall give some more detailed information concerning the execution of my plan. As regards the results at

lxiii AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

which I arrive, I do not feel called upon to anticipate them here, as they can only carry conviction after consideration of all the arguments which I shall have to bring forward in their support.

THE FOUNDATIONS

In this first book it has been my task to endeavour to reveal the bases upon which the nineteenth century rests; this seemed to me, as I have said, the most difficult and important part of the whole scheme; for this reason I have devoted two volumes to it. In the sphere of history understanding means seeing the evolution of the present from the past; even when we are face to face with a fact which cannot be explained further, as happens in the case of every pre-eminent personality and every nation of strong individuality at its first appearance on the stage of history, we see that these are linked with the past, and it is from this point of connection that we must start, if we wish to form a correct estimate of their significance. If we draw an imaginary line separating the nineteenth from all preceding centuries, we destroy at one stroke all possibility of understanding it critically. The nineteenth century is not the child of the former ages — for a child begins life afresh — rather it is their direct product; mathematically considered, a sum; physiologically, a stage of life. We have inherited a certain amount of knowledge, accomplishments, thoughts, &c., we have further inherited a definite distribution of economic forces, we have inherited errors and truths, conceptions, ideals, superstitions: many of these things have grown so familiar that any other conditions would be inconceivable; many which promised well have become stunted, many have shot up so suddenly that they have almost broken their connection with the aggregate life, and while the roots of these new flowers reach down to forgotten generations, their fantastic

lxiv AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

blossoms are taken for something absolutely new. Above all we have inherited the blood and the body by which and in which we live.

Whoever takes the admonition “Know thyself” seriously will soon recognise that at least nine-tenths of this “self” do not really belong to

himself. And this is true also of the spirit of a century. The pre-eminent individual, who is able to realise his physical position in the universe and to analyse his intellectual inheritance, can attain to a relative freedom; he then becomes at least conscious of his own conditional position, and though he cannot transform himself, he can at least exercise some influence upon the course of further development; a whole century, on the other hand, hurries unconsciously on as fate impels it: its human equipment is the fruit of departed generations, its intellectual treasure — corn and chaff, gold, silver, ore and clay — is inherited, its tendencies and deviations result with mathematical necessity from movements that have gone before. Not only, therefore, is it impossible to compare or to determine the characteristic features, the special attributes and the achievements of our century, without knowledge of the past, but we are not even able to make any precise statement about it, if we have not first of all become clear with regard to the material of which we are physically and intellectually composed. This is, I repeat, the most important problem.

THE TURNING-POINT

My object in this book being to connect the present with the past, I have been compelled to sketch in outline the history of that past. But, inasmuch as my history has to deal with the present, that is to say, with a period of time which has no fixed limit, there is no case for a strictly defined beginning. The

lxv AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

nineteenth century points onward into the future, it points also back into the past: in both cases a limitation is allowable only for the sake of convenience, it does not lie in the facts. In general I have regarded the year 1 of the Christian era as the beginning of our history and have given a fuller justification of this view in the [introduction to the first part](#): but it will be seen that I have not kept slavishly to this scheme. Should we ever become true Christians, then certainly that which is here merely suggested, without being worked out, would become an historical actuality, for it would mean the birth of a new race: perhaps the twenty-fourth century, into which, roughly speaking, the nineteenth throws faint shadows, will be able to draw more definite outlines. Compelled as I have been to let the beginning and the end merge into an undefined penumbra, a clearly drawn middle line becomes all the more indispensable to me, and as a date chosen at random could not be satisfactory in this case, the important thing has been to fix the turning-point of the history of Europe. The awakening of the Teutonic peoples to the consciousness of their all-important vocation as the founders of a completely new civilisation and culture forms this turning point; the year

1200 can be designated the central moment of this awakening.

Scarcely any one will have the hardihood to deny that the inhabitants of Northern Europe have become the makers of the world's history. At no time indeed have they stood alone, either in the past or in the present; on the contrary, from the very beginning their individuality has developed in conflict with other individualities, first of all in conflict with that human chaos composed of the ruins of fallen Rome, then with all the races of the world in turn; others, too, have exercised influence — indeed great influence — upon the destinies of mankind, but then always merely as opponents of the men from

lxvi AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

the north. What was fought out sword in hand was of but little account; the real struggle, as I have attempted to show in [chaps. vii.](#) and [viii.](#) of this work, was one of ideas; this struggle still goes on to-day. If, however, the Teutons were not the only peoples who moulded the world's history, they unquestionably deserve the first place: all those who from the sixth century onwards appear as genuine shapers of the destinies of mankind, whether as builders of States or as discoverers of new thoughts and of original art, belong to the Teutonic race. The impulse given by the Arabs is short-lived; the Mongolians destroy, but do not create anything; the great Italians of the *rinascimento* were all born either in the north saturated with Lombardic, Gothic and Frankish blood, or in the extreme Germano-Hellenic south; in Spain it was the Western Goths who formed the element of life; the Jews are working out their "Renaissance" of to-day by following in every sphere as closely as possible the example of the Teutonic peoples. From the moment the Teuton awakes, a new world begins to open out, a world which of course we shall not be able to call purely Teutonic — one in which, in the nineteenth century especially, there have appeared new elements, or at least elements which formerly had a lesser share in the process of development, as, for example, the Jews and the formerly pure Teutonic Slavs, who by mixture of blood have now become "un-Teutonised" — a world which will yet perhaps assimilate great racial complexes and so lay itself open to new influences from all the different types, but at any rate a new world and a new civilisation, essentially different from the Helleno-Roman, the Turanian, the Egyptian, the Chinese and all other former or contemporaneous ones. As the "beginning" of this new civilisation, that is, as the moment when it began to leave its peculiar impress on the world, we can, I think, fix the thirteenth century. Individuals

lxvii AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

such as Alfred the Great, Charlemagne, Scotus Erigena and others had long ago proved their Teutonic individuality by their civilising activity. It

is, however, not individuals, but communities, that make history; these individuals had been only pioneers. In order to become a civilising power the Teuton had to awaken and grow strong in the exercise far and wide of his individual will in opposition to the will of others forced upon him from outside. This did not take place all at once, neither did it happen at the same time in all the spheres of life; the choice of the year 1200 as turning-point is therefore arbitrary, but I hope, in what follows, to be able to justify it, and my purpose will be gained if I in this way succeed in doing away with those two absurdities — the idea of Middle Ages and that of a Renaissance — by which more than by anything else an understanding of our present age is not only obscured, but rendered directly impossible.

Abandoning these formulae which have but served to give rise to endless errors, we are left with the simple and clear view that our whole civilisation and culture of to-day is the work of one definite race of men, the Teutonic. * It is untrue that the Teutonic barbarian conjured up the so-called “Night of the Middle Ages“; this night followed rather upon the intellectual and moral bankruptcy of the raceless chaos of humanity which the dying Roman Empire had nurtured; but for the Teuton everlasting night would have settled upon the world; but for the unceasing opposition of the non-Teutonic peoples, but for that unrelenting hostility to everything Teutonic which has not yet died down among the racial chaos which has never been exterminated, we should have reached a stage of culture quite different

* Under this designation I embrace the various portions of the one great North European race, whether “Teutonic“ in the narrower Tacitean meaning of the word, or Celts or genuine Slavs — see [chap. vi.](#) for further particulars.

lxviii AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

from that witnessed by the nineteenth century. It is equally untrue that our culture is a renaissance of the Hellenic and the Roman: it was only after the birth of the Teutonic peoples that the renaissance of past achievements was possible and not *vice versa*; and this *rinascimento*, to which we are beyond doubt eternally indebted for the enriching of our life, retarded nevertheless just as much as it promoted, and threw us for a long time out of our safe course. The mightiest creators of that epoch — a Shakespeare, a Michael Angelo — do not know a word of Greek or Latin. Economic advance — the basis of our civilisation — takes place in opposition to classical traditions and in a bloody struggle against false imperial doctrines. But the greatest mistake of all is the assumption that our civilisation and culture are but the expression of a general progress of mankind; not a single fact in history supports this popular belief (as I think I have conclusively proved in the [ninth chapter](#) of this book); and in the meantime this empty phrase strikes us blind, and we lose sight of

the self-evident fact — that our civilisation and culture, as in every previous and every other contemporary case, are the work of a definite, individual racial type, a type possessing, like everything individual, great gifts but also insurmountable limitations. And so our thoughts float around in limitless space, in a hypothetical “humanity,” and we pass by unnoticed that which is concretely presented and which alone effects anything in history, the definite individuality. Hence the obscurity of our historical groupings. For if we draw one line through the year 500, and a second through the year 1500, and call these thousand years the Middle Ages, we have not dissected the organic body of history as a skilled anatomist, but hacked it in two like a butcher. The capture of Rome by Odoacer and by Dietrich of Berne are only episodes in that entry of the Teutonic

lxi AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

peoples into the history of the world, which went on for a thousand years: the decisive thing, namely, the idea of the unnational world-empire, far from receiving its death-blow thereby, for a long time drew new life from the intervention of the Teutonic races. While, therefore, the year 1 — the (approximate) date of the birth of Christ — is a date which is ever memorable in the history of mankind and even in the mere annals of events, the year 500 has no importance whatever. Still worse is the year 1500, for if we draw a line through it we draw it right through the middle of all conscious and unconscious efforts and developments — economic, political, artistic, scientific — which enrich our lives to-day and are moving onward to a still distant goal. If, however, we insist on retaining the idea of “Middle Ages” there is an easy way out of the difficulty: it will suffice if we recognise that we Teutons ourselves, together with our proud nineteenth century, are floundering in what the old historians used to call a “Middle Age” — a genuine “Middle Age.” For the predominance of the Provisional and the Transitional, the almost total absence of the Definite, the Complete and the Balanced, are marks of our time; we are in the “midst” of a development, already far from the starting-point and presumably still far from the goal.

What has been said may in the meantime justify the rejection of other divisions; the conviction that I have not chosen arbitrarily, but have sought to recognise the one great fundamental fact of all modern history, will be established by the study of the whole work. Yet I cannot refrain from briefly adducing some reasons to account for my choice of the year 1200 as a convenient central date.

lxx AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

THE YEAR 1200

If we ask ourselves when it is that we have the first sure indications that something new is coming into being, a new form of the world in place of the old shattered ruin, and of the prevailing chaos, we must admit that they are already to be met with in many places in the twelfth century (in Northern Italy even in the eleventh), they multiply rapidly in the thirteenth — the glorious century, as Fiske calls it — attain to a glorious early full bloom in the social and industrial centres in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, in art in the fifteenth and sixteenth, in science in the sixteenth and seventeenth, and in philosophy in the seventeenth and eighteenth. This movement does not advance in a straight line; in State and Church fundamental principles are at war with each other, and in the other spheres of life there is far too little consciousness to prevent men from ever and anon straying from the right path; but the all-important question we have to ask ourselves is, whether it is only interests that clash, or whether ideals, suggested by a definite individuality, are floating before the eyes of men; these ideals we do possess approximately since the thirteenth century; but we have not yet attained them, they are floating before us in the distance, and to this fact is due the feeling that we are still very deficient in the moral equilibrium and the aesthetic harmony of the ancients, but it is at the same time the basis of our hope for better things. When we glance backwards we are indeed entitled to cherish high hopes. And, I repeat, if when looking back we try to discover when the first shimmer of those rays of hope can be clearly seen, we find the time to be about the year 1200. In Italy the movement to found cities had begun in the eleventh century, that movement which aimed at the same time at the furtherance of trade and industry and

lxxi AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

the granting of far-reaching rights of freedom to whole classes of the population, which had hitherto pined under the double yoke of Church and State; in the twelfth century this strengthening of the core of the European population had become so widely spread and intensified that at the beginning of the thirteenth century the powerful Hansa and the Rhenish Alliance of Cities could be formed. Concerning this movement Ranke writes (*Weltgeschichte*, iv. 238): "It is a splendid, vigorous development, which is thus initiated ... the cities constitute a world power, paving the way for civic liberty and the formation of powerful States." Even before the final founding of the Hansa, the Magna Charta had been proclaimed in England, in the year 1215, a solemn proclamation of the inviolability of the great principle of personal freedom and personal security. "No one may be condemned except in accordance with the laws of the land. Right and justice may not be bought nor refused." In some countries of Europe this first guarantee for the dignity of man has not to this day become law; but since that June 15, 1215, a

general law of conscience has gradually grown out of it, and whoever runs counter to this is a criminal, even though he wear a crown. I may mention another important point in which Teutonic civilisation showed itself essentially different from all others: in the course of the thirteenth century slavery and the slave trade disappeared from European countries (with the exception of Spain). In the thirteenth century money begins to take the place of natural products in buying and selling; almost exactly in the year 1200 we see in Europe the first manufacture of paper — without doubt the most momentous industrial achievement till the invention of the locomotive. It would, however, be erroneous to regard the advance of trade and the stirring of instincts of freedom as the only indications of the dawn of a new day. Perhaps

lxxii AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

the great movement of religious feeling, the most powerful representative of which was Francis of Assisi (*b.* 1182) is a factor of deeper and more lasting influence; in it a genuinely democratic impulse makes itself apparent; the faith and life of men like Francis call in question the tyranny of Church as of State, and deal a death-blow to the despotism of money. "This movement," one of the authorities * on Francis of Assisi writes, "gives men the first forewarning of universal freedom of thought." At the same moment the avowedly anti-Catholic movement, that of the Albigenses, came into dangerous prominence in Western Europe. In another sphere of religious life some equally important steps were taken at the same time: after Peter Abelard (*d.* 1142) had unconsciously defended the Indo-European conception of religion against the Semitic, especially by emphasising the symbolic character of all religious ideas, two orthodox schoolmen, Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus, made in the thirteenth century an admission which was just as dangerous for the church dogma by conceding, in agreement with each other (though they were otherwise opponents), the right of existence to a philosophy which differed from theology. And while theoretical thinking here began to assert itself, other scholars, among whom Albertus Magnus (*b.* 1193) and Roger Bacon (*b.* 1214) are especially conspicuous, laid the foundations of modern natural science by turning the attention of men from logical disputes to mathematics, physics, astronomy and chemistry. Cantor (*Vorlesungen über Geschichte der Mathematik*, 2 Aufl. ii. 3) says that in the thirteenth century "a new era in the history of mathematical science" began; this was especially the work of Leonardo of Pisa, who was the first to introduce to us the Indian (falsely called Arabian) numerical signs, and of Jordanus Saxo, of the family of Count Eberstein, who initiated

* Thode, *Franz von Assisi*, p. 4.

lxxiii AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

us into the art of algebraic calculation (also originally invented by the Hindoos). The first dissection of a human body — which was of course the first step towards scientific medicine — took place towards the end of the thirteenth century, after an interval of one thousand six hundred years, and it was carried out by Mondino de' Luzzi, of Northern Italy. Dante, likewise a child of the thirteenth century, also deserves mention here — indeed very special mention. “Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita“ is the first line of his great poem, and he himself, the first artistic genius of world-wide importance in the new Teutonic epoch of culture, is the typical figure at this turning-point of history, the point at which she has left behind her “the half of her way,“ and, after having travelled at break-neck speed downhill for centuries, sets herself to climb the steep, difficult path on the opposite slope. Many of Dante's sentiments in the *Divina Comedia* and in his *Tractatus de monarchia* appear to us like the longing glance of the man of great experience out of the social and political chaos surrounding him, towards a harmoniously ordered world; and such a glance was possible as a sure sign that the movement had already begun; the eye of genius is a ray of light that shows the way to others. *

But long before Dante — this point must not be overlooked — a poetical creative power had manifested itself

* I am not here thinking of the details of his proofs, coloured as they are by scholasticism, but of such things as his views on the relation of men to one another (*Monarchia*, I. chaps. iii. and iv.) or on the federation of States, each of which he says shall retain its own individuality and its own legislature, while the Emperor, as “peacemaker“ and judge in matters that are “common and becoming to all,“ shall form the bond of union (I. chap. xiv.). In other things Dante himself, as genuine “middle“ figure, allows himself to be very much influenced by the conceptions of his time and dwells in poetical Utopias. This point is more fully discussed in [chap. vii.](#), and especially in the introduction to [chap. viii.](#) of this book.

lxxiv AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

in the heart of the most genuine Teutonic life, in the north, a fact in itself sufficient to prove how little need we had of a classical revival to enable us to create incomparable masterpieces of art: in the year 1200, Chrestien de Troyes, Hartmann von Aue, Wolfram von Eschenbach, Walther von der Vogelweide, Gottfried von Strassburg were writing their poems, and I mention only some of the most famous names, for, as Gottfried says, “of the nightingales there are many more.“ And up to this time the questionable separation of poetry and music (which originated from the worship of the dead letters) had not taken place: the poet was at the same time singer; when he invented the “word“ he invented for it at the same time the particular “tone“ and the particular “melody.“ And so we see music too, the most original art of the new culture, develop just at

the moment when the peculiar individuality of this culture began to show itself in a perfectly new form as polyphonic harmonious art. The first master of note in the treatment of counterpoint is the poet and dramatist Adam de la Halle (*b.* 1240). With him — and so with a genuinely Teutonic word- and sound-creator — begins the development of music in the strict sense, so that the musical authority Gevaert can write: “Désormais l'on peut considérer ce treizième siècle, si décrié jadis, comme le siècle initiateur de tout l'art moderne.” Likewise in the thirteenth century those inspired artists Niccolo Pisano, Cimabue and Giotto revealed their talents, and to them we are indebted, in the first place, not merely for a “Renaissance” of the plastic and graphic arts, but above all for the birth of a perfectly new art, that of modern painting. It was also in the thirteenth century that Gothic architecture came into prominence (the “Teutonic style” as Ruhmor rightly wished to call it) almost all masterpieces of church architecture, the incomparable beauty of which we to-day admire but cannot

lxxv AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

imitate, originate in that one century. In the meantime (shortly before 1200), the first purely secular university had been founded in Bologna, at which only jurisprudence, philosophy and medicine were taught. * We see in how many ways a new life began to manifest itself about the year 1200. A few names would prove nothing; but the fact that a movement embraces all lands and grades of society, that the most contradictory phenomena point backwards to a similar cause and forwards to a common goal, proves that we have here to deal not with an accidental and individual thing but with a great, general process which is maturing with unconscious imperativeness in the inmost heart of society. And that peculiar “decline in historical sense and historical understanding about the middle of the thirteenth century,” to which different scholars have wonderingly called attention, † should be taken also, I think, in this connection: under the guidance of the Teutonic peoples men have just begun a new life; they have, so to speak, turned a corner in their course and even the nearest past has completely vanished from their sight: henceforth they belong to the future.

It is most surprising to have to chronicle the fact that exactly at this moment, when the new European world was arising out of chaos, the discovery of the remaining parts of the world also began, without which our blossoming Teutonic culture could never have developed its own peculiar power of expansion: in the second half of the thirteenth century Marco Polo made expeditions of discovery and thereby laid the foundations of our still incomplete knowledge of the surface of our planet. What is gained by this is, in the first place

* The theological faculty was not established till towards the end of the fourteenth

century (Savigny).

† See Döllinger, *Das Kaisertum Karls des Grossen* (Akad. Vorträge iii. 156).

lxxvi AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

and apart from the widening of the horizon, the capability of expansion; this, however, denotes only something relative; the most important thing is that European authority may hope within a measurable space of time to encompass the earth and thereby no longer be exposed, like former civilisations, to the plundering raids of unlooked for and unbridled barbaric Powers.

So much to justify my choice of the thirteenth century as separating-line.

That there is, nevertheless, something artificial in such a choice I have admitted at the very beginning and I repeat it now; in particular one must not think that I attribute a special fateful importance to the year 1200: the ferment of the first twelve centuries of the Christian era has of course not yet ceased, it still confuses thousands and thousands of intellects, and on the other hand we may cheerfully assert that the new harmonious world began to dawn in the minds of individuals long before 1200. The rightness or wrongness of such a scheme is revealed only by its use. As Goethe says: "Everything depends on the fundamental truth, the development of which reveals itself not so easily in speculation as in practice: this is the touch-stone of what has been admitted by the intellect."

DIVISION INTO TWO PARTS

In consequence of this fixing of the turning-point of our history, this book, which treats of the period up to the year 1800, falls naturally into two parts: the one deals with the period previous to the year 1200, the other the period subsequent to that year.

In the [first part](#) — the origins — I have discussed first the legacy of the old world, then the heirs and lastly the fight of the heirs for their inheritance. As everything new is attached to something already in existence, some-

lxxvii AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

thing older, the first fundamental question is, "What component parts of our intellectual capital are inherited?" the second, no less important, is, "Who are we?" Though the answering of these questions may take us back into the distant past, the interest remains always a present interest, because in the whole construction of every chapter, as well as in every detail of the discussion, the one all-absorbing consideration is that of the nineteenth century. The legacy of the old world forms still an important

— often quite inadequately digested — portion of the very youngest world: the heirs with their different natures stand opposed to one another to-day as they did a thousand years ago; the struggle is as bitter, as confused as ever; the investigation of the past means therefore at the same time an examination of the too abundant material of the present. Let no one, however, regard my remarks on Hellenic art and philosophy, on Roman history and Roman law, on the teaching of Christ, or, again, on the Teutonic peoples and the Jews, &c., as independent academic treatises and apply to them the corresponding standard. I have not approached these subjects as a learned authority, but as a child of to-day that desires to understand the living present world and I have formed my judgments, not from the Aristophanic cloud-cuckoo-land of a supernatural objectivity, but from that of a conscious Teuton whom Goethe not in vain has warned:

Was euch nicht angehört,
Müset ihr meiden;
Was euch das Inn're stört,
Dürft ihr nicht leiden!

In the eyes of God all men, indeed all creatures, may be equal: but the divine law of the individual is to maintain and to defend his individuality. I have formed my idea of Teutonicism on a scale quite as large; which means in this case “as large-heartedly as possible,” and

lxxviii AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

have not pleaded the cause of any particularism whatever. I have, on the other hand, vigorously attacked whatever is un-Teutonic, but — as I hope — nowhere in an unchivalrous manner.

The fact that the [chapter on the entry of the Jews into western history](#) has been made so long may perhaps demand explanation. For the subject of this book, so diffuse a treatment would not have been indispensable; but the prominent position of the Jews in the nineteenth century, as also the great importance for the history of our time of the philo- and anti-semitic currents and controversies, made an answer to the question, “Who is the Jew?” absolutely imperative. Nowhere could I find a clear and exhaustive answer to this question, so I was compelled to seek and to give it myself. The essential point here is the question of religion; and so I have treated this very point at considerable length, not merely in the [fifth](#), but also in the [third](#) and in the [seventh](#) chapters. For I have become convinced that the usual treatment of the “Jewish question” is altogether and always superficial; the Jew is no enemy of Teutonic civilisation and culture; Herder may be right in his assertion that the Jew is always alien to us, and consequently we to him, and no one will deny that this is to the detriment of our work of culture; yet I think that we are inclined to under-estimate our own powers in this respect and, on the other hand, to exaggerate the importance of the

Jewish influence. Hand in hand with this goes the perfectly ridiculous and revolting tendency to make the Jew the general scapegoat for all the vices of our time. In reality the “Jewish peril“ lies much deeper; the Jew is not responsible for it; we have given rise to it ourselves and must overcome it ourselves. No souls thirst more after religion than the Slavs, the Celts and the Teutons: their history proves it; it is because of the lack of a true religion that

lxxix AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

our whole Teutonic culture is sick unto death (as I show in the [ninth chapter](#)), and this will mean its ruin if timely help does not come. We have stopped up the spring that welled up in our own hearts and made ourselves dependent upon the scanty, brackish water which the Bedouins of the desert draw from their wells. No people in the world is so beggarly-poor in religion as the Semites and their half-brothers the Jews; and we, who were chosen to develop the profoundest and sublimest religious conception of the world as the light, life and vitalising force of our whole culture, have with our own hands firmly tied up the veins of life and limp along like crippled Jewish slaves behind Jehovah's Ark of the Covenant! Hence my exhaustive treatment of the Jewish question: my object was to find a broad and strong foundation for so important a judgment.

[The second part](#) — the gradual rise of a new world — has in these “Foundations“ only one chapter devoted to it, “from the year 1200 to the year 1800.“ Here I found myself in a sphere which is pretty familiar even to the unlearned reader, and it would have been altogether superfluous to copy from histories of politics and of culture which are within the reach of all. My task was accordingly limited to shaping and bringing into clearer range than is usually the case the too abundant material which I could presume to be known — as material; and here again my one consideration was of course the nineteenth century, the subject of my work. This chapter stands on the border-line between the two parts, that now published and what is to follow; many things which in the preceding chapters could only be alluded to, not fully and systematically discussed, such for instance as the fundamental importance of Teutonicism for our new world and the value of our conceptions of progress and degeneration for the understanding of history, find complete treatment here; on the other hand, the short

lxxx AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

sketch of development in the various spheres of life brings us hurriedly to the nineteenth century, and the tabular statement concerning knowledge, civilisation and culture, and their various elements points to the work of comparison which forms the plan of the supplement and

gives occasion for many an instructive parallel: at the same moment as we see the Teuton blossom forth in his full strength, as though nothing had been denied him, and he were hurrying to a limitless goal, we behold also his limitations; and this is very important, for it is upon these last characteristics that his individuality depends.

In view of certain prejudices I shall probably have to justify myself for treating State and Church in this chapter as subordinate matters — or, more properly speaking, as phenomena among others, and not the most important. State and Church form henceforth, as it were, only the skeleton: the Church is an inner bone structure in which, as is usual, with advancing age an always stronger tendency to chronic ankylosis shows itself; the State develops more and more into the peripheric bone-cuirass, so well known in zoology, the so-called dermatoskeleton; its structure becomes always massier, it stretches over the “soft parts“ until at last in the nineteenth century it has grown to truly megalotheric dimensions and sets apart from the true course of life and, if I may say so, “ossifies“ an extremely large percentage of the effective powers of humanity as military and civil officials. This is not meant as criticism; the boneless and invertebrate animals have never, as is well known, played a great part in the world; it is besides far from my purpose to wish to moralise in this book; I wish merely to explain why in the second part I have not felt obliged to lay special stress upon the further development of Church and State. The impulse to their development had already been given in the thirteenth century, when nationalism

lxxxix AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

having prevailed over imperialism, the latter was scheming how to win back what was lost; nothing essentially new was added later; even the movements against the all too prevalent violation of individual freedom by Church and State had already begun to make themselves felt very forcibly and frequently. Church and State serve from now onwards, as I have said, as the skeleton — now and then suffering from fractures in arms and legs but nevertheless a firm skeleton — yet take comparatively little share in the gradual rise of a new world; henceforth they follow rather than lead. On the other hand, in all European countries in the most widely different spheres of free human activity there arises from about the year 1200 onwards a really recreative movement. The Church schism and the revolt against State decrees are in reality rather the mechanical side of this movement; they spring from the deeply felt need, experienced by newly awakening powers, of making room for themselves; the creative element, strictly speaking, has to be sought elsewhere. I have already indicated where, when I sought to justify my choice of the year 1200 as turning-point: the advance in things technical and industrial, the founding of commerce on a large scale on the thoroughly Teutonic basis of stainless uprightness, the rise of busy towns, the discovery of

the earth (as we may daringly call it), the study of nature which begins diffidently but soon extends its horizon over the whole cosmos, the sounding of the deepest depths of human thought, from Roger Bacon to Kant, the soaring of the spirit up to heaven, from Dante to Beethoven: it is in all this that we may recognise the rise of a new world.

THE CONTINUATION

With this study of the gradual rise of a new world, approximately from the year 1200 to the year 1800,

lxxxii AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

these "Foundations" come to a close. The detailed plan of the "Nineteenth Century" lies before me. In it I carefully avoid all artificial theorising and all attempts to find an immediate connection between the two parts. It is quite sufficient that the explanatory account of the first eighteen centuries has been already given even though frequent and express reference to it be not necessary, it will prove itself as the indispensable introduction; the supplement will then be devoted to drawing parallels and to the calculation of comparative values. Here I shall confine myself to considering one by one the most important phenomena of the century; the principal features of political, religious and social organisation, the course of development of the technical arts, the progress of natural science and the humanities, and, lastly, the history of the human mind as a thinking and creative power; everywhere, of course, only the principal currents will be emphasised and nothing but the highest achievements mentioned.

The consideration of these points is led up to by an introductory chapter on the "New Forces" which have asserted themselves in this century and have given to it its characteristic physiognomy, but which could not be treated adequately within the limits of one of the general chapters. The press, for instance, is at the same time a political and a social power of the very first rank; its stupendous development in the nineteenth century it owes primarily to industry and art. I do not refer so much to the production of newspapers by timesaving machinery, &c., as to telegraphy, which supplies the papers with news, and to railways, which spread printed matter everywhere. The press is the most powerful ally of capitalism; on art, philosophy and science it cannot really exercise a distinct determining influence, but even here it can hasten or delay, and so exercise in a high degree a formative influence upon

lxxxiii AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

the age. This is a power unknown to previous centuries. In the same way technical developments, the invention and perfection of the railway and

the steamboat, as also of the electric telegraph, have exercised no small influence upon all spheres of human activity and wrought a great change in the face of our earth and in the conditions of life upon it: quite direct is the influence on strategy and consequently upon politics, as well as on trade and industry, while science and even art have also been indirectly affected: the astronomers of all lands can with comparative ease betake themselves to the North Cape or the Fiji Islands to observe a total eclipse of the sun, and the German festival plays in Bayreuth have, towards the end of the century, thanks to the railway and the steamboat, become a living centre of dramatic art for the whole world. Among these forces I likewise reckon the emancipation of the Jews. Like every power that has newly dropped its fetters, like the press and quick transit, this sudden inroad of the Jews upon the life of the European races, who mould the history of the world, has certainly not brought good alone in its train; the so-called Classical Renaissance was after all merely a new birth of ideas, the Jewish Renaissance is the resurrection of a Lazarus long considered dead, who introduces into the Teutonic world the customs and modes of thought of the Oriental, and who at the same time seems to receive a new lease of life thereby, like the vine-pest which, after leading in America the humble life of an innocent little beetle, was introduced into Europe and suddenly attained to a world-wide fame of serious import. We have, however, reason to hope and believe that the Jews, like the Americans, have brought us not only a new pest but also a new vine. Certain it is that they have left a peculiar impress upon our time, and that the "new world" which is arising will require a very great exercise of its strength

lxxxiv AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

for the work of assimilating this fragment of the "old world." There are still other "new forces" which will have to be discussed in their proper place. The founding of modern chemistry, for example, is the starting-point of a new natural science; and the perfecting of a new artistic language by Beethoven is beyond doubt one of the most pregnant achievements in the sphere of art since the days of Homer; it gave men a new organ of speech, that is to say, a new power.

The supplement is intended, as I have said, to furnish a comparison between the "Foundations" and the book which is to follow. This comparison I shall carry out point by point in several chapters, using the scheme of the first part; this method will, I think, be found to lead to many suggestive discoveries and interesting distinctions. Besides, it paves the way splendidly for the somewhat bold but indispensable glance into the future, without which our conception would not acquire complete plasticity; it is only in this way that we can hope to gain a bird's-eye view of the nineteenth century and so be able to judge it with perfect objectivity; this will be the end of my task.

Such then is the extremely simple and unartificial plan of the

continuation. It is a plan which, perhaps, I may not live to carry out, yet I am obliged to mention it here, as it has to no small degree influenced the form of the present book.

ANONYMOUS FORCES

In this general introduction I must also discuss briefly some specially important points, so that later we may not be detained by out-of-place theoretical discussions.

Almost all men are by nature “hero-worshippers“; and no valid objection can be urged against this healthy instinct. Simplification is a necessity of the human

lxxxv AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

mind; we find ourselves involuntarily setting up a single name in place of the many names representative of a movement; further, the personality is something given, individual, definite, while everything that lies beyond is an abstraction and an ever-varying circle of ideas.

We might therefore put together the history of a century by a mere list of names: it seems to me, however, that a different procedure is necessary to bring out what is really essential. For it is remarkable how slightly the separate individualities stand out in relief from each other. Men form inside their racial individualities an atomic but nevertheless very homogeneous mass. If a great spirit were to lean out from among the stars and, bending in contemplation over our earth, were capable of seeing not only our bodies but also our souls, the human population of any part of the world would certainly appear to him as uniform as an ant-heap does to us: he would of course distinguish warriors, workers, idlers and monarchs, he would notice that the one runs hither, the other thither, but on the whole his impression would be that all individuals obey, and must obey, a common impersonal impulse. Extremely narrow limits are set to the influence as well as to the arbitrariness of the great personality. All great and lasting revolutions in the life of society have taken place “blindly.“ A remarkable personality, as, for example, that of Napoleon, can lead us astray on this point, and yet even his, when closely examined, appears as a blindly working Fate. Its possibility is explained by previous events: had there been no Richelieu, no Louis XIV., no Louis XV., no Voltaire, no Rousseau, no French Revolution — there would have been no Napoleon! How closely linked, moreover, is the life-achievement of such a man with the national character of the whole people, with its virtues and its failings: without a French people, no Napoleon! The activity of this commander

lxxxvi AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

is directed in particular towards the outside world, and here again we must say: but for the irresolution of Friedrich Wilhelm III., but for the want of principle in the House of Habsburg, but for the troubles in Spain, but for the criminal treatment of Poland just previously, no Napoleon had been possible! And if, in order to be quite clear on this point, we consult the biographies and correspondence of Napoleon, to see what were his aims and aspirations, we shall find that all of them remained unrealised, and that he sank back into the indistinguishable homogeneous mass, as clouds dissipate after a storm, as soon as the community rose to oppose the predominance of individual will. On the other hand, the radical change of our whole economic conditions of life, which no power on earth could prevent, the passing of a considerable portion of the property of nations into new hands, and further, the thorough remodelling of the relations of all parts of the earth, and so of all men, to one another, which we read of in the history of the world, took place in the course of the nineteenth century as the result of a series of technical discoveries in the sphere of quick transit and of industry, the importance of which no one even suspected. We need only read in this connection the masterly exposition in the fifth volume of Treitschke's *Deutsche Geschichte*. The depreciation of landed property, the progressive impoverishment of the peasant, the advance of industry, the rise of an incalculable army of industrial proletarians, and consequently of a new form of Socialism, a radical change of all political conditions: all this is a result of changed conditions of traffic and has been brought about, if I may so express it, anonymously, like the building of an ant's nest, in which each ant only sees the individual grains which it laboriously drags to the heap. The same, however, is true of ideas: they hold man in a tyrannical grasp, they clutch his mind as a bird of prey its quarry and no one can resist them; so long as any particular

lxxxvii AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

conception is dominant, nothing can be accomplished outside the sphere of its magic influence; whoever cannot feel as it dictates is condemned to sterility, however talented he may be. This we have seen in the second half of the nineteenth century in connection with Darwin's theory of evolution. This idea had already begun to appear in the eighteenth century, as a natural reaction from the old theory of the immutability of species, which Linnaeus had brought to formal perfection. In Herder, Kant and Goethe we meet with the idea of evolution in characteristic colouring; it is the revolt of great minds against dogma: in the case of the first, because he, following the course of Teutonic philosophy, endeavoured to find in the development of the idea "nature" an entity embracing man; in the case of the second, because he as metaphysician and moralist could not bear to lose the conception of perfectibility, while the third, with the eye of the poet, discovered on all sides phenomena

which seemed to him to point to a primary relationship between all living organisms, and feared lest his discovery should evaporate into abstract nothingness if this relationship were not viewed as resting upon direct descent. This is how such thoughts arise. In minds of such phenomenal breadth as Goethe's, Herder's and Kant's there is room for very different conceptions side by side; they are to be compared with Spinoza's God, whose one substance manifests itself simultaneously in various forms; in their ideas on metamorphosis, affinities and development, I can find nothing contrary to other views, and I believe that they would have rejected our present dogma of evolution, as they did that of immutability.

* I return to this point in another place. The overwhelming

* Compare in this connection Kant's extremely complete exposition which forms the concluding portion of the division "On the regulative use of ideas of pure reason" in his *Critique of pure Reason*. The great thinker here points to the fact that the idea of a "continuous gradation of creatures" did not and cannot originate from observation

lxxxviii AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

majority of men with their display of ant-like activity are quite incapable of viewing things in such an original manner; productive power can be generated only by simple healthy specialisation. A manifestly unsound system like that of Darwin exercises a much more powerful influence than the deepest speculations, just because of its "practicability." And so we have seen the idea of evolution develop itself till it spread from biology and geology to all spheres of thought and investigation, and, intoxicated by its success, exercised such a tyranny that any one who did not swear by it was to be looked upon as a simpleton. I am not here concerned with the philosophy of all these phenomena; I have no doubt that the spirit of man as a whole expresses itself appropriately. I may, however, appropriate Goethe's remark, "what especially impresses me is the people, a great mass, a necessary inevitable existence" and thus establish and explain my conviction, that great men are in reality the flower of history and not its roots. And so I consider it proper to portray a century not so much by an enumeration of its leading men as by an emphasising of the anonymous currents, from which it has derived its peculiar and characteristic stamp in the various centres of social, industrial and scientific life.

but from an interest of reason. "The steps of such a ladder, as experience can supply them to us, are far, too far, removed from one another, and what we suppose to be little distinctions are commonly in nature itself such wide clefts that on such observations as intentions of nature we can lay no stress whatever (especially when things are so manifold, since it must always be easy to find certain resemblances and approximations)." In his criticism of Herder he reproaches the hypothesis of evolution with being one of those ideas "in the case of which one cannot think anything at all." Kant, whom even Haeckel calls the most important predecessor of Darwin, had thus gone so far as to supply the antidote to the dogmatic abuse of such a hypothesis.

GENIUS

There is, however, one exception. When we are dealing not with the mere power of observation, of comparison, of calculation, or with the inventive, industrial or intellectual activity struggling for existence, but with a purely creative activity, then Personality is everything. The history of art and philosophy is the history of individual men, the history of the really creative men of genius. Here nothing else counts. Whatever outside this is achieved within the sphere of philosophy — and much of importance is so achieved — belongs to science; in art it belongs to mechanical art, that is, to industry.

I lay all the more stress on this point, because at the present day regrettable confusion prevails with regard to it. The idea and consequently the word “Genius“ originated in the eighteenth century; they arose from the necessity of possessing a particular defining expression for “specifically creative minds.“ No less a thinker than Kant calls our attention to the fact that “the greatest discoverer in the sphere of science differs only in degree from the ordinary man, the Genius, on the other hand, differs specifically.“ This remark of Kant's is beyond doubt just, but we make the one reservation, that of extending — as we cannot help doing — the term “work of genius“ to every creation, in which the imagination plays a formative and predominant part, and in this connection the philosophic genius deserves the same place as the poetic or the plastic. Here let me say that I give to the word philosophy its old, wide signification, which embraced not only the abstract philosophy of reason, but natural philosophy, the philosophy of religion, and all thought which rises to the dignity of a philosophy of life. If the word genius is to retain a sense, we must employ it only of men who have everlastingly enriched our intellectual store by powerful

creations of their imagination, but it must be applicable to all such without exception. Not only the *Iliad* and *Prometheus Bound*, the *Adorations of the Cross* and *Hamlet*, but also Plato's *World of Ideas* and Democritus' *World of Atoms*, the Chandogya's *tat-tvam-asi* and Copernicus' *System of the Heavens* are works of immortal genius; for just as indestructible as matter and power are the flashes of light which radiate from the brains of men endowed with creative power; they never cease to reflect for each other the generations and the nations, and if they sometimes pale for a time, they shine out brightly once more when they strike a creative eye. In recent years it has been discovered that in the depths of the ocean, to which the sunlight does not penetrate, there

are fishes which light up this world of darkness electrically; even thus is the dark night of human knowledge lighted up by the torch of genius. Goethe lit a torch with his *Faust*, Kant another with his conception of the transcendental ideality of time and space: both were creators of great imaginative power, both were men of genius. The scholastic strife about the Königsberg thinker, the battles between Kantians and anti-Kantians seem to me of just as much moment as the work of the zealous *Faust* critics: what is the use of logical hair-splitting here? What in such a case is the meaning of the phrase, “to be right“? Blessed are they who have eyes to see and ears to hear! If the study of the stone, the moss, the microscopic infusorium fills us with wonder and admiration, with what reverence must we look up to the greatest phenomenon that nature presents to us — Genius!

GENERALISATIONS

I must here add a remark of some importance. Though we are to concern ourselves particularly with general

xci AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

tendencies, not with events and personages, still the danger of too wide generalisations must not be overlooked. We are but too prone to sum up prematurely. It is this tendency that makes men so often hang, as it were, a ticket round the neck of the nineteenth century, even though they must know that it is utterly impossible by means of a single word to be just both to ourselves and to the past. A fixed idea of this kind is quite sufficient to render a clear comprehension of historical development impossible.

Quite commonly, for example, the nineteenth century is called the “century of natural science.“ When we remember what the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries have achieved in this very sphere, we must surely hesitate before bestowing any such title on the nineteenth. We have but continued to build and by our industry have discovered much, but whether we can point to a Copernicus and a Galileo, to a Kepler and a Newton, to a Lavoisier and a Bichat * appears to me at least doubtful. Cuvier's activity attains indeed to the dignity of philosophical importance, and the powers of observation and invention of men like Bunsen (the chemist) and Pasteur come remarkably near genius; of imperishable fame are men like Louis Agassiz, Michael Faraday, Julius Robert Mayer, Heinrich Hertz and perhaps some few others; but we must at least admit that their achievements do not surpass those of their predecessors. Some years ago a University teacher of the medical faculty with a fine reputation for theoretical as well as practical work remarked to me, “In the case of us scholars nowadays it is not so much a question of brain convolutions as of perseverance.“ It

would indeed be false modesty, and an emphasising of the unimportant, to designate the nineteenth century the “century of perseverance.” All the more so, since the

* He died in 1802.

xcii AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

designation of “the century of the rolling wheel“ would certainly be quite as justifiable for an epoch which has produced the railway and the bicycle. Better, certainly, would be the general term “the century of science,” by which would be understood that the spirit of accurate investigation which received its first encouragement from Roger Bacon had put all departments of study under its yoke. This spirit, however, if the matter be fully considered, will be found to have brought about less surprising results in the sphere of natural science, in which since earliest times the exact observation of the heavenly bodies formed the basis of all knowledge, than in other spheres, in which arbitrary methods had hitherto been the order of the day. Perhaps it would be a true and apt characterisation of the nineteenth century — though at the same time an unfamiliar one to most educated people — to style it the “century of philology.” First called into being towards the end of the eighteenth century by such men as Jones, Anquetil du Perron, the brothers Schlegel and Grimm, Karadžić and others, comparative philology has in the course of a single century made quite extraordinary progress. To establish the organism and the history of language means not merely to throw light upon anthropology, ethnology and history, but particularly to strengthen human minds for new achievements. And while the philology of the nineteenth century thus laboured for the future, it unearthed buried treasures of the past, which are among the most valuable possessions of mankind. It is not necessary to feel sympathy for the pseudo-Buddhistical sport of half-educated idlers in order to recognise clearly that the discovery of the divine doctrine of understanding of the ancient Indians is one of the greatest achievements of the nineteenth century, destined to exercise an enduring influence upon distant ages. To this has been added the knowledge of old Teutonic poetry and mythology. Every-

xciii AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

thing that tends to strengthen genuine individuality is a real safety anchor. The brilliant series of Teutonic and Indian scholars has, half unconsciously, accomplished a great work at the right moment; now we too possess our “holy books,” and what they teach is more beautiful and nobler than what the Old Testament sets forth. The belief in our strength, which the history of the nineteenth century gives us, has been

intensified to an incalculable extent by this discovery of our independent capacity for much that is of the highest, and to which our relation was hitherto one of subjection: in particular the myth of the peculiar aptitude of the Jew for religion is finally exploded; for this later generations will owe a debt of gratitude to the nineteenth century. This is one of the greatest and most far-reaching achievements of our time, and so the title "the century of philology" would be in a certain sense justified. In this connection we have mentioned another of the characteristic phenomena of the nineteenth century. Ranke had prophesied that our century would be a century of nationality; that was a correct political prognostic, for never before have the nations stood opposed to each other so clearly and definitely as antagonistic unities. It has, however, also become a century of races, and that indeed is in the first instance a necessary and direct consequence of science and scientific thinking. I have already said at the beginning of this introduction that science does not unite but dissects. That statement has not contradicted itself here. Scientific anatomy has furnished such conclusive proofs of the existence of physical characteristics distinguishing the races from each other that they can no longer be denied; scientific philology has discovered between the various languages fundamental differences which cannot be bridged over; the scientific study of history in its various branches has brought about similar results, especially by the

xciv AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

exact determination of the religious history of each race, in which only the most general of general ideas can raise the illusion of similarity, while the further development has always followed and still follows definite, sharply divergent lines. The so-called unity of the human race is indeed still honoured as a hypothesis, but only as a personal, subjective conviction lacking every material foundation. The ideas of the eighteenth century with regard to the brotherhood of nations were certainly very noble but purely sentimental in their origin; and in contrast to these ideas to which the Socialists still cling, limping on like reserves in the battle, stern reality has gradually asserted itself as the necessary result of the events and investigations of our time. There are many other titles for which much might be said: Rousseau had already spoken prophetically of a "siècle des révolutions," others speak of a century of Jewish emancipation, century of electricity, century of national armies, century of colonies, century of music, century of advertisement, century of the proclamation of infallibility. Lately I found the nineteenth century described in an English book as *the religious century*, and could not quite dispute the statement; for Beer, the author of the *Geschichte des Welthandels*, the nineteenth century is the "economic" century, whereas Professor Paulsen in his *Geschichte des gelehrten Unterrichts* (2 Aufl. ii. 206) calls it the *saeculum historicum* in contrast to the preceding

saeculum philosophicum, and Goethe's expression "ein aberweises Jahrhundert" could be applied quite as well to the nineteenth century as to the eighteenth. No such generalisation possesses any real value.

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

These remarks bring me to the close of this general introduction. But before I write the last line I should

xcv AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

like to place myself, according to an old custom, under the protection of highly honoured men.

Lessing writes in his *Briefe, die neueste Litteratur betreffend*, that "history should not trouble with unimportant facts, should not burden the memory, but enlighten the understanding." Taken generally, this is saying too much. But in the case of a book which is directed not to historians but to the educated layman, the remark is perfectly justified. To enlighten the understanding, not to teach in the real sense of the word, but to suggest, to stimulate thoughts and conclusions, that is my aim.

Goethe differs somewhat from Lessing in his conception of the task of the historian. He says, "The best thing that we get from history is the enthusiasm it arouses." These words, too, I have kept in mind in the course of my work, for I am convinced that understanding, however well enlightened, avails little, if not united to enthusiasm. The understanding is the machine; the more perfect every detail in it, the more neatly every part fits into the other, the more efficient will it be, but only potentially, for, in order to be driven, it requires the motive-power, and the motive-power is enthusiasm. Perhaps, however, it is difficult to take Goethe's hint and wax enthusiastic over the nineteenth century, simply for this reason, that self-love is so contemptible; we wish to test ourselves strictly, and tend to under-estimate rather than over-estimate; may future ages judge us more leniently. I find it difficult to grow enthusiastic because the material element is so predominant in this century. Just as our battles have generally been won not by the personal superiority of individuals but by the number of the soldiers, or to put it more simply by the amount of food for powder, so in the very same way have treasures in gold and knowledge and discoveries been piled up. Things have increased in numbers and in bulk, men

xcvi AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

have collected but not sifted; such, at any rate, has been the general tendency. The nineteenth century is essentially a century of accumulation, an age of transition and of the provisional; in other

respects it is neither fish nor flesh; it dangles between empiricism and spiritism, between *liberalismus vulgaris*, as it has been wittily called, and the impotent efforts of senile conservatism, between autocracy and anarchism, doctrines of infallibility and the most stupid materialism, worship of the Jew and anti-Semitism, the rule of the millionaire and proletarian government. Not ideas, but material gains, are the characteristic feature of the nineteenth century. The great thoughts that have cropped up here and there, the mighty creations of art, from *Faust*, Part II., to *Parsifal*, have brought undying fame to the German people, but they are for future times. After the great social revolutions and the momentous intellectual achievements (at the close of the eighteenth and the early dawn of the nineteenth century) material for further development had again to be collected. And so this too great preoccupation with the material banished the beautiful almost entirely from life; at the present moment there exists perhaps no savage, at least no half-civilised people, which does not to my mind possess more beauty in its surroundings and more harmony in its existence as a whole than the great mass of so-called civilised Europeans. It is therefore, I think, necessary to be moderate in our enthusiastic admiration for the nineteenth century. On the other hand it is easy to feel the enthusiasm spoken of by Goethe, as soon as our glance rests not upon the one century alone but embraces all that “new world“ which has been slowly unfolding for centuries. Certainly the commonly accepted idea of “progress“ has by no means a sound philosophical foundation; under this flag sail almost all the refuse wares of our time; Goethe, who never tires of pointing to enthusiasm as the motive element

xcvii AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

in our nature, declares his conviction nevertheless to be that “Men become wiser and more discerning, but not better, happier and more vigorous, or if they do become so, it is only for a time.“ * But what could be more elevating than consciously to work towards such an epoch, in which, if only for a time, mankind will be better, happier and more vigorous? And when we regard the nineteenth century not as something isolated but as part of a much greater period of time, we discover soon that out of the barbarism which followed upon the downfall of the old world, and out of the wild ferment called forth by the shock of opposing forces, some centuries ago a perfectly new organisation of human society began to develop, and that our world of to-day — far from being the summit of this evolution — simply represents a transition stage, a “middle point“ in the long and weary journey. If the nineteenth century were really a summit, then the pessimistic view of life would be the only justifiable one: to see, after all the great achievements in the intellectual and material spheres, bestial wickedness still so widespread, and misery increased a thousandfold, could cause us only to repeat Jean Jacques

Rousseau's prayer: "Almighty God, deliver us from the sciences and the pernicious arts of our fathers! Grant us ignorance, innocence and poverty once more as the only things which can bring happiness and which are of value in Thine eyes!" If, however, as I have said, we see in the nineteenth century a stage in the journey, if we do not let ourselves be blinded by visions of "golden ages," or by delusions of the future and the past, if we do not allow ourselves to be led astray in our sound judgment by Utopian conceptions of a gradual improvement of mankind as a whole, and of political machinery working ideally, then we are justified in the hope and belief that we Teutonic peoples, and the

* Eckermann: October 23, 1828.

xcviii AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

peoples under our influence, are advancing towards a new harmonious culture, incomparably more beautiful than any of which history has to tell, a culture in which men should really be "better and happier" than they are at present. It may be that the tendency of modern education to direct the glance so unceasingly to the past is regrettable, but it has the advantage that one does not require to be a Schiller to feel with him that "no single modern man can vie with the individual Athenian for the prize of manhood." * For that reason we now direct our glance to the future, to that future the character of which is beginning to dawn upon us, as we are gradually becoming aware of the real significance of the present era which embraces the last seven hundred years. We will vie with the Athenian. We will form a world in which beauty and harmony of existence do not, as in their case, depend upon the employment of slaves, upon eunuchs, and the seclusion of women! We may confidently hope to do so, for we see this world slowly and with difficulty rising up around our brief span of life. And the fact that it does so unconsciously does not matter; even the half-fabulous Phoenician historian Sanchuniathon says in the first part of his first book, when speaking of the creation of the world: "Things themselves, however, knew nothing of their own origin." The same holds true to-day; history endlessly illustrates Mephisto's words, "Du glaubst zu schieben und du wirst geschoben." When, therefore, we look back at the nineteenth century, which certainly was driven more than it drove, and in most things deviated to an almost ridiculous extent from the paths it had originally intended to pursue, we cannot help feeling a thrill of honest admiration and almost of enthusiasm. In this century

* This famous sentence is only conditionally true; I have submitted it to a thorough criticism in the last chapter, to which I here refer in order to avoid misconceptions.

xcix AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

an enormous amount of work has been done, and that is the foundation of all “growing better and happier”; this was the morality of our age, if I may so express myself. And while the workshop of great creative ideas was seemingly unproductive, the methods of work were perfected in a manner hitherto undreamt of.

The nineteenth century is the triumph of method. In this more than in any political organisation we see a victory of the democratic principle. Men as a whole rose hereby a step higher, and became more efficient. In former centuries only men of genius, later only highly gifted men could accomplish anything; now, thanks to method, every one can do so. Compulsory education, followed by the imperative struggle for existence, has provided thousands to-day with the “method“ to enable them, without any special gift, to take part in the common work of the human race as technicians, industrials, natural investigators, philologists, historians, mathematicians, psychologists, &c. The mastery of so colossal a material in so short a space of time would otherwise be quite unthinkable. Just consider what was understood by “philology“ a hundred years ago! Where was there such a thing as true “historical investigation“? We meet with exactly the same spirit in all spheres which lie far remote from science: the national armies are the most universal and simple application of method and the Hohenzollerns are in so far the democrats of the nineteenth century that they set the fashion for others: method in arm and leg movement, but at the same time method in education of the will, of obedience, of duty, of responsibility. Skill and conscientiousness have in consequence — unfortunately not everywhere, but nevertheless in many spheres — decidedly increased: we make greater demands on ourselves and on others than we did of old; in a sense a general technical improvement has taken place — an improvement

c AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

which extends even to men's habits of thinking. This amelioration of conditions can hardly fail to have a bearing upon morality: the abolition of human slavery outside Europe — at least in the officially recognised sense of the word — and the beginning of a movement to protect animal slaves are omens of great significance.

And so I believe that in spite of all doubts a just and loving contemplation of the nineteenth century must both “enlighten the understanding“ and “awaken enthusiasm.“ To begin with, we consider only its “Foundations,“ that is, the “sum of all that has gone before“ — that Past out of which the nineteenth century has laboriously but successfully extricated itself.

FOUNDATIONS OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

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1

FIRST PART

THE ORIGINS

Und keine Zeit und keine Macht zerstückelt
Geprägte Form, die lebend sich entwickelt.

GOETHE.

2

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3

DIVISION I

THE LEGACY OF THE ANCIENT WORLD

Das Edelste, was wir besitzen, haben wir nicht von uns selbst; unser Verstand mit seinen Kräften, die Form, in welcher wir denken, handeln und sind, ist auf uns gleichsam herabgeerbet. — HERDER.

INTRODUCTORY

HISTORICAL PRINCIPLES

“THE WORLD,” says Dr. Martin Luther, “is ruled by God through a few heroes and pre-eminent persons.” The mightiest of these ruling heroes are the princes of intellect, men who without sanction of diplomacy or force of arms, without the constraining power of law and police, exercise a defining and transforming influence upon the thought and feeling of many generations, men who may be said to be all the more powerful the less power they have, but who seldom, perhaps never, ascend their throne during their lifetime; their sway lasts long, but begins late, often very late, especially when we leave out of account the influence which they exercise upon individuals and consider the moment when that which filled their life begins to affect and mould the life of whole peoples. More than two centuries elapsed before

4 HISTORICAL PRINCIPLES

the new conception of the Cosmos, which we owe to Copernicus, and which was bound to revolutionise all human thought from its foundations, became common property. Men as important among his contemporaries as Luther said of Copernicus that he was “a fool who turned upside down the whole art of astronomia.” Although his system of the world was already taught in antiquity; although the works of his direct predecessors, Regiomontanus and others, had prepared everything that made the last discovery inevitable, so that one might safely say that the Copernican system was only awaiting for its completion the spark of inspiration in the brain of the “most pre-eminent”; although it was here not a question of baffling problems in metaphysics and morals, but of a simple and, moreover, a demonstrable conception; although no material interest whatever was threatened by the new doctrine, much time was needed for this conception, which was in so many important respects of a revolutionary character, to travel from the brain of its author into that of a few other privileged men, and, ever spreading, finally take possession of the whole of mankind. It is well known how Voltaire in the first half of the eighteenth century fought for the recognition of the great triad — Copernicus, Kepler, Newton — but as late as the year 1779 the worthy Georg Christoph Lichtenberg felt himself compelled to undertake a campaign in the *Göttingisches Taschenbuch*, against the “Tychonians,” and it was not till the year of grace one thousand eight hundred and twenty-two that the Congregation of the Index authorised the printing of books which teach that the earth moves!

I make this statement in advance that the reader may comprehend in what sense the year 1 is here chosen as the starting-point of our age. It is no random date, chosen for reasons of convenience, or because the outward course of political events had stamped this year as

5 HISTORICAL PRINCIPLES

particularly noteworthy; it has been adopted because the simplest logic compels us to trace a new force back to its origin. It is a matter of “history“ how slowly or how quickly it grows into an effective power; the actual life of the hero is, and cannot but be, the living source of all subsequent developments.

The birth of Jesus Christ is the most important date in the whole history of mankind. * No battle, no dynastic change, no natural phenomenon, no discovery possesses an importance that could bear comparison with the short earthly life of the Galilean; almost two thousand years of history prove it, and even yet we have hardly crossed the threshold of Christianity. For profoundly intrinsic reasons we are justified in calling that year the “first year,“ and in reckoning our time from it. In a certain sense we might truly say that “history“ in the real sense of the term only begins with the birth of Christ. The peoples that have not yet adopted Christianity — the Chinese, the Indians, the Turks and others — have all so far no true history; all they have is, on the one hand, a chronicle of ruling dynasties, butcheries and the like: on the other the uneventful, humble existence of countless millions living a life of bestial happiness, who disappear in the night of ages leaving no trace behind; whether the kingdom of the Pharaohs was founded in the year 3285 or in the year 32850 is in itself of no consequence; to know Egypt under one Rameses is the same as to know it under all fifteen Ramesides. And so it is with the other pre-Christian nations (with the exception of those three — of which I shall speak presently — that stand in organic relation to our Christian epoch): their culture, their art, their religion, in short their condition may interest us, achievements of their intellect or their

* The fact that this birth did not take place in the year 1, but in all probability some years before, is for us here of no special consequence.

6 HISTORICAL PRINCIPLES

industry may even have become valuable parts of our own life, as is exemplified by Indian thought, Babylonian science and Chinese methods; their history, however, purely as such, lacks moral greatness, in other words, that force which rouses the individual man to consciousness of his individuality in contrast to the surrounding world and then — like the ebb and flow of the tide— makes him employ the world, which he has discovered in his own breast, to shape that which is without it. The

Aryan Indian, for example, though he unquestionably possesses the greatest talent for metaphysics of any people that ever lived, and is in this respect far superior to all peoples of to-day, does not advance beyond inner enlightenment: he does not shape; he is neither artist nor reformer, he is content to live calmly and to die redeemed — he has no history. No more has his opposite, the Chinaman — that unique representative of Positivism and Collectivism; what our historical works record as his “history“ is nothing more than an enumeration of the various robber bands, by which the patient, shrewd and soulless people, without sacrificing an iota of its individuality, has allowed itself to be ruled: such enumerations are simply “criminal statistics,“ not history, at least not for us: we cannot really judge actions which awaken no echo in our breast.

Let me give an example. While these lines are being written (1897), the civilised world is clamorously indignant with Turkey; the European Powers are being compelled by the voice of public opinion to intervene for the protection of the Armenians and Cretans; the final destruction of the Turkish power seems now only a question of time. This is certainly justified; it was bound to come to this; nevertheless it is a fact that Turkey is the last little corner of Europe in which a whole people lives in undisturbed prosperity and happiness. It knows nothing of social questions, of the bitter

7 HISTORICAL PRINCIPLES

struggle for existence and other such things; great fortunes are unknown and pauperism is literally non-existent; all form a single harmonious family, and no one strives after wealth at the expense of his neighbour. I am not simply repeating what I have read in newspapers and books, I am testifying to what I have seen with my own eyes. If the Mohammedan had not practised tolerance at a time when this idea was unknown to the rest of Europe, there would now be idyllic peace in the Balkan States and in Asia Minor. Here it is the Christian who throws in the leaven of discord; and with the cruelty of a ruthlessly reacting power of nature, the otherwise humane Moslem rises and destroys the disturber of his peace. In fact, the Christian likes neither the wise fatalism of the Mohammedan nor the prudent indifferentism of the Chinese. “I come not to bring peace, but a sword,“ Christ himself said. The Christian idea can, in a certain sense, be said to be positively anti-social. Now that the Christian has become conscious of a personal dignity otherwise never dreamt of, he is no longer satisfied with the simple animal instinct of living with others; the happiness of the bees and the ants has now no charm for him. If Christianity be curtly characterised as the religion of love, its importance for the history of mankind is but superficially touched upon. The

essential thing is rather this: by Christianity each individual has received an inestimable, hitherto unanticipated value — even the “hairs on his head are all numbered by God“ (*Matthew* x. 30); his outward lot does not correspond to this inner worth; and thus it is that life has become tragic, and only by tragedy does history receive a purely human purport. For no event is in itself historically tragic; it is only rendered tragic by the mind of those who experience it; otherwise what affects mankind remains as sublimely indifferent as all other natural phenomena. I shall return soon to

8 HISTORICAL PRINCIPLES

the Christian idea. My purpose here has been merely to indicate, first, how deeply and manifestly Christianity revolutionises human feeling and action, of which we still have living proofs before our very eyes; * secondly, in what sense the non-Christian peoples have no true history, but merely annals.

HELLAS, ROME, JUDEA

History, in the higher sense of the word, means only that past which still lives actively in the consciousness of man and helps to mould him. In pre-Christian times, therefore, it is only when it concerns peoples which are hastening towards the moral regeneration known as Christianity that history acquires an interest at once scientific and universally human. Hellas, Rome, Judea alone of the peoples of antiquity are historically important for the living consciousness of the men of the nineteenth century.

Every inch of Hellenic soil is sacred to us, and rightly so. On the other side of the strait, in Asia, not even the men had or yet have a personality; here, in Hellas, every river, every stone is animate and individualised, dumb nature awakes to self-consciousness. And the men by whom this miracle was performed stand before us, from the half-fabulous times of the Trojan War on to the supremacy of Rome, each one with his own incomparable physiognomy: heroes, rulers, warriors, thinkers, poets, sculptors. Here man was born: man capable of becoming a Christian. Rome presents in many respects the most glaring contrast to Greece; it is not only geographically but also mentally more distant from Asia, that is, from Semitic, Babylonian and

* It is altogether erroneous to think one must attribute such effects not to the awakened soul-life, but merely to race; the Bosniac of pure Servian descent and the

Macedonian of Grecian stock are, as Mohammedans, just as fatalistic and anti-individualistic in their mode of thinking as any Osmanli whatever.

9 HISTORICAL PRINCIPLES

Egyptian influences; it is not so bright and easily satisfied, not so flighty. Possession is the ambition of the people as it is of the individual. The Roman mind turns from the sublimely intuitive in art and philosophy to the intellectual work of organisation. In Greece a single Solon, a single Lycurgus in a way created fundamental laws of State as dilettanti, from purely individual conviction of what was right, while later a whole people of glib amateurs forcibly took the supreme power into their own hands; in Rome there grew up a long-lived community of sober, serious legislators, and while the outward horizon — the Roman Empire and its interests — continually widened, the horizon of internal interests grew most perilously narrower. Morally, however, Rome stands in many respects higher than Greece: the Greek has from the earliest times been what he is to-day, disloyal, unpatriotic, selfish; self-restraint was foreign to him and so he has never been able either to control others or to submit with dignified pride to being controlled. On the other hand, the growth and the longevity of the Roman state point to the shrewd, strong, conscious political spirit of the citizens. The family and the law that protects it are the creations of Rome. And indeed this is true of the family in the narrower sense of an institution laying the foundation of every higher morality, as well as in the extended sense of a power which unites the whole of the citizens into one firm state capable of self-defence; only from the family could a permanent state arise, only through the state could that which to-day we call civilisation become a principle of society capable of development. All the states of Europe are grafts on the Roman stem. And however frequently of old, as to-day, might prevailed over right, the conception of right is our inheritance from the Roman. Meanwhile, just as the day is followed by the night (the sacred night, which reveals to our eye the secret of other

10 HISTORICAL PRINCIPLES

worlds, worlds above us in the firmament of heaven and worlds within ourselves, in the depths of our silent hearts), so the glorious positive work of the Greeks and Romans demanded a negative completion; and this was provided by Israel. To enable us to see the stars, the light of day must be extinguished; in order to become truly great, to attain that tragic greatness which, as I have said, alone gives vivid purport to history, man

had to become conscious not only of his strength but also of his weakness. It was only by clear recognition and unsparing accentuation of the triviality of all human action, the pitiableness of reason in its heavenward flight, the general baseness of human feelings and political motives, that thought was able to take its stand upon a totally new foundation, from which it was to discover in the heart of man capacities and talents, that guided it to the knowledge of something that was sublimer than all else; Greeks and Romans would never by their methods have reached this sublimest goal; it would never have occurred to them to attach so great importance to the life of the single individual. If we contemplate the outward history of the people of Israel, it certainly offers at the first glance little that is attractive; with the exception of some few pleasing features, all the meanness of which men are capable seems concentrated in this one small nation; not that the Jews were essentially baser than other men, but the grinning mask of vice stares at us from out their history in unveiled nakedness; in their case no great political sense excuses injustice, no art, no philosophy reconciles us to the horrors of the struggle for existence. Here it was that the negation of the things of this world arose, and with it the vague idea of a higher extramundane vocation of mankind. Here men of the people ventured to brand the princes of this earth as “companions of thieves,” and to cry out upon the rich, “Woe unto

11 HISTORICAL PRINCIPLES

them that join house to house, that lay field to field till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth.” That was a different conception of right from that of the Romans, to whom nothing seemed more sacred than property. But the curse extended not merely to the mighty, but also to “them that are wise in their own eyes and prudent in their own sight,” and likewise to the joyous heroes, who “drink wine,” and have chosen the world as their sporting place. So speaks an Isaiah already in the eighth century before the birth of Christ. * But this first outcry against what is radically evil in man and in human society rings louder and louder in the course of the following centuries from the soul of this strange people: it grows in earnestness, until Jeremiah cries out, “Woe unto me, O mother, that thou hast given me birth!” Finally the negation becomes a positive principle of life, and the sublimest of prophets suffers on the cross out of love. Now it matters not whether we adopt the attitude of a believing Christian or simply that of the objective historian; one thing is certain, that in order to understand the figure of Christ, we must know the people who crucified Him. One point of course must be kept in mind: in the case of the Greeks and Romans their deeds were their positive and permanent achievement; in the case of the Jews,

on the other hand, it was the negation of the deeds of this people that was the only positive achievement for mankind. But this negation is likewise an historical fact, a fact indeed that has “grown historically.” Even if Jesus Christ, as is extremely probable, was not descended from the Jewish people, † nothing but the most superficial partisanship

* See Isaiah, chaps. i. and v.

† For the proof that Christ was no Jew (in the sense of Jew by race) and also for the exposition of his close relation to the moral life of the real Jewish people, see chap. [iii.](#); chap. [v.](#) then deals more fully with the Jewish people.

12 HISTORICAL PRINCIPLES

can deny the fact that this great and divine figure is inseparably bound up with the historical development of that people.

Who could doubt it? The history of Hellas, that of Rome, and that of Judea have had a moulding influence upon all centuries of our era and still had a living influence upon the nineteenth century. Indeed they were not merely living, but also life-retarding influences, inasmuch as they obstructed our free view into the purely human sphere in many directions by a fence of man's height. This is the unavoidable fate of mankind: what advances him, at the same time fetters him. And so the history of these peoples must be carefully noted by any one who proposes to discuss the nineteenth century.

In the present work a knowledge of pure history, of the chronology of the world, has been assumed. I can attempt only one thing here, viz., to define with the greatest possible brevity what are the most essential distinguishing marks of this “legacy of the old world”. This I shall do in three chapters, the [first](#) of which treats of Hellenic art and philosophy, the [second](#) of Roman law, and the [third](#) of the advent of Jesus Christ.

PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY.

Before concluding these introductory remarks, one more warning! The expression, this or that “had to” happen, slipped from my pen a moment ago; perhaps it will recur in what follows. Thereby I am far from admitting that the philosophy of history has any right to dogmatise. The contemplation of the past from the point of view of the present admits the logical conclusion that certain events “had to” happen at that time, in order that the present should become what it has become. The subtle question as to whether the course of history

13 HISTORICAL PRINCIPLES

might have been different from what it would be out of place here. Scared by the dreary clamour of so-called scientism, most of our modern historians have handled this subject with timidity. And yet it is clear that it is only when considered *sub specie necessitatis* that the present acquires an instructive significance. *Vere scire est per causas scire*, says Bacon; this way of viewing things is the only scientific one; but how shall it be successfully applied if necessity is not everywhere recognised? The phrase "had to" expresses the necessary connection of cause and effect, nothing more; it is with such examinations as these that we men gild the main beams of our narrow intellectual sphere, without imagining that thereby we have flown out into the open air. The following should, however, be borne in mind: if necessity be a shaping power, then round this central point wider and wider circles form themselves, and no one can blame us if, when our purpose demands it, we avoid the long circuitous path, in order that we may take our stand as near as possible to the axis which while causing motion is itself hardly moved — that point where what appears to be an arbitrary law almost merges into undeniable necessity.

14

FIRST CHAPTER

HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

Nur durch den Menschen tritt der Mensch in das Tageslicht des Lebens ein. — JEAN PAUL FRIEDRICH RICHTER.

MAN BECOMING MAN

Much wit has been spent in defining the difference between man and beast, but the distinction between man and man seems to me to be even more important, preparing the way, as it does, for the recognition of a fact of greater significance. The moment a man awakens to a consciousness of freely creative power, he crosses a definite boundary and breaks the spell which showed how closely, in spite of all his talent and all his achievements, he was related even in mind to other living creatures. Through art a new element, a new form of existence, enters into the cosmos.

In expressing this as my conviction, I put myself on the same footing as some of Germany's greatest sons. This view of the importance of art corresponds, too, if I am not mistaken, to a specific tendency of the German mind; at any rate so clear and precise a formulation of this

thought, as we find in Lessing and Winckelmann, Schiller and Goethe, Hölderlin, Jean Paul and Novalis, in Beethoven and Richard Wagner, would hardly be met with among the other members of the related Indo-Teutonic group. In order to do justice to this view, we must in the first place know exactly what is here meant

15 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

by “art.” When Schiller writes, “Nature has formed creatures only, art has made men,” we surely cannot believe that he was thinking here of flute-playing or verse-writing? Whoever reads Schiller's writings (especially of course his *Briefe über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen*) carefully and repeatedly, will recognise more and more that the idea “art” means to the poet-philosopher something very vivid, something glowing in him, as it were, and yet a very subtle thing, which can scarcely be confined within a brief definition. A man must have misunderstood him if he believes himself free of such a belief. Let us hear what Schiller says, for an understanding of this fundamental idea is indispensable not merely for the purpose of this chapter, but also for that of the whole book. He writes: “Nature does not make a better beginning with man than with her other works: she acts for him, while he cannot yet act for himself as a free intelligent being. But what precisely makes him a man is the fact that he does not stand still as mere nature made him, but is endowed with the capacity of retracing with the aid of reason the steps which nature anticipated with him, of transforming the work of necessity into a work of his free choice and of raising the physical necessity to a moral one.” First and foremost then it is the eager struggle for freedom which, according to Schiller, betokens the artistic temperament. Man cannot escape necessity, but he “transforms” it, and, in so doing, shows himself to be an artist. As such he employs the elements, which nature offers him, to create for himself a new world of semblance; but a second consideration follows from this, which must not on any account be overlooked: by placing himself “on his aesthetic standpoint,” as it were, “outside the world and contemplating it,” man for the first time clearly sees this world, the world outside himself! The desire to tear himself away from nature had indeed been a

16 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

delusion, but it is this very delusion which is now bringing him to a full and proper consciousness of nature: for “man cannot purge the semblance from the real without at the same time freeing the real of the

semblance.“ It is only when man has begun to invent artistically that he also begins to think consciously, it is only when he himself builds that he begins to perceive the architectonics of the universe. Reality and semblance are at first mixed up in his consciousness; the conscious, freely creative dealing with the semblance is the first step towards attaining to the freest and purest possible cognition of reality. True science — a science that not only measures and records, but contemplates and perceives — owes its origin, according to Schiller, to the direct influence of the artistic efforts of man. Then for the first time philosophy finds a place in the human intellect; for it hovers between the two worlds. Philosophy is based at once on art and on science: it is, if I may so express myself, the latest artistic elaboration of a reality which has been sifted and purified. But this does not by any means exhaust the import of Schiller's conception of art. For “beauty“ (that freely transformed, new world) is not simply an object, in it rather there is mirrored also “a condition of our subject“: “Beauty is, in truth, form, because we contemplate it, but it is at the same time life, because we feel it. In a word, it is at once a state and an achievement“ * To feel artistically, to think artistically denotes then a particular condition of man in general; it is a phase of feeling, or rather attitude of mind — still better, perhaps, a latent store of power, which must everywhere act as a “freeing,“ “transforming,“ “purging“ element in the life of the individual man, as well as in the life of a whole nation, even where art,

* Cf. *Aesthetische Erziehung*, Bd. 3, 25, 26. Further particulars in [chap. ix. div. 7](#) of this book (vol. ii.).

17 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

science and philosophy are not directly concerned. Or, to present this relation to ourselves from a different side, we can also — and indeed here too with Schiller * — say, “From being a successful instrument, man became an unsuccessful artist.“ That is the tragedy of which I spoke in the introductory remarks.

We must, I think, admit that this German conception of “man becoming man“ goes deeper, embraces more, and throws a brighter light upon that future of mankind after which we have to strive than any narrowly scientific or purely utilitarian one. However that may be, one thing is certain: whether such a view is to have unconditional or merely conditional validity, it is of the very greatest service for a study of the Hellenic world and the sure revelation of its principle of life; for though in this subjective formulation it may be a characteristically German conception, it leads back in the main to Hellenic art and to Hellenic philosophy, which embraced natural science, and proves that Hellenism

lived on in the nineteenth century not merely outwardly and historically, but also as an inherent force that has helped to mould the future. †

ANIMAL AND MAN

Not every artistic activity is art. Numerous animals evince extraordinary skill in the construction of dwellings; the song of the nightingale vies successfully with the natural song of the savage; capricious imitation we find

* Cf. *Etwas über die erste Menschengesellschaft*, div. I.

† To avoid misunderstanding, I wish to mention that here at the beginning of my book I have without further criticism joined hands with Schiller, to ensure that what follows may be more easily understood; only in my final chapter can I establish my view that in the case of the Teutonic peoples, in contrast to the Hellenes, the turning point in “man becoming man“ is to be sought not in art, but in religion — this however does not mean a deviation from Schiller's conception of “art“ but purely and simply a particular gradation.

18 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

highly developed in the animal kingdom, and that too in the most various spheres — imitation of activity, of sound, of form — and here it must also be remembered that we know next to nothing of the life of the higher apes; * language, that is, communication of feelings and judgments from one individual to another, is widespread throughout the whole animal kingdom and the means adopted are so incredibly sure that not only anthropologists but also philologists † do not consider it superfluous to warn us against thinking that vibration of the human vocal chords — or for that matter sound in general — is the only thing that can be called language. ‡ By instinctively uniting into civic organisations, no matter how complex and intricate they may be, the human race similarly achieves nothing which is in principle an advance on the exceedingly complex animal communities; modern sociologists, indeed, consider the origin of human society as having a close organic connection with the development of the social instincts in the surrounding animal kingdom. § If we consider

* See, however, the observations of J. G. Romanes in the case of a female chimpanzee, given in fullest detail in *Nature*, vol. xi., p. 160 ff, condensed in the books of the same author. In a short time this ape learned to count up to seven with unfailing accuracy. On the other hand, the Bakairi (South American Indians) are able to count only up to six, and that with great difficulty. (See Karl von Steinen: *Unter den Naturvölkern Brasiliens*.)

† See, for example, Whitney, *The Life of Language* (Fr. edit. p. 238 f).

‡ Compare especially the instructive remarks of Topinard in his *Anthropologie*, pp. 159-162. It is interesting to know that so great and at the same time so extremely cautious a naturalist as Adolf Bastian, with all his abhorrence of everything fantastic, claims for the articulata (with the tentacles with which they touch each other) a language analogous to ours and in keeping with their nature; see *Das Beständige in den Menschenrassen*, p. viii. of the preface. In Darwin's *Descent of Man*, chap. iii., we find an exceedingly interesting review of the facts pertaining to this question and an energetic refutation of the paradoxes of Max Müller and others.

§ See, for example, the *Principles of Sociology* of the American Professor Franklin H. Giddings (Fr. edit., 1897, p. 189): "Les bases de l'empire de l'homme furent posées sur les associations zoogéniques des plus humbles formes de la vie consciente."

19 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

the civic life of the ants, and see by what daring refinements they ensure the practical efficiency of the social mechanism and the faultless fitting of all parts into each other — as an example I shall mention only the removal of the baneful sexual impulse in a large percentage of the population, and that too not by mutilation, as is the case with our wretched makeshift castration, but by shrewd manipulation of the fecundating germs — then we must admit that the civic instinct of man is not of a high standard; compared with many animal species we are nothing but political blunderers. * Even in the special exercise of reason we can indeed recognise a peculiar specific feature of man, but hardly a fundamentally new natural phenomenon. Man in his natural condition uses his superior reason exactly as the stag his speed of foot, the tiger his strength, the elephant his weight; it is his finest weapon in the struggle for existence, it takes the place of agility, bulk and so many other things that he lacks. The times are past when men had the effrontery to deny that animals have reason; not only do the ape, the dog and all higher animals manifest conscious reflection and unerring judgment, but insects have been experimentally proved to do the same: a colony of bees, for example, placed in unaccustomed and absolutely new surroundings, adopts new measures, tries this and that, till it has found what

* See Carl Vogt's amusing *Untersuchungen über Thierstaaten* (1851). In Brehm, *Vom Nordpol zum Aequator* (1890), we find very noteworthy facts concerning the waging of war by baboons; their tactics change according to the nature of the ground, they divide their forces into definite groups, first line, second line of attack, &c., several work together, so as to roll a large boulder down on the enemy, &c. Perhaps the most amazing social life is that of the farming ants from South America, first reported upon by Belt, *Naturalist in Nicaragua*, then by the German Alfred Möller; now we can observe these animals in the Zoological Garden in London, where it is especially easy to follow the activity of the large-headed "overseers," which rush forward and shake up the workers whenever they take things easy!

20 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

suits it. * There is no doubt that if we investigate with more care and insight the psychological life — so far

* Cf. Huber, *Nouvelles observations sur les abeilles*, ii. 198, and the fine book by Maurice Maeterlinck, *La vie des abeilles*, 1901. The best and shortest recent *résumé* of the most important facts pertinent to our case is probably that by J. G. Romanes, *Essays on Instinct*, 1897; even this distinguished pupil of Darwin is, however, under the constant necessity of referring to the series of observations of the two Hubers as being the most brilliant and reliable; but too little known is another work, that of J. Traherne Moggridge, *Observations on harvesting Ants and Trapdoor Spiders* (Reeve, London, 1873); in general the psychologists of the animal kingdom should direct more attention to the spiders, which beyond doubt are endowed with special gifts of their own. But see H. C. MacCook, *American Spiders* (Philadelphia, 1889), and the various volumes of the invaluable *Souvenirs entomologiques* by Fabre. Among older writings, Kirby's *History, Habits, and Instincts of Animals* is of lasting value. Of the more philosophic writings I shall here call attention especially to Wundt's *Vorlesungen über die Menschen- und Tierseele* and to Fritz Schulze's *Vergleichende Seelenkunde* (Second Part, "The Psychology of Animals and Plants," 1897). In this note I should like at the same time to put in an express caveat, namely, that here and further on I do not fail to recognise the deep gulf between the intellect of thinking man and that of the animal; it was high time that a Wundt with all his intellectual keenness should openly oppose our almost ineradicable inclination to anthropomorphic interpretations; but it seems to me that Wundt himself and with him Schulze, Lubbock and others fall into the opposite error: they make indeed a just protest against the uncritical over-estimation of the thought-life of the animals, yet these learned men, accustomed from their earliest years to think and speculate unceasingly, do not seem to have any idea of the minimum of consciousness and reflection with which mankind as a whole manages to go through life; they are in general inclined to attach too great importance to "consciousness" and "reflection"; this manifests itself in their treatises on the elementary conditions of the human *ψυχή* and — perhaps still more clearly — in their lack of ability to explain the nature of the real act of creative genius (Art and Philosophy). One Wundt having reduced the estimate of animal intelligence to its right level, we should need a second to expose our tendency to overrate enormously our own importance. The following point also seems to me never to have been properly emphasised: that in our observations of animals we, do what we will, remain anthropomorphists; for we cannot even conceive a sense (I mean a physical instrument for acquiring knowledge of the surrounding world) if we do not possess it ourselves, and we must of necessity remain for ever blind and deaf to all manifestations of feeling and understanding, which are not immediately echoed in our own intellectual life. It is all very well for Wundt to warn against "false analogies"; in this whole sphere no conclusions but those of analogy are possible. As Clifford has clearly shown (cf. *Seeing and*

21 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

practically unknown to us — of animals from remote classes, we shall everywhere find similar things.

Thinking), we can proceed neither purely objectively nor purely subjectively here; this mixed method of knowing he has therefore termed an “ejective” one. We estimate those animals as most intelligent whose intelligence most closely resembles our own, and is therefore best understood by us, but is not this extremely simple and thoughtless in reference to a cosmic problem such as that of intellect? Is this not disguised anthropomorphism? Most certainly. When Wundt therefore maintains, “In this sphere experiment is in a high degree superior to mere observation,” one can only very conditionally agree with him; for experiment is from the outset a reflex of our purely human conceptions, whereas the loving observation of a quite differently organised creature in its own most normal conditions and that with the desire not to criticise its achievements but to understand them — as far as our human narrow intellectual horizon permits us — would be bound to lead to many surprising discoveries. And so old blind Huber has taught us much more about bees than Lubbock in his — nevertheless admirable — book on *Ants, Bees and Wasps* (1883). And so it is that the rough trainers, who demand of each animal only such tricks as they can expect from it on the basis of daily observation of its capabilities, achieve such remarkable results. Here as elsewhere our science of to-day is still in the toils of Helleno-Jewish anthropomorphism, and not least just where it warns us against it. — Since the above has been written, the sensational book of Bethe, *Dürfen wir Ameisen und Bienen psychische Qualitäten zuschreiben?* has appeared, which in its whole argumentation is a classical example of disguised anthropomorphism. By ingenious (though in my opinion by no means conclusive) tests, Bethe has come to the conclusion that ants recognise by smell that they belong to the nest, and their finding of their way depends on the excretion of a chemical substance, &c. The whole is “Chemoreflex,” the whole life of these animals “purely mechanical.” One is astonished to find such an abyss of philosophical barbarity. Why, is not the whole sense-life as such inevitably mechanical? Can I recognise my own father without help of a mechanism? Does not the dog recognise its master almost entirely by smell? Are Descartes' automata always to rise into life again, as though science and philosophy had stood still for three hundred years? Here we have the real ineradicable anthropomorphism. In the case of vertebrates their strict analogy with our own structure lets us draw conclusions about psychical processes; in the insect, on the other hand, a totally strange being is before us, built on a plan which is so fundamentally at variance with that of our body that we are not in a position to explain with certainty even the purely mechanical working of the organs of sense (see Gegenbaur, *Vergleichende Anatomie*) and in consequence cannot know at all what a world of sense-impressions and of possibilities of communication, &c., quite closed to us, may surround these creatures. Not to comprehend this fact is to display an ant-like naïveté. — (Addenda of the

22 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

Thus the comparatively enormous development of the human brain * gives us after all only a relative superiority. Man does not walk upon earth like a God, but as a creature among other creatures, perhaps it would be no exaggeration to say as *primus inter pares*; for it is difficult to comprehend why a higher differentiation, with its countless disadvantages, should be forthwith regarded as higher “perfection”; the relative perfection of an organism should be judged, in my opinion, by its suitability to given conditions. Through all the fibres of his nature man is organically and closely connected with his surroundings; all this is blood

of his blood; if we think him apart from nature, he is a fragment, an uprooted stem.

What now distinguishes man from other beings? Many will answer, his inventive power: it is the instrument which shows him to be prince among the animals. Yet even with this he still remains an animal among animals. Not only the anthropoid, but also the common

third edition.) In the opening speech of the fourth International Congress of Zoologists on August 23, 1898, Sir John Lubbock violently attacked the automata theory and said, *inter alia*: "Many animals possess organs of sense, the meaning of which is inscrutable to us men. They notice sounds which we cannot hear, they see things which remain invisible to us, they receive impressions of sense, which lie beyond the sphere of our power of conception. The world which we know so well must have for them quite a different physiognomy." Montaigne had already expressed the opinion: "Les bêtes ont plusieurs conditions qui se rapportent aux nôtres; de celles-là, par comparaison, nous pouvons tirer quelque conjecture: mais ce qu'elles ont en particulier, que savons-nous que c'est?" The psychiatrist Forel became convinced after thirty years of diligent observation that ants possessed memory, had the capacity of unifying in their brain various impressions of sense and acted with conscious reflection. (Speech delivered on August 13, 1901, at the Congress of Zoologists in Berlin.)

* It is well known that Aristotle has made a serious mistake here, as he often does: man possesses, neither absolutely nor relatively (that is, in relation to weight of body), the largest brain; the superiority of this apparatus in his case is based on other things. (See Ranke, *Der Mensch*, second edition, I., pp. 551 and 542 f.).

23 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

ape, invents simpler instruments (any one can obtain information on this point by referring to Brehm's *Tierleben*), and the elephant is, if perhaps not in invention, yet in the employment of instruments a real master. (See Romanes, *Die geistige Entwicklung im Tierreich*, pp. 389 ff.) The most ingenious dynamo machine does not raise men one inch over the earth-surface which is common to all creatures; all such things denote merely a new accumulation of strength in the struggle for existence; man becomes thereby in a way a more highly potentiated animal. Instead of going to bed, he illumines with tallow candles, oil, gas or electricity; he thereby gains time and can do more work; but there are likewise countless animals which procure light for themselves, many by phosphorescence, others, particularly the deep sea fishes, by electricity; * we travel by bicycle, by train, and shall perhaps soon travel by airship — the bird of passage and the inhabitant of the sea had brought travelling long ago into fashion, and just like them, men travel in order to subsist. The incalculable superiority of man shows itself certainly in this, that he can invent all these things rationally and can unite individual discoveries, so as to make still further progress. The impulse to imitate and the capacity for assimilation which one certainly finds in all

mammals are in his case of so high a standard that the same thing becomes, so to speak, a different thing; in analogous manner we see in chemical substances that frequently the addition of a single essentially similar atom,

* Emin Pasha and Stanley tell about chimpanzees which go out at night with torches on their predatory raids. With Romanes, one would do well to doubt this fact till further information is available. Stanley did not see it himself and Emin Pascha was exceedingly shortsighted. If apes have really discovered the art of lighting fires, to us men there would remain nevertheless the invention of the figure of Prometheus, and that this, and not that, is what makes man man forms exactly the substance of my remarks.

24 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

accordingly a simple numerical addition, fundamentally changes the qualities of the substance in question; if one adds oxygen to oxygen, a new compound, ozone, is formed ($O_2+O_1=O_3$). One should, however, not forget that all human discoveries rest on assimilation and imitation; man “finds out“ (er-findet) what is there and has only awaited his coming, just as he “discovers“ what hitherto was covered with a veil; nature plays at “hide and seek“ and “blind man's buff“ with him. *Quod invenitur, fuit*, says Tertullian. The fact that he understands this, that he seeks what is hidden, and bit by bit reveals and finds so much, certainly testifies to the possession of incomparable gifts; but if he did not possess them, he would indeed be the most miserable of creatures, for there he stands weaponless, powerless, wingless; bitter necessity is his incentive, the faculty of invention his salvation.

Now man becomes truly man, a creature differing from all animals, even human ones, when he reaches the stage of inventing without necessity, when he exercises his incomparable gifts of his own free will and not because nature compels him, or — to use a deeper and more suitable expression — when the necessity which impels him to invent enters his consciousness, no longer from outside, but from his inner self; when that which was his salvation becomes his sanctuary. The decisive moment is when free invention consciously appears, that is, therefore, when man becomes artist. The study of surrounding nature, as, for example, of the starry heavens, may have made great strides, and a complex cult of gods and spirits have been formed without thereby anything fundamentally new entering into the world. All this proves a latent capacity; essentially, however, it is nothing more than the half-unconscious exercise of an instinct. It is only when an individual man, like Homer, invents the gods of his own free will as he wishes them

25 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

to be; it is only when an observer of nature, like Democritus, from free creative power invents the conception of the atom; when a pensive seer, like Plato, with the wilfulness of the genius superior to the world throws overboard all visible nature and puts in its place the realm of ideas that man has created; it is only when a most Sublime Teacher proclaims, "Behold the kingdom of Heaven is within you" — it is only then that a completely new creature is born, that being of whom Plato says, "He has generative power in his soul rather than in his body," it is only then that the macrocosm contains a microcosm. The only thing that deserves to be called culture is the daughter of such "creative freedom," or in a word "art," and with art philosophy — genuine, creative philosophy and science — is so closely related that both must be recognised as two sides of the same being; every great poet has been a philosopher, every philosopher of genius a poet. That which lies outside this microcosmic life of culture is nothing more than "civilisation," that is, a more and more highly potentiated, increasingly more industrious, easier and less free ant-like state-existence, certainly rich in blessing and in so far desirable, nevertheless a gift of the ages, in the case of which it frequently remains exceedingly questionable whether the human race does not pay more for it than it receives from it. Civilisation is in itself nothing, for it denotes something merely relative; a higher civilisation could be regarded as a positive gain (*i.e.*, an "advance") only when it led to an increasingly intensive intellectual and artistic shaping of life and to an inner moral enlightenment. Because this seemed to him not to be the case with us, Goethe, as the most competent judge, could make the melancholy confession, "These times are worse than one thinks." On the other hand, the undying importance of Hellenism lies in this, that it understood how to create for itself an age better than any that we can conceive,

26 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

an age incomparably better, if I may so express it, than its own backward civilisation deserved. To-day all ethnographers and anthropologists distinguish clearly between morals and religion, and recognise that both in a certain sense are independent of each other; it would be just as useful to learn to distinguish clearly between culture and civilisation. A highly developed civilisation is compatible with a rudimentary culture: Rome, for example, exemplifies a wonderful civilisation with very insignificant and quite unoriginal culture. Athens, on the other hand (with its free citizens) reveals a stage of culture in comparison with which we Europeans of the nineteenth century are in many respects still

barbarians, and this is united with a civilisation which — in comparison with ours — may with perfect justice be termed really barbaric. * Compared with all other phenomena of history, Hellenism represents an exuberantly rich blossoming of the human intellect, and the reason of this is that its whole culture rests on an artistic basis. The freely creative work of human imagination was the starting-point of the infinitely rich life of the Hellenes. Their language, religion, politics, philosophy, science (even mathematics), history and geography, all forms of imaginative invention in words and sounds, their whole public life and the whole inner life of the individual — everything radiates from this work, and everything finds itself in it once more as in a figurative and at the same time organic centre, a centre which reduces the greatest divergencies in characters,

* We have an excellent example of this in the case of the Indo-Aryans in their original home, where the formation of a language, “which surpassed all others, was completely uniform and wonderfully perfect,” apart from other intellectual achievements, pointed to a high culture. These men were nevertheless a race of shepherds who walked abroad almost naked and knew neither cities nor metals. (See in particular Jhering, *Vorgeschichte der Indoeuropäer*, p. 2.) For a definite distinction between knowledge, civilisation and culture I refer readers to vol. ii. chap. ix. of this book and the synopsis contained in it.

27 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

interests and endeavours to reach a living conscious unity. At this central point stands Homer.

HOMER

The fact that the existence of the poet Homer has been open to doubt will give later generations no very favourable idea of the intellectual acumen of our epoch. It is exactly a century ago since F. A. Wolf published his hypothesis; since that time our neo-Alexandrians have bravely “sniffed and shovelled away,” till at last they arrived at the conclusion that Homer was merely a pseudo-mythical collective term and the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* nothing more than a skilful pasting together and re-editing of all sorts of poems.... Pasted together by whom? and by whom so beautifully edited? Well, naturally by learned philologists, the ancestors of the modern ones! The only matter for surprise is that, as we are once more in possession of such an ingenious race of critics, these gentlemen have not taken the trouble to piece together for us poor wretches a new *Iliad*. There is truly no lack of songs, no lack of genuine, beautiful folksongs; is there, perhaps, a lack of paste, of brainpaste? The

most competent judges in such a question are clearly the poets, the great poets; the philologist clings to the shell which has been exposed to the caprice of centuries; but the congenial glance of the poet, on the other hand, penetrates to the kernel and perceives the individual creative process. Now Schiller, with his unerring instinct, immediately stigmatised as “simply barbaric“ the view that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were not, in all essential points of their construction, the work of a single inspired individual. Indeed, in his excitement, he so far oversteps the mark that he calls Wolf a “stupid Devil“! The opinion of Goethe is almost more interesting. His much-lauded objectivity manifested itself, among other things, in this, that he unreservedly

28 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

and unresistingly let himself be influenced by an impression; Wolf's great philological merits and the mass of correct statements which his expositions contained, misled the great man; he felt convinced and declared this openly. But later, when he again had the opportunity of studying the Homeric poems thoroughly — and viewed them no longer from a philologico-historical but from a purely poetic standpoint — he retracted his over-hasty endorsement of the “subjective trash“ (as he now called it), for now his knowledge was precise; behind these works there stands a “glorious unity, a single, higher poetical sense.“ * But the philologists too, in their necessarily roundabout way, have come to the same view, and Homer enters the twentieth century, the fourth millennium of his fame, greater than ever. †

* See, for example, the small work, *Homer noch einmal*, of the year 1826.

† I must take care to avoid even the slightest assumption of a learning which I do not possess; a man in my position can only note the results of learned research; but it is his right and his duty to approach these results as a free man, possessing unexceptionable critical power. Indeed, he must, in my opinion, use his critical power above all in the same way as a monarch whose wisdom has especially to prove itself in the choice of his advisers; the layman cannot sit in judgment on the value of learned arguments, he can, however, from style, language and train of thoughts very well form an estimate of the individual scholar and distinguish between mason and architect. It is not therefore in the sense of a material proof, but merely in order that the reader himself may be able, in the sense alluded to, to gauge my ability to form a critical judgment, that I now and then refer in the notes to my “authorities.“ As I have pointed out in the text, I here in the first place hold with Socrates that musicians are the best judges of flute-playing, poets of poetical works. Goethe's opinion with regard to Homer is worth more to me than that of all the philologists together who have lived since the beginning of the world. I have, however, informed myself, as far as a layman can, in regard to the latter, and in so complicated a question this is very essential. The summary accounts of Niese, *Die Entwicklung der Homerischen Poesie*, 1882, and of Jebb, *Homer*, 1888, enable us to follow the course of the discussion up to modern times, but nothing more. On the other hand, in Bergk, *Griechische Litteraturgeschichte*, 1872-84, we have a safe guide. That

Bergk was a Hellenist of the first rank is admitted by all Homeric scholars and even the ordinary man is impressed by the comprehensive and penetrating character of his knowledge, com-

29 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

For besides many philologising nonentities, Germany has produced an undying race of really great linguistic and literary scholars; F. A. Wolf himself was one of them; he never lowered himself to the absurd idea afterwards propounded, that a great work of art could be produced by the united efforts of a number of insignificant men or directly from the vague consciousness of the masses, and he would be the first to learn with satisfaction of the successful issue that finally attended the protracted scientific researches. Even if as great a genius as Homer himself had devoted himself to improving and embellishing Homer's works — this is of course almost a senseless supposition — the history of all art teaches us that genuine individuality defies all imitation; but the farther the critical investigations of the nineteenth century advanced, the more was every capable investigator compelled to realise that even the most important imitators, completers and restorers of the epics of Homer all differed from him in this, that not one of them approached even in the slightest degree

bined as it is with a moderation which bordered on the jejune; Bergk is not a fiery spirit; his attitude in this question forms the complement to the lightning intuition of a Schiller. One should read not only the chapter, "Homer an historical personality," but particularly also in the later paragraph, "Homer in modern times," the remarks on the song-theory, of which Bergk says, "The general premisses, from which the advocates of the song-theory proceed, prove themselves on closer examination, especially when one considers the Homeric poems in connection with the whole development of epic poetry, as quite untenable. This theory could only be formulated by critics by whom the Homeric epic, separated from its surroundings and without any regard to the history of Greek literature, was submitted to their disintegrating criticism" (i. 525). One should read also his proof that the use of writing was common in Homer's time and that external as well as internal facts testify that Homer actually left his works in writing (i. 527 ff). — 1905. In the meantime the discoveries in Crete have proved that the use of script was common among the Hellenes long before the Achaeans entered the Peloponnese. In the palace of Minos, the most modern parts of which can be proved to have been built not later than 1550 years before Christ, whole libraries and archives have been discovered (*cf.* the publications of A. J. Evans in the last volumes of the *Annual of the British School at Athens*).

30 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

his commanding genius. Disfigured though they were by countless

misconceptions, copyists' mistakes, and still more by the supposed improvements of irrepressible wiseacres and the interpolations of well-meaning followers, the more the patchwork of the present form of these poems was shown up by the polishing work of research, the more they testified to the incomparable divine creative power of the original artist. What marvellous power of beauty must have been possessed by works which could so successfully defy for centuries the stormy social conditions, and for a still longer time the desecrating tempest of narrow-mindedness, mediocrity and pseudogenius, that even to-day, from the midst of the ruins, the ever youthful charm of artistic perfection greets us like the good fairy of our own culture! At the same time other investigations, which had gone their own independent way — historical and mythological studies — clearly proved that Homer must have been an historical personage. It has, in fact, been shown that in these poems both saga and myth have been treated very freely and according to definite principles of conscious artistic shaping. To mention only the most essential point: Homer was a remarkable simplifier, he unravelled the tangled clue of popular myths, and from the planless medley of popular sagas, which had a different form in every district, he wove certain definite forms in which all Hellenes recognised themselves and their gods, although this very delineation was quite new to them. What we have now discovered after so much toil the ancients knew very well; I quote in this connection the remarkable passage in *Herodotus*: "From the Pelasgians the Hellenes took their gods. But whence each of the gods comes, whether they were always there, what their form is, we Hellenes only know as it were since yesterday. For it is Hesiod and Homer, in the first place, who created for the Greeks their race of

31 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

gods, who gave the gods their names, distributed honours and arts among them, and described their forms. The poets, however, who are supposed to have lived before these two men, in my opinion at least, really came after them" (Book II. 53). Hesiod lived about a hundred years after Homer and was directly influenced by him; with the exception of this little error the simple naive sentence of Herodotus contains all that the gigantic critical work of a century has brought to light. It has been proved that the poets who according to the priestly tradition lived before Homer — *e.g.*, Orpheus, Musaeos, Eumolpos from the Thracian school, or Olen and others of the Delian school — in reality lived after him; * and it is likewise proved that the religious conceptions of the Greeks have been drawn from very different sources; the Indo-European inheritance forms the main capital; to this were added all kinds of motley Oriental influences (as Herodotus had also shown in the passage which precedes

that above quoted): upon this chaos a hand was now laid by the one incomparable man with the sovereign authority of the freely creative, poetic genius, and out of it he formed by artistic means a new world; as Herodotus says: he creates for the Greeks their race of gods.

May I here be permitted to quote the words of Erwin Rohde, † recognised as one of the most learned of living Hellenists: "The Homeric epic can only be called folk-poetry because it is of such a nature that the whole Greek-speaking people willingly took it up and could make it their own, not because the 'people' in any mystic way were engaged in its production. Many hands have been at work on the two poems, but all in

* See in particular Flach, *Geschichte der griechischen Lyrik nach den Quellen dargestellt*, I. pp. 45 ff, 90 ff.

† Since the above was written, German science has had to deplore the death of this extraordinary man.

32 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

the direction and in the sense which the greatest poetic genius among the Greeks, and probably of mankind, and not the people or the saga, as one certainly hears maintained, gave to them. In Homer's mirror Greece appears united and uniform in belief, in dialect, in constitution, customs and morals. One may, however, boldly maintain that this unity cannot in reality have existed; the elements of Panhellenism were doubtless present, but it was the genius of the poet alone that collected and fused them together in a merely imaginary whole." * Bergk, whose whole rich scholastic life was devoted to the study of Greek poetry formulates the opinion: "Homer draws chiefly from himself, from his own inner soul; he is a truly original spirit, not an imitator, and he practises his art with full consciousness" (*Griechische Litteraturgeschichte*, p. 527). Duncker, too, the historian, remarks that "what was lacking in the imitators of Homer — what accordingly distinguished this one man — was the comprehensive eye of genius." † And to close these quotations in a worthy manner I refer to Aristotle, in whom one must admit some competence, so far as critical acumen is concerned. It is striking and consoling to see that he too discovers the distinguishing-mark of Homer to be his eye; in the eighth chapter of his *Poetics* (he is speaking of the qualities of poetic action), he says: "But Homer, just as he is different in other things also, seems here too to have seen aright, either by art or by nature." A profound remark! which prepares us for the surprising outburst of enthusiasm in the twenty-third chapter of the *Poetics*: Homer is above all other poets *divine*.

* *Seelenkult und Unsterblichkeitsglaube der Griechen*, pp. 35, 36.

† *Geschichte des Altertums*, v. 566).

33 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

ARTISTIC CULTURE

I have felt bound to prove this, even at the cost of some detail; not because it is of importance for the subject treated in this book, whether one man named Homer wrote the *Iliad*, or in how far the poem, which to-day is so entitled, may correspond to the original poem; the special proof is a side issue. It is, on the other hand, essential for my whole work that I should emphasise the incomparable importance of personality in general; it is likewise essential to recognise the fact that every work of art always and without exception presupposes a strong individual personality, — a great work of art a personality of the first rank, a Genius; it is, finally, imperative that we should grasp the fact, that the secret of the magic power of Hellenism lies locked in this idea “personality.” For indeed if we would understand what Hellenic art and Hellenic thought have meant for the nineteenth century, if we would know the secret of so lasting a power, we must realise especially that it is the power of great personalities that, coming down from that vanished world, still influences us with the freshness of youth.

Höchstes Glück der Erdenkinder
Ist nur die Persönlichkeit:

says Goethe; this greatest gift — *höchstes Glück* — the Greeks possessed as no other people ever did, and it is this very thing that surrounds them with that sunny halo which is peculiarly theirs. Their great poems and their great thoughts are not the work of anonymous commercial companies as are the so-called art and wisdom of the Egyptians, Assyrians, Chinese, *e tutu quanti*; the life-principle of this people is heroism; the individual steps forward alone: boldly crossing the boundary

34 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

of what is common to all, he leaves behind all that civilisation which has accumulated instinctively, unconsciously and uselessly, and fearlessly hews out a path in the ever-deepening gloom of the primeval forest of accumulated superstitions, — he dares to have Genius! And this daring gives rise to a new conception of manhood; for the first time man has “entered into the daylight of life.”

The individual, however, could not accomplish this alone. Personalities can clearly reveal themselves as such, only when surrounded by other

personalities; action receives a conscious existence only after reaction has taken place; the genius can breathe only in an atmosphere of genius. If then a single, surpassingly great, incomparably creative personality has undoubtedly been the condition and absolutely indispensable *primum mobile* of the whole Grecian culture, we must recognise as the second characteristic factor in this culture the fact that the surroundings proved themselves worthy of so extraordinary a personality. That which is lasting in Hellenism, that which keeps it alive to-day and has enabled it to be a bright ideal, a consolation and a hope to so many of the best men in the nineteenth century, can be summed up in one word: it is its element of Genius. What would a Homer have availed in Egypt or Phoenicia? The one would have paid no heed to him, the other would have crucified him; yes, even in Rome... but here we have the experimental proof before our eyes. Has all the poetry of Greece succeeded in striking even a single spark out of this sober, inartistic heart? Is there among the Romans a single true poetic genius? Is it not pitiful that our schoolmasters are condemned to embitter the fresh years of our childhood by compulsory admiration of these rhetorical, unnatural, soulless, hypocritical imitations of genuine poetry? And is this example alone not

35 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

enough to prove — a few poets more or less make really no difference — how all culture is linked to art? What is one to say to a history which embraces more than 1200 years and does not show a single philosopher, not even a philosopher in miniature? What to a people which has to conceal its own modest claims in this respect by the importation of the latter-day persecuted, anaemic Greeks, who, however, are not philosophers at all but merely very commonplace moralists? How low must the quality of genius have sunk when a good Emperor, who wrote maxims in his leisure hours, is commended to the reverence of coming generations as a thinker! * Where is there a great, creative natural scientist among the Romans? Surely not the industrious encyclopaedist, Pliny? Where is there a mathematician

* Lucretius might be named as a man certainly worthy of admiration both as a thinker and as a poet; but his thoughts are, as he admits, always Greek thoughts, and his poetical apparatus is predominantly Greek. And withal there lies over his great poem the deadly shadow of that scepticism, which sooner or later leads to unproductivity, and which must be carefully distinguished from the deep insight of truly religious minds, which become aware of the figurative element in their conceptions, without for that reason doubting the sublime truth of what they vaguely feel in their hearts but cannot fathom, as when, for example, the Vedish seer suddenly exclaims:

From what it has arisen, this creation
Whether created it has been or not —
Whoever in the heavens watches o'er it,
He knows it well! Or does he too not know?
Rigveda, x. 129.

or as Herodotus in the passage quoted a few pages previously, where he expresses the opinion that the poet created the gods. And Epicurus himself, the “atheist,” the man whom Lucretius describes as the greatest of all mortals, the man from whom he takes his whole system — do we not learn that in his case “religious feeling must have been so to speak inborn?” (See the sketch of Epicurus' life by K. L. von Knebel, which Goethe recommends.) “Never,” exclaimed Diocles when he found Epicurus in the temple, “never have I seen Zeus greater than when Epicurus lay at his feet!” The Latin fancied he had spoken the last word of wisdom with his *Primus in orbe deos fecit timor*; the Greek, on the other hand, as an enlightened being, knelt more fervently than ever before the glorious god-image, which heroism had freely created for itself, and in so doing testified to his own genius.

36 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

of importance? Where a meteorologist, a geographer, an astronomer? All that was achieved under the sway of Rome, in these and other sciences, is derived without exception from the Greeks. But the poetical fountain had dried up, and so too, bit by bit, creative thinking and creative observation were exhausted, even among the Greeks of the Roman Empire. The life-giving breath of genius was gone; neither in Rome nor in Alexandria was there anything of this manna of the human spirit for the ever upward-soaring Hellenes; in the one city the superstition of utility, in the other, scientific elephantiasis, gradually choked every movement of life. Learning indeed steadily increased, the number of known facts multiplied continually, but the motive-power, instead of increasing, decreased, where increase was badly needed. Thus the European world, in spite of its great progress in civilisation, underwent a gradual decline in culture — sinking down into naked bestiality. Nothing probably is more dangerous for the human race than science without poetry, civilisation without culture. *

In Hellas the course of events was quite different. So long as art flourished, the torch of genius flashed up heavenward in all spheres. The power, which in Homer had fought its way to a dominant individuality, recognised in him its vocation, narrowed down in the first instance to the purely artistic creation of a world of beautiful semblance. Around the radiant central figure arose a countless army of poets and a rich gradation of poetical styles. Immediately after Homer's time and later, originality formed the hall-mark of Greek creation. Inferior powers naturally took their direction from those of greater eminence; but there were so many of the latter, and

* Compare in vol. ii., chap. ix., the remarks about China, &c.

37 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

these had invented so infinitely manifold forms, that the lesser talent was enabled to choose what was exactly fitted to it, and thus achieve its highest possibilities. I am speaking not only of poetry in words wedded to music, but also of the unexampled glory of the poetry that delights the eye, which grew up beside the other, like a dearly beloved younger sister. Architecture, sculpture, painting, like epic, lyric and dramatic poetry, like the hymn, the dithyramb, the ode, the romance, and the epigram, were all rays of that same sun of art, only differently refracted according to the individual eye. It is surely ridiculous that schoolmen cannot distinguish between true culture and ballast, and should inflict on us interminable lists of unimportant Greek poets and sculptors; the protest — ever growing in violence — which began to be made against this at the end of the nineteenth century, must be welcome; but before we consign the many superfluous names to a deserved oblivion, we would express our admiration of the phenomenon as a whole; it gives evidence of a supremacy of good taste which is always desirable, of a fineness of judgment never since equalled, and of a widespread creative impulse. Greek art was a truly “living“ thing, and so it is alive to-day. That which lives is immortal. It possessed a solid, organic central point, and obeyed a spontaneous and therefore unerring impulse, which knitted into one creative artistic whole of the most varied luxuriance the most trifling fragments, and even the wildest excrescences. In short — if I may be forgiven for the apparent tautology — Hellenic art was an artistic art, and no individual, not even a Homer, could make it that; it could only become such by the united efforts of a whole body of artists. Since that time nothing similar has happened, and so it is that Greek art not only still lives, works and preaches in our midst, but the greatest of our artists (of our artistic

38 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

creators of actions, sounds, words, figures) have in the nineteenth century as in former ages felt themselves drawn to Greece as to a home. Among us the man of the people has only an indirect knowledge of Greek art; for him the gods have not, as for Epicurus, ascended a still higher Olympus; they have been hurled down and dashed to pieces by rude Asiatic scepticism and rude Asiatic superstition; but he meets them on our fountains and theatre curtains, in the park, whither he resorts on

Sundays for fresh air, and in the museums, where sculpture has always had a greater attraction for the masses than painting. The “man of culture“ carries fragments of this art in his head as the undigested material of education: names rather than living conceptions; yet he meets it too frequently at every step, to be able ever to lose sight of it completely; it has a greater share in the building of his intellect than he himself is aware of. The artist, on the other hand — and here I mean every artistic mind — cannot help turning eyes of longing to Greece, not merely because of the individual works which arose there — for among us too many a glorious thing has been created since the year 1200: Dante stands alone, Shakespeare is greater and richer than Sophocles, the art of a Bach would have been a complete novelty for a Greek — no, what the artist finds there and misses here is the artistic element, artistic culture. Since the time of the Romans, European life has had a political basis: and now it is gradually becoming economic. Whereas among the Greeks no free man could venture to be a merchant, among us every artist is a born slave: art is for us a luxury, a realm of caprice; it is not a State necessity, and it does not lay down for our public life the law that the feeling for beauty should pervade everything. Even in Rome it was the caprice of a single Maecenas that called poetry into life, and

39 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

since that time the greatest achievements of the most glorious minds have depended largely on a Pope's passion for building, on the conceit of a prince educated in the classics, or on the extravagant taste of a pompous commercial guild. Now and then a lifegiving breath was wafted from higher spheres, as, for example, from the religious New Birth which the great and saintly Francis of Assisi tried to bring about — a movement which gave the first impetus to our modern art of painting — or from the gradual awakening of the German soul to which we owe that glorious new art German music. But what has become of the pictures? The wall-paintings were covered over with plaster because they were thought ugly; the pictures were torn from the sacred places of worship and hung side by side on the walls of museums; and then — because otherwise the evolution up to these most treasured masterpieces could not have been scientifically explained — the plaster was scratched off, well or badly as the case might be, the pious monks were turned out and cloisters and *campi santi* became a second class of museums. Music fared little better; I have myself been present at a concert where J. S. Bach's “Passion of Matthew“ was given. It was in one of the capitals of Europe — which, moreover, is specially famed for its educated musical taste — and here every “number“ was followed by applause and the Chorale “O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden“ was actually received with cries of “Da capo“! We have

much that the Greeks did not possess, but such instances are clear yet painful proofs of how much is lacking in us that they possessed. One can well understand how Hölderlin could exclaim to the artist of to-day:

Stirb! Du suchst auf diesem Erdenrunde,
Edler Geist, umsonst dein Element!
(Die! Thou seekest on this earthly ball,
In vain, O noble mind, thine element!)

40 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

It is not lack of inner strength or of originality that draws the heart of the artist of to-day to Greece, but the consciousness and the experience that the individual, by himself, cannot be really original. For originality is quite different from caprice; originality is the free pursuit of the path involuntarily marked out for itself by the particular nature of the personality in question; but the artist can only find this freedom where he is surrounded by a thoroughly artistic culture; such a culture he cannot find to-day. It would of course be absolutely unjust to deny to our European world of to-day artistic impulses: the interest in music shows that men's minds are in a mighty ferment, and modern painting is laying hold upon well-defined but at the same time extensive circles, and rousing an enthusiasm which amounts to an almost uncanny passion, but all this remains outside the life of the nations, it is a supplement — for hours of leisure and men of leisure; and so fashion and caprice and manifold hypocrisy are predominant, and the atmosphere in which the genuine artist lives lacks all elasticity. Even the most powerful genius is now bound, hemmed in, repelled on many sides. And so Hellenic art lives on in our midst as a lost ideal, which we must strive to recover.

SHAPING

Under a happier star Hellenic philosophy and natural science enjoy with us children of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries a hospitality gladly and gratefully bestowed. Here too it is not a question of mere *lares*, or worship of ancestry; on the contrary, Hellenic philosophy is very much alive among us, and Hellenic science, so helpless on the one hand, and so incredibly powerful in intuition on the other, compels

41 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

us to take in it not merely an historical but also a living interest. The pure joy excited in us by contemplating Greek thought may be due, to some extent, to the consciousness that we have advanced so much

further here than our great ancestors. Our philosophy has become more philosophical, our science more scientific: an advance which, unfortunately, we do not find in the domain of art. So far as philosophy and science are concerned, our modern culture has shown itself worthy of its Hellenic origin; we have a good conscience.

It cannot pertain to my purpose here to point out connections of which every educated man must be aware. These connections, so far as philosophy is concerned, are purely genetic, since it was only through contact with Greek thought that modern thought awoke, acquiring from it indeed that power of contradiction and independence which was the last to reach maturity: so far as mathematics, the foundation of all science, are concerned, they were equally genetic; in the case of the sciences of observation * they were less genetic, and in former years rather a hindrance than a help. My one task must be to explain in a few words what secret power gave these old thoughts such a tenacious spirit of life.

How much of what has been done since has passed into everlasting oblivion, while Plato and Aristotle, Democritus, Euclid and Archimedes still live on in our midst, inspiring and teaching us, and while the half-fabulous form of Pythagoras grows greater with every century! † And I am of opinion that what gives everlasting youth to the thought of a Democritus, a Plato, a Euclid, an

* With regard to the last point one must, however, remark that many a splendid achievement of Hellenic talent in this sphere remained unknown to us till a short time ago.

† This is a return to a former view. When the Romans were commanded by an oracle to erect a statue to the wisest of the Hellenes, they put up the statue of Pythagoras (Plutarch, *Numa*, chap. xi.)

42 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

Aristarchus * is that same spirit, that same mental power which makes Homer and Phidias ever young: it is the creative and — in the widest sense of the word — the really artistic element. For the important thing is that the conception by which man seeks to master the inner world of his Ego, or the outer world, and assimilate them in himself, should be sharply defined and shaped with absolute clearness. If we glance back at about three thousand years of history, we shall see that while the human mind has certainly been broadened by the knowledge of new facts, it has been enriched only by new ideas, that is, by new conceptions. This is that creative power, of which Goethe speaks in the *Wanderjahre*, which “glorifies nature” and without which in his opinion “the outer world would remain cold and lifeless.” † But its creations are lasting only when beautiful and perspicuous, that is, artistic.

As imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns them to shapes.

SHAKESPEARE.

But only those conceptions which have been transformed into shapes form a lasting possession of human consciousness. The supply of facts is ever changing, hence the centre of gravity of the Actual (if I may so express it) is subject to constant shifting; besides, about the half of our knowledge or even more is provisional: what was yesterday regarded as true is false to-day; nor can the future change anything in this respect, since the multiplication of the material of knowledge keeps pace with the extension of knowledge itself. ‡ On the other hand, that which man in the capacity of

* Aristarchus of Samos, the discoverer of the so-called Copernican system of the world.

† One sees that according to Goethe a creative act of the human mind is necessary, in order that life itself may become "living"!

‡ A general text-book of botany or of zoology of the year 1875 is, for example, useless to-day, and that not solely or even chiefly

43 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

artist has formed, the figure into which he has breathed the breath of life, does not decay. I must repeat what I have already said: what lives is immortal. We know that to-day most zoologists teach the theory of immortality — physical immortality — of the germ-plasma; the gulf between organic and inorganic, that is, between living and dead nature, which at the beginning of the nineteenth century was thought to have been bridged,

because of the new material collected, but because actual relations are viewed differently and exact observations are overthrown by still more exact ones. Trace, for example, the dogma of Imbibition with its endless series of observations from its first appearance in 1838 to its point of highest popularity, about 1868; then begins the countermines and in the year 1898 the zealous student hears no more about it. It is particularly interesting to observe how in zoology, in which at the beginning of the nineteenth century great simplification had been considered possible and in which, under Darwin's influence, there had been an effort to reduce, if possible, all animal forms to one single family, now, as our knowledge has gradually increased, an ever greater complication of the original scheme of types has revealed itself. Cuvier thought four "general structure-plans" sufficient. Soon, however, it was necessary to recognise seven different types, all disconnected, and about thirty years ago Carl Claus found that nine was the minimum. But this minimum is not enough. When we disregard all but the convenience and needs of the beginner (Richard Hertwig's well-known and otherwise excellent text-book is an example), when we weigh structural differences against each other without reference to richness of forms and so on — we find now that anatomical

knowledge is more thorough, that not less than sixteen different groups, all equally important as types, must be taken into account. (See especially the masterly *Lehrbuch der Zoologie*, by Fleischmann, 1898.) — At the same time opinions with regard to many fundamental zoological facts have been quite changed by more exact knowledge. For instance, twenty years ago when I studied zoology under Karl Vogt it was considered an established fact that worms stood in direct genetic relation to vertebrates; even such critically independent Darwinists as Vogt considered this settled and could tell many splendid things about the worm, which had developed as high as man. In the meantime much more accurate and comprehensive investigations on the development of animals in the embryo have led to the recognition of the fact that there are two great groups inside the “metazoa” (which comprises animals that do not consist of simple separable cells), the development of which from the moment of the fecundation of the embryo proceeds on quite different lines, so that every true — not merely apparent — relationship between them is out of the question, not only the genetic relationship which the evolutionists assume, but also the purely architectonic. And behold! the worms belong to

44 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

becomes deeper every day; * this is not the proper place for a discussion on the subject; I merely adduce this fact by way of analogy, to justify me in extending to the intellectual sphere the sharp distinction which I have drawn between organised and inorganised conceptions, and in expressing my conviction that nothing which the style of the creative artist has formed into a living figure has ever yet died. Cataclysms may bury

the one group (which reaches its highest point in the insects), and the vertebrates belong to the other and might as well be said to be descended from cuttle-fishes and sea-urchins! (Cf. especially Karl Camillo Schneider: *Grundzüge der tierischen Organisation* in the *Preussische Jahrbücher*, 1900, July number, p. 73 ff.) Such facts serve to prove and confirm what has been said on p. 42, and it is absolutely necessary that the layman, who is ever apt to suppose that the science of his time is perfection, should learn to recognise in it only a transition stage between a past and a future theory.

* See, for example, the standard work of the American zoologist, E. B. Wilson (Professor in Columbia): *The Cell in Development and Inheritance*, 1896, where we read: “The investigation of cell activity has on the whole rather widened than narrowed the great gulf which separates the lowest forms of life from the phenomena of the inorganic world.” [Privy Councillor Wiesner](#) lately assured me of the absolute correctness of this statement from the standpoint of pure natural science. Wilson's book has in the meantime (1900) appeared in a second enlarged edition. The sentence quoted stands unaltered on p. 434. The whole of the last chapter, *Theories of Inheritance and Development*, is to be recommended to all who desire not mere phrases but real insight into the present state of scientific knowledge with reference to the important facts of the animal form. They will find a chaos. As the author says (p. 434), “The extraordinary dimensions of the problem of development, whether ontogenetic or phylogenetic, have been underestimated.” Now it is recognised that every newly discovered phenomenon does not bring enlightenment and simplification, but new confusion and new problems, so that a well-known embryologist (see Introduction) lately exclaimed: “Every animal

embryo seems to carry its own law in itself!“ Rabl arrives at similar results in his investigations on *Der Bau und die Entwicklung der Linse* (1900); he finds that every animal form possesses its specific organs of sense, the differences between which are already conditioned in the embryo cell. And thus by the progress of true science — as distinguished from the nonsense regarding power and matter, with which generations of credulous laymen have been befooled — our view of life became always “more living,” and the day is surely not far distant when it will be recognised as more reasonable to try to interpret the dead from the standpoint of the living than the other way about. (I refer to my *Immanuel Kant*, p. 482 f.)

45 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

such figures, but centuries later they once more emerge in perpetual youth from their supposed grave; it frequently occurs also that the children of thought, like their brothers and sisters, the marble statues, become maimed, broken or even completely shattered; that is, however, a mechanical destruction, not death. And thus Plato's theory of ideas, more than one thousand years old, has been a living factor in the intellectual life of the nineteenth century, an “origin“ of very many thoughts; almost every philosophical speculation of importance has been connected with it at one point or another. In the meantime the spirit of Democritus has been paramount in natural science: fundamental as were the alterations that had to be made on his brilliant theory of atoms in order to adapt it to the knowledge of to-day, he still remains the inventor, the artist. It is he who, to use the language of Shakespeare, has by the force of his imagination bodied forth “the forms of things unknown,” and then “turned them to shapes.”

PLATO

Instances of the manner in which Hellenic creative power has given life and efficacy to thought are not difficult to find. Take Plato's philosophy. His material is not new; he does not sit down, like Spinoza, to evolve a logical system of the world out of the depths of his own consciousness; nor does he with the splendid simplicity of Descartes reach into the bowels of nature, in the delusion that he will there find as explanation of the world a kind of clockwork; he rather takes here and there what seems to him the best — from the Eleatics, from Heraclitus, the Pythagoreans, Socrates — and forms out of this no really logical, but certainly an artistic, whole. The relation of Plato to the former philosophers of Greece is not at all unlike that of Homer

46 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

to past and contemporary poets. Homer, too, probably “invented” nothing, just as little as Shakespeare did later on; but from various sources he laid hold of that which suited his purpose and welded it into a new whole, something thoroughly individual, endowed with the incomparable qualities of the living individual and burthened with the limitations, failings, and peculiarities inseparably bound up with his nature — for every individual says with the God of the Egyptian mysteries: “I am who I am,” and stands before us a new, inscrutable, unfathomable thing. * Similar is Plato's philosophy. Professor Zeller, the famous historian of Greek philosophy, expresses the opinion that “Plato is too much of a poet to be quite a philosopher.” It would probably be difficult to extract any definite sense out of this criticism. Heaven knows what a philosopher *in abstracto* may be. Plato was himself, and no one else, and his example shows us how a mind had to be fashioned in order that Greek thought might yield its highest fruit. He is the Homer of this thought. If a competent man were to analyse the doctrine of Plato in such a way that we could clearly see what portions are the original property of the great thinker, not merely by the process of reproduction through genius but as entirely new inventions, then the poetical element in his work would certainly become specially clear. For Montesquieu, too (in his *Pensées*), calls Plato one of the four great poets of mankind. Especially that which is blamed as inconsistent and contradictory would reveal itself as an artistic necessity. Life is in itself a contradiction: *la vie est l'ensemble des fonctions qui résistent à la mort*, said the great Bichat; each living thing has therefore something fragmentary about it, something

* “A genuine work of art is, like a work of nature, always infinite to our mind; it is seen, felt; it produces its effect, but it cannot really be known, much less can its essence, its merit, be expressed in words.” (Goethe.)

47 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

which might be called arbitrary; the addition which man makes to it — a free, poetical and only conditionally valid addition — is the sole thing that makes the joining of the two ends of the magic girdle possible. Works of art are no exception. Homer's *Iliad* is a splendid example of this, Plato's philosophy a second, Democritus' theory of the world a third of equal importance. And while the philosophies and theories so finely carved by the “logical” method disappear one after the other in the gulf of time, these old ideas take their place in all the freshness of youth, side by side with the most recent. Clearly it is not “objective truth,” but the

manner in which things receive shape, *l'ensemble des fonctions*, as Bichat would say, that is the decisive thing.

Still another remark in reference to Plato; again it is only a hint — for the space at my disposal will not allow of lengthy treatment — but enough, I hope, to leave nothing vague. That Indian thought has exercised an influence of quite a determinative character upon Greek philosophy is now a settled fact; our Hellenists and philosophers have, it is true, long combated this with the violent obstinacy of prejudiced scholars; everything was supposed to have originated in Hellas as *autochthon*; at most the Egyptians and the Semites were allowed to have exercised a moulding influence — whereby philosophy would in truth have had little to gain; the more modern Indologists, however, have confirmed the conjectures of the oldest (particularly of that genius Sir William Jones). It has been fully proved in regard to Pythagoras especially that he had a thorough knowledge of Indian doctrines, * and as Pythagoras is being recognised more and more as the ancestor of Greek thought, that in itself means a great deal. Besides, direct influence upon the Eleatics, Heraclitus, Anaxagoras, Democritus, &c., has been

* Cf. on this point Schroeder: *Pythagoras und die Inder* (1884).

48 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

shown to be most probable. * In these circumstances it cannot be surprising that so lofty a spirit as Plato forced his way through much misleading extraneous matter and — especially in reference to some essential points in all genuine metaphysics — endorses in every detail some of the sublimest views of Indian thinkers. † But compare Plato and the Indians, his works and their works! Then we shall no longer wonder why Plato lives and influences, while the Indian philosophers live indeed but do not directly affect the wide world and the progress of mankind. Indian thought is unsurpassed in depth and comprehensive many-sidedness; if Professor Zeller thought that Plato was “too much of a poet to be quite a philosopher,” we see from the example of the Indian what becomes of a philosopher when a thinker is too “completely” a philosopher to be at the same time something of a poet. This pure thinking of the Indians lacks all capacity of being communicated — and we find this simply but at the same time profoundly expressed by the Indians themselves, for according to their books the highest and final wisdom can be taught only by silence. ‡ How different the Greek! Cost what it

* The best summary account of recent times that is known to me is that of Garbe in his *Sāmkhya-Philosophie* (1894), p. 85 f.; there we also find the most important

bibliography.

† For the comparison between Plato and the Indians in reference to the recognition of the empirical reality and transcendental ideality of experience see specially Max Müller: *Three Lectures on the Vedānta Philosophy* (1894), p. 128 f. Plato's relation to the Eleatics becomes hereby for the first time clear. Fuller information in Deussen's works, especially in his lecture, "On the Philosophy of the Vedānta in Relation to the Metaphysical Doctrines of the West," Bombay, 1893.

‡ "When Bāhva was questioned by Vāshkali, the former explained Brahmanism to him by remaining silent. And Vāshkali said, 'Teach me, O revered one, Brahmanism!' But the latter remained quite silent. When now the other for the second or third time asked, he said, 'I am indeed teaching you it, but you do not understand it; this Brahmanism is silence.' " ([Sankara](#) in the *Sūtra's of Vedānta*, iii. 2, 17). And in the *Taittiriya Upanishad* we read (ii. 4): "From the great joy of knowledge all language and all thought turn away, unable to reach it."

49 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

might, he must "body forth the forms of things unknown and give them shape." Read in this connection the laboured explanation in Plato's *Theaetetus*, where Socrates ultimately admits that we may possess truth without being able to explain it, but that this is not knowledge; what knowledge is remains certainly undecided at the end (a proof of Plato's profundity!); however, in the culminating-point of the dialogue it is termed "right conception," and the remark is made that we must be able to give a reasoned explanation of right conception; we should also read in this connection the famous passage in the *Timaeus*, where the cosmos is compared to a "living animal." It must be conceived and endowed with shape: that is the secret of the Greek, from Homer to Archimedes. Plato's theory of ideas bears exactly the same relation to metaphysics as Democritus' theory of atoms to the physical world: they are creations of a freely creative, shaping power and in them, as in all works of art, there wells up an inexhaustible fountain of symbolical truth. Such creations bear the same relation to material facts as the sun to the flowers. Hellenic influence has not been an unqualified blessing: much that we have received from the Greeks still weighs like a nightmare upon our struggling culture. But the goodly inheritance which we hold from them has been first and foremost this flower-compelling sunshine.

ARISTOTLE

It was under the direct influence of Plato that Aristotle, one of the mightiest sages that the world has ever seen, shot up into the empyrean. The nature of his intellect accounts for the fact that in certain respects he developed as the opposite of Plato: but without Plato he would never

have become a philosopher, at any rate not a metaphysician. A critical appreciation of this

50 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

great man would take me too far: I could not do it adequately even if I were to limit myself to the scope and object of this chapter. I could not, however, pass him by unnoticed, and I take it for granted that no one fails to admire the creative power that he revealed in his logical *Organon*, his *Animal History*, his *Poetics*, &c. These have been the admiration of all ages. To appropriate a remark of Scotus Erigena: it was in the sphere of *naturalium rerum discretio* that he achieved unparalleled results and won the gratitude of the most distant generations. Aristotle's greatness lies not in the fact that he was right — no man of the first rank has made more frequent or more flagrant mistakes — but in the fact that he knew no peace, till he had wrought in all spheres of human life and evolved order out of chaos. * In so far he is a genuine Hellene. Certainly we have paid dear for this “order.” Aristotle was less of a poet than perhaps any of the great philosophers of Greece; Herder says of him that he was perhaps the driest writer that ever used a stylus; † he must, I fancy, be “philosopher enough” even for Professor Zeller; certainly he was this in a sufficient degree — thanks to his Hellenic creative power — to sow more persistent error in the world than any man before or after him. Till a short time ago he had paralysed the natural sciences at all points; philosophy and especially metaphysics have not yet shaken off his yoke; our theology is, if I might call it so, his natural child. In truth, this great and important legacy of the old world was a two-edged sword. I shall return shortly in another connection to Aristotle and Greek philosophy; here I shall only add that the Greeks certainly had great need of an Aristotle to lay emphasis

* Eucken says in his essay, *Thomas von Aquin und Kant*, p. 30 (*Kantstudien*, 1901, vi. p. 12): The intellectual work of Aristotle is “an artistic or more accurately speaking a plastic shaping.”

† *Ideen zur Geschichte der Menschheit*, XIII., chap. v.

51 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

upon empiric methods and in all things to recommend the golden mean; in their brilliant exuberance of pride and creative impulse they were inclined to dash upwards and onwards with thoughtless disregard of the serious ground of reality, and this in time was bound to have a baneful

influence; it is nevertheless characteristic that Aristotle, Greek as he was, exercised comparatively little influence, to begin with, on the development of Greek intellectual life; the healthy instinct of a people that rejoiced in creating rebelled against a reaction which was so fatally violent, and had perhaps a vague feeling that this pretended empiricist brought with him as his curative medicine the poison of dogma. Aristotle was, of course, by profession a doctor — he was a fine example of the doctor who kills to cure. But this first patient of his had a will of his own; he preferred to save himself by flying to the arms of the neo-Platonic quack. But we, hapless posterity, have inherited as our legacy both doctor and quack, who drench our healthy bodies with their drugs. Heaven help us!

NATURAL SCIENCE

One word more about Hellenic science. It is only natural that the scientific achievements of the Greeks should hardly possess for us anything more than an historical interest. But what cannot be indifferent to us is the perception of the incredible advances which were made in the correct interpretation of nature when newly discovered artistic capacities began to develop and exercise influence. We are involuntarily reminded of Schiller's statement that we cannot separate the phantom from the real without at the same time purging the real of the phantom.

If there is a sphere in which one might expect less than nothing from the Greeks, it is that of geography. What we remember having read in their poems — the

52 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

wanderings of Odysseus and of Io &c. — seemed to us rather confused and was rendered still more confusing by contradictory commentaries. Moreover, up to the time of Alexander, the Greeks did not travel far. But if we glance at Dr. Hugo Berger's *Geschichte der wissenschaftlichen Erdkunde der Griechen*, a strictly scientific work, we shall be lost in amazement. At school we learn at most something of Ptolemaeus, and his geographical map strikes us as almost as curious as his heavenly spheres encased in each other; that, however, is all the result of a period of decay, of a science wonderfully perfect, which, however, had become weak in intuition, the science of a raceless chaos of peoples. Let us, on the other hand, inquire into the geographical conceptions of the genuine Greeks, from Anaximander to Eratosthenes, and we shall understand Berger's assertion: "The achievements of the remarkably gifted Greek nation in the sphere of scientific geography are indeed worth

investigating. Even to-day we find their traces at every step and cannot do without the foundations laid by them“ (i. p. vi.). Particularly striking are the comparatively widespread knowledge and the healthy conceptive power possessed by the ancient Ionians. There was serious falling off later, due especially to the influence of “the despisers of physics, meteorology and mathematics, the cautious people, who would believe only their own eyes or the credible information gained at first hand by eye-witnesses“ (i. 139). Still later, investigators had further to contend with so deeply rooted scientific prejudices that the voyages of the “first North Pole explorer,“ Pytheas (a contemporary of Aristotle), with their accurate descriptions of the coasts of Gaul and Britain, their narratives of the sea of ice, their decisive observations with regard to the length of day and night in the northern latitudes were declared by all scholars of antiquity to be lies (iii. 7, compare the

53 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

opinion of men of to-day, iii. 36). Philipp Paulitschke in his work, *Die geographische Erforschung des afrikanischen Kontinents* (second edition, p. 9), calls attention to the fact that Herodotus possessed a more accurate conception of the outlines of Africa than Ptolemaeus. The latter, however, was considered an “authority.“ Thereby hangs a tale, and it is with genuine regret that I establish the fact that we have inherited from the Hellenes not only the results of their “remarkable ability,“ as Berger puts it, but also their mania for creating “authorities“ and believing in them. In this connection the history of palaeontology is specially instructive. With the artless simplicity of unspoiled intuitive power the ancient Greeks had, long before Plato and Aristotle, noticed the mussels on mountain-tops, and recognised even the impressions of fishes for what they are; upon these observations men like Xenophanes and Empedocles had based theories of historical development and geocyclic doctrines. But the authorities declared this view to be absurd; when the facts multiplied, they were simply explained away by the grand theory of *vis plastica*; * and it was not till the year 1517 that a man ventured once more to express the old opinion, that the mountain-tops once lay beneath the sea: “in the year of the Reformation, accordingly, after 1500 years, knowledge had reached the point at which it had stood in classical antiquity.“ † Fracastorius' idea received but scant support, and should it be desired to estimate — it is really very difficult after the advance of science — how great and venerable a power of truth lay in the seeing eye of these ancient poets (Xenophanes and Empedocles were in the first place poets and singers), I recommend the student to consult the writings of the

* According to Quenstedt this hypothesis is due to Avicenna; but it is to be traced back to Aristotle and was taught definitely by Theophrastus (see Lyell, *Principles of Geology*, 12th ed., i. 20).

† Quenstedt, *Handbuch der Petrefaktenkunde*, 2nd ed., p. 2.

54 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

free-thinker Voltaire and to see what abuse he hurled at the palaeontologists even as late as the year 1768. * Just as amusing are the frantic efforts of his scepticism to resist evidence. Oysters had been found on Mont Cenis: Voltaire is of opinion that they fell from the hats of Roman pilgrims! Hippopotamus bones had been dug up not far from Paris: Voltaire declares *un curieux a eu autrefois dans son cabinet le squelette d'un hippopotame!* Evidently scepticism does not suffice to clear a man's sight. † On the other hand, the oldest poems provide us with examples of peculiar discernment. Even in the *Iliad*, for instance, Poseidon is called the “shaker of the earth,” this god, that is, water and especially the sea, is always mentioned as the cause of earthquakes: that is exactly in accordance with the results arrived at by science to-day. However, I wish merely to point to such features as a contrast to the ignorance of those heroes of a pretended “age of enlightenment.” — Much more striking examples of the freeing of the real from the phantom are met with in the sphere of astrophysics, especially in the school of Pythagoras. The theory of the spherical shape of the earth is found in the earliest adepts, and even a great deal that is fantastic in the conceptions of these ancients is rich in instruction, because it contains in a manner *in nuce* what afterwards proved to be correct. ‡ And so

* See *Des singularités de la Nature*, chaps. xii. to xviii., and *L'Homme aux quarante écus*, chap. vi., both written in the year 1768. Similar remarks in his letters (see especially, *Lettre sur un écrit anonyme*, 19.4.1772).

† This same Voltaire had the presumption to describe the great astronomical speculations of the Pythagoreans as “galimatias,” on which the famous astronomist Schiaparelli remarks with justice: “Such men do not deserve to understand what great speculative power was necessary to attain to a conception of the spherical form of the earth, of its free floating in space and its mobility; ideas without which we should have had neither a Copernicus nor a Kepler, a Galileo nor a Newton” (see the work mentioned below, p. 16).

‡ Zeller, *Die Philosophie der Griechen*, 5th ed., Pt. I., p. 414 ff. More technical, but explained with remarkable lucidity in the work of

55 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

in the case of the Pythagoreans, as time went on, to the theory of the

earth as a sphere and the inclination of its orbit, there was added that of its revolving on its axis, and that of motion round a central point in space, vouched for from Philolaus, a contemporary of Democritus, onward; a generation later the hypothetical "central fire" had been replaced by the sun. Not of course as a philosopher, but as an astronomer, Aristarchus had at a later time (about 250 B.C.) founded the heliocentric system upon clear lines and had undertaken to calculate the distance from sun and moon, and recognised in the sun (1900 years before Giordano Bruno) one of the countless fixed stars. *

Schiaparelli, *Die Vorläufer des Kopernikus im Altertum* (translated into German from the Italian original by the author and M. Curtze, published in the *Altpreuussische Monatsschrift*, 1876). "We are in a position to assert that the development of the physical principles of this school was bound by logical connection of ideas to lead to the theory of the earth's motion" (see 5 f.). More details of the "really revolutionary view, that it is not the earth that occupies the centre of the universe," in the recently published book of Wilhelm Bauer, *Der ältere Pythagoreismus* (1897), p. 54 ff. 64 ff. &c. The essay too of Ludwig Ideler, *Über das Verhältnis des Kopernikus zum Altertum* in the *Museum für Altertumswissenschaft*, published by Fr. Aug. Wolf, 1810, p. 391 ff. is still worth reading.

* "Aristarchus puts the sun among the number of the fixed stars and makes the earth move through the apparent track of the sun (that, is the ecliptic), and declares that it is eclipsed according to its inclination," says Plutarch. For this and the other evidences in reference to Aristarchus compare the above-mentioned book of Schiaparelli (pp. 121 ff. and 219). This astronomer is moreover convinced that Aristarchus only taught what was already discovered at the time of Aristotle (p. 117), and here too he shows how the method adopted by the Pythagoreans was bound to lead to the correct solution. But for Aristotle and neo-Platonism the heliocentric system would, even at the time of Christ's birth, have been generally accepted; in truth, the Stagyrite has honestly deserved his position as official philosopher of the orthodox church! On the other hand, the story of the Egyptians having contributed something to the solution of the astrophysical problem has been proved to be quite unfounded, like so many other Egyptian stories (Schiaparelli, pp. 105-6). Moreover Copernicus himself tells us in his introduction dedicated to Pope Paul III.: "I first found in Cicero that Nicetus had believed that the earth moved. Afterwards I found also in Plutarch that some others had likewise been of this opinion. This was what caused me too to begin to think about the earth's mobility."

56 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

What imaginative power, what capacity of bodying forth, as Shakespeare calls it, this presupposes is clearly seen by later history: Bruno had to pay for his imaginative power with his life, Galileo with his freedom; it was not till the year 1822 (2000 years after Aristarchus) that the Roman Church took the work of Copernicus off the Index and sanctioned the printing of books which taught that the earth moves, without, however, annulling or in any way lessening the validity of the Papal bulls, in which it is forbidden to believe in the motion of the earth. * We must, moreover,

always bear in mind that it was the Pythagoreans, who were decried as mystagogues, who led up to this brilliant “purging the real of phantom,” and they were supported by the idealist Plato, particularly towards the end of his life, whereas the herald of the sole saving grace of induction, Aristotle, attacked the theory of the motion of the earth with the whole weight of his empiricism. “The Pythagoreans,” he writes, in reference to the theory of the earth's turning on its axis, which he denied, “do not deduce grounds and causes from phenomena observed, but endeavour to make phenomena harmonise with views and assumptions of their own; they thus attempt to interfere with the formation of the world“ (*De Coelo*, ii. 13). This contrast should certainly give pause to many of our contemporaries; for we have no lack of natural scientists who still cling to Aristotle, and in our newest scientific theories there is still as much stiff-necked dogmatism as in the Aristotelian and Semitic doctrines grafted upon the Christian Church. † — The progress of mathematics and especially of geometry affords us in quite a different

* Cf. Franz Xaver Kraus in the *Deutsche Literaturzeitung*, 1900. Nr. 1.

† What the English scientist, John Tyndall, in his well-known speech in Belfast, 1874, said, “Aristotle put words in the place of things; he preached induction, without practising it,” will be considered by later ages as just as apt for many an Ernst Haeckel of the nineteenth century. It should also be mentioned that the system of

57 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

form a proof of the life-giving influence of Greek creative power. Pythagoras is the founder of scientific mathematics in Europe; that he owed his knowledge, especially the so-called “Pythagorean theorem,” the idea of irrational magnitudes, and — very probably — also his arithmetic, to the Indians is of course an established fact, * and with regard to abstract arithmetical calculation, the so-called “Arabian cyphers“ which we owe to the Aryan Indians, Cantor says, “Algebra attained among the Indians to a height which it has never been able to reach in Greece.“ † But see to what transparent perfection the Greeks have brought formal mathematics, geometry! In the school of Plato was educated Euclid, whose *Elements of Geometry* are such a perfect work of art that it would be exceedingly regrettable if the introduction of simplified and more modern methods of teaching were to remove such a jewel from the horizon of educated people. Perhaps I should be expressing my partiality for mathematics too simply if I confessed that Euclid's *Elements* seem to me almost as fine as Homer's *Iliad*. At any rate I may look upon it as no accident that the incomparable geometrician was also an enthusiastic musician, whose *Elements of Music*, if we possessed them in the original form, would perhaps form a worthy counterpart to his *Elements of*

Geometry. And here I may recognise the cognate poetical spirit, that power of bodying forth and of giving an artistic form to conceptions. This sunbeam will not readily be extinguished. Let me here make a remark which is of the highest importance for our subject: it was the almost pure poetry of arithmetical theory and geometry that caused the Greeks at a later

Tycho de Brahe is also of Hellenic origin; see details in Schiaparelli, (p. 107 ff. and especially p. 115); no possible combination could indeed escape the richness of this imagination.

* See Leopold von Schroeder: *Pythagoras und die Inder*, p. 39 ff.

† Cantor: *Vorlesungen über Geschichte der Mathematik*, i. 511 (quoted from Schroeder, p. 56).

58 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

time to become the founders of scientific mechanics. As in the case of everything Hellenic so here too the meditation of many minds received shape and living power in the life-work of one single all-powerful genius: the “century of mechanics“ has, I think, every reason to venerate Archimedes as its father.

PUBLIC LIFE

Inasmuch as I am only concerned here with the achievements and the individuality of the Greeks in so far as they were important factors in our modern culture and living elements of the nineteenth century, much must be omitted, though in connection with what has been said, one would be tempted to go into more detail. Rohde told us above that creative art was the unifying force for all Greece. Then we saw art — widening gradually to philosophy and science — laying the foundations of a harmony of thinking, feeling and knowing. This next spread to the sphere of public life. The endless care devoted to the development of beautiful, powerful human frames followed artistic rules; the poet had created the ideals, which people henceforth strove to realise. Every one knows how great importance was attached to music in Greek education; even in rough Sparta it was highly honoured and cultivated. The great statesmen have all a direct connection with art or philosophy: Thales, the politician, the practical man, is at the same time lauded as the first philosopher and the first mathematician and astronomer; Empedocles, the daring rebel, who deals the death-blow to the supremacy of the aristocracy in his native city, the inventor of public oratory (as Aristotle tells us), is also poet, mystic, philosopher, natural investigator and

evolutionist. Solon is essentially a poet and a singer, Lycurgus was the first to collect the Homeric

59 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

poems and that too “in the interests of the State and of morality.” * Pisistratus is another instance: the creator of the Theory of Ideas is statesman and reformer; it was Cimon who prepared for Polygnotus a suitable sphere of activity, and Pericles did the same for Phidias. As Hesiod puts it, “Justice (Dikê) is the maiden daughter of Zeus“ † and in this observation is contained a definite philosophy embracing all state relations, a philosophy which though also religious is mainly artistic; all literature, too, even the most abstruse writings of Aristotle, and even remarks like that of Xenophanes (meant, indeed, as a reproach) that the Greeks were accustomed to derive all their culture from Homer, ‡ testify to the same fact. In Egypt, in Judea, and later in Rome we see the law-giver laying down the rules of religion and worship; among the Teutonic peoples the king decrees what his people shall believe; § in Hellas the reverse holds good: it is the poet, the “creator of the race of gods,” the poetical philosopher (Anaxagoras, Plato, &c.), who understands how to lead all men to profound conceptions of the divine and the moral. And those men who — in the period of its greatness — give the land its laws, have been educated in the school of these same poets and philosophers. When Herodotus gives each separate book of his history the name of a Muse, when Plato makes Socrates deliver his finest speeches only in the most beautiful spots inhabited by nymphs, and represents him as closing dialectical discussions with an invocation to Pan — “Oh, grant that I may be inwardly beautiful.

* Plutarch, *Life of Lycurgus*, chap. iv.

† *Work and Days*, 256.

‡ Fragment 4 (quoted from Flach, *Geschichte der griechischen Lyrik*, ii. p. 419).

§ The principle introduced at the time of the Reformation “cujus est regio, illius est religio” only expresses the old condition of law as it existed from time immemorial.

60 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

and that my outward appearance may be in harmony with the inner!“ — when the oracle at Thespieae promises a “land rich in fruits of the soil“ to those who “obey the agricultural teaching of the poet Hesiod“ * — such traits (and we meet them at every step) point to an artistic atmosphere permeating the whole life: the memory of it has descended to us and

coloured many an ideal of our time.

HISTORICAL FALSEHOODS

Hitherto I have spoken almost solely of a positive beneficial inheritance. It would, however, be entirely one-sided and dishonest to let the matter rest there. Our life is permeated with Hellenic suggestions and achievements and I fear that we have adopted the baneful to a greater extent than the good. If Greek intellectual achievements have enabled us to enter the daylight of human life, Greek achievements have, on the other hand — thanks perhaps to the artistic creative power of this remarkable people — also played a great part in casting a mist over the light of day and hiding the sun behind a jealous mask of clouds. Some items of the Hellenic inheritance which we have dragged into the nineteenth century, but which we had been better without, need not be touched upon until we come to deal with that century; some other points must, however, be taken up here. And in the first place let us consider what lies on the surface of Greek life.

That to-day, for example, — when so much that is great and important claims our whole attention, when we have piled up endless treasures of thought, of poetry

* French excavation of the year 1890. (See Peppmüller: *Hesiodos* 1896, p. 152.) One should note also such passages as Aristophanes, *Frogs*, I, 1037 ff.

61 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

and above all of knowledge, of which the wisest Greeks had not the faintest idea and to a share of which every child should have a prescriptive right — that to-day we are still compelled to spend valuable time learning every detail of the wretched history of the Greeks, to stuff our poor brains with endless registers of names of vainglorious heroes in *ades, atos, enes, eiton*, &c., and, if possible, wax enthusiastic over the political fate of these cruel, short-sighted democracies, blinded with self-love, and based upon slavery and idleness, is indeed a hard destiny, the blame for which, however, if we do but reflect, lies not with the Greeks but with our own shortsightedness. * Certainly the Greeks frequently set

* I said “cruel” and in fact this trait is one of the most characteristic of the Hellenes, common to them and the Semites. Humanity, generosity, pardon were as foreign to them as love of truth. When they meet these traits for the first time in the Persians, the Greek historians betray an almost embarrassed astonishment: to spare prisoners, to give a kingly reception to a conquered prince, to entertain and give presents to envoys of the enemy, instead of killing them (as the Lacedaemonians and Athenians did,

Herodotus, vii. 113), indulgence to criminals, generosity even to spies, the assumption that the first duty of every man is to speak the truth, ingratitude being regarded as a crime punishable by the State — all this seems to a Herodotus, a Xenophon, almost as ridiculous as the Persian custom not to spit in presence of others, and other such rules of etiquette (cf. Herodotus i, 133 and 138). How is it possible that in the face of such a mass of indubitable facts our historians can go on systematically falsifying history? Leopold van Ranke, for instance, tells in his *Weltgeschichte* (Text edition, i. 129) the well-known anecdote of the disgraceful treatment of the corpse of Leonidas, and how Pausanias rejected the proposal to avenge himself by a similar sin against the corpse of the Persian commander Mardonius, and continues: “This refusal affords food for endless thought. The contrast between East and West is here expressed in a manner which henceforth was to remain the tradition.” And yet the whole of Greek history is filled with the mutilation not only of corpses, but of living people, torture, and every kind of cruelty, falsehood and treachery. And thus, in order to get in a high-sounding empty phrase, to remain true to the old absurd proverb of the contrast between Orient and Occident (how ridiculous in a spherical world!), in order to retain cherished prejudices and give them a stronger hold than ever, one of the first historians of the nineteenth century simply puts aside all the facts of history — facts concerning which even the most ignorant man can inform himself in Duncker,

62 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

an example of heroism, though indeed frequently also of the opposite; but courage is the commonest of all human virtues, and the constitution of such a State as the Lacedaemonian would lead us rather to conclude that the Hellenes had to be forced to be brave, than that they naturally possessed the proud contempt of death which distinguishes every Gallic circus-fighter, every Spanish toreador and every Turkish Bashi-bazouk. * “Greek history,” says Goethe, “has in it little that is gratifying — besides, that of our own days is really great and stirring; the battles of Leipzig and Waterloo, for example, after all throw into the shade Marathon and others like it. Our own heroes, too, are not behindhand; the French marshals, and Blücher and Wellington may well be put side by side with those of antiquity.” † But Goethe does not go nearly far enough. The traditional history of Greece is, in many points, a huge mystification: we see that more clearly every day; and our modern teachers — under the influence of a “suggestion” that has completely paralysed their honesty — have falsified it worse than the Greeks themselves. With regard to the battle of Marathon, for example, Herodotus admits quite honestly that the Greeks were in this battle put to flight,

Geschichte des Altertums; Gobineau, *Histoire des Perses*; Maspero, *Les premières Mêlées des peuples*, &c. — and the credulous student is forced to accept a manifest untruth with regard to the moral character of the different human races, on the basis of a doubtful anecdote. Such unscrupulous perfidy can only be explained in the case of such a man by the supposition of a “suggestion” paralysing all judgment. As a matter of fact, from India and Persia we derive the one kind of humanity and generosity and love of truth, from Judea and Arabia the other (caused by reaction) — but none from Greece,

nor from Rome, that is, therefore, none from the “Occident.” How far removed Herodotus is from such designed misrepresentation of history! for, when he has told of the mutilation of Leonidas, he adds, “Such treatment is not the custom among the Persians. They more than all other nations are wont to honour brave warriors” (vii. 238).

* Helvétius remarks exquisitely (*De l'Esprit*, ed. 1772, II. 52): “La législation de Lycurgue métamorphosait les hommes en héros.”

† Conversation with Eckermann, Nov. 24, 1824.

63 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

where they were opposed by Persians and not Hellenes (iv. 113); how this fact is always explained away by us! And with what infantile credulity — though we know quite well how utterly unreliable Greek numbers are — all our historians still copy from the old stories the number of 6400 Persian slain and 192 Hoplites who met their death bravely, but omit to mention what Herodotus in the same chapter (vi. 117) relates with inimitable artlessness how an Athenian became blind with fright in that battle. This “glorious victory” was in reality an unimportant skirmish, in which the Greeks had rather the worst than the best of it. * The Persians, who had come to Greece in Ionian ships, not of their own accord, but because they were invited by the Greeks, returned in all tranquillity to Ionia with several thousand prisoners and rich booty, because these ever fickle allies thought the moment unfavourable (see Herodotus, vi. 118). † In the same way the whole description of the later struggle between Hellas and the Persian empire is falsified, ‡ but after all we must not criticise the Greeks too harshly

* Since these lines were written, I have received the well known English Hellenist Professor Mahaffy's *A Survey of Greek Civilisation*, 1897, in which the battle of Marathon is termed “a very unimportant skirmish.”

† See Gobineau: *Histoire des Perses*, ii. 138-142.

‡ Particularly the famous battle of Salamis, of which one gets a refreshing description in the above-mentioned work of Count Gobineau, ii. 205-211): “C'est quand les derniers bataillons de l'arrière-garde de Xerxès eurent disparu dans la direction de la Béotie et que toute sa flotte fut partie, que les Grecs prirent d'eux-mêmes et de ce qu'ils venaient de faire et de ce qu'ils pouvaient en dire l'opinion que la poésie a si heureusement mise en oeuvre. Encore fallut-il que les alliés apprissent que la flotte ennemie ne s'était pas arrêtée à Phalère pour qu'ils osassent se mettre en mouvement. Ne sachant où elle allait — ils restaient comme éperdus. Ils se hasardèrent enfin à sortir de la baie de Salamine, et se risquèrent jusqu'à la hauteur d'Andros. C'est ce qu'ils appelèrent plus tard avoir poursuivi les Perses! Ils se gardèrent cependant d'essayer de les joindre, et rebroussant chemin, ils retournèrent chacun dans leurs patries respectives” (p. 208). In another place (ii, 360) Gobineau characterises Greek history as “la plus élaborée des fictions du plus artiste des peuples.”

64 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

for this, as the same tendency * has manifested and still manifests itself among all other nations. However, if Hellenic history is really to mould the intellect and the judgment, it would need, one would fancy, to be a true, just history, grasping events by their deepest roots and revealing organic connections, not the immortalisation of half-invented anecdotes and views, which could only be excused by the bitterness of the struggle for existence, and the crass ignorance and infatuation of the Greeks. Glorious indeed is the poetic power by which gifted men in that land sought to inspire with patriotic heroism a fickle, faithless, corruptible people inclined to panic, and — where the discipline was firm enough, as in Sparta — actually succeeded in doing so. Here too we see art as the animating and moving power. But that we should impose as truth upon our children the patriotic lies of the Greeks, and not merely on our children, but also — in works like Grote's — should force them as dogmas upon the judgment of healthy men and let them become an influential factor in the politics of the nineteenth century, is surely an extreme abuse of our Hellenic legacy, after Juvenal 1800 years ago mockingly had said:

creditur quidquid Graecia mendax audet in historia.

Still worse does it seem to me to force us to admire

* The principal thing is clearly not what is found in learned books, but what is taught in school, and here I can speak from experience, for I was first in a French “Lycée,” then in an English “college,” afterwards I received instruction from the teachers of a Swiss private school, and last of all from a learned Prussian. I testify that in these various countries even the best certified history, that of the last three centuries (since the Reformation), is represented in so absolutely different ways that without exaggerating I may affirm that the principle of historical instruction is still everywhere in Europe systematic misrepresentation. While the achievements of our own country are always emphasised, those of others passed over or suppressed, certain things put always in the brightest light, others left in the deepest shadow, there is formed a general picture which in many parts differs only for the subtlest eye from naked lies. The foundation of all genuine truth: the absolutely disinterested love of justice is almost everywhere absent; a proof that we are still barbarians!

65 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

political conditions, which should rather be held up as an example to be avoided. It is no business of mine to take any side, either that of Great Greece or of Little Greece, of Sparta or of Athens, either (with Mitford and Curtius) that of the nobility, or (with Grote) of the Demos; where the political characters, individually or as a class, are so pitiful, no lofty political conditions could exist. The belief that we even received the idea of freedom from the Hellenes is a delusion; for freedom implies

patriotism, dignity, sense of duty, self-sacrifice, but from the beginning of their history to their suppression by Rome, the Hellenic States never cease to call in the enemies of their common fatherland against their own brothers; indeed, within the individual States, as soon as a statesman is removed from power, away he hurries, it may be to other Hellenes, or to Persia or to Egypt, later to the Romans, in order to reduce his own city to ruin with their help. Numerous are the complaints of the immorality of the Old Testament; to me the history of Greece seems just as immoral; for among the Israelites we find, even in their crimes, character and perseverance, as well as loyalty to their own people. It is not so with the Greeks. Even a Solon goes over at last to Pisistratus, denying the work of his life, and a Themistocles, the “hero of Salamis,” bargains shortly before the battle about the price for which he would betray Athens, and later actually lives at the court of Artaxerxes as “declared enemy of the Greeks,” but rightly regarded by the Persians as a “crafty Greek serpent” and of little account; as for Alcibiades, treachery had become with him so entirely a life-principle that Plutarch can jokingly say that he changed colour “quicker than a chameleon.” All this was so much a matter of course with the Hellenes that their historians do not disturb themselves about it. Herodotus, for instance, tells us with the greatest tran-

66 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

quillity how Miltiades forced on the battle of Marathon by calling the attention of the commander-in-chief to the fact that the Athenian troops were inclined to go over to the Persians, and urging him to attack as soon as possible, that there might not be time to put this “evil design” into execution; half an hour later, and the “heroes of Marathon” would have marched with the Persians against Athens. I remember nothing like this in Jewish history. In such a soil it is manifest that no admirable political system could flourish. “The Greeks,” says Goethe again, “were friends of freedom, yes, but each one only of his own freedom; and so in every Greek there was a tyrant.” If any one wishes to make his way to the light through this primeval forest of prejudices, phrases and lies, which have grown up luxuriantly in the course of centuries, I strongly recommend him to read the monumental work of Julius Schvarcz, *Die Demokratie von Athen*, in which a statesman educated theoretically as well as practically, who is at the same time a philologist, has shown once for all what importance is to be attached to this legend. The closing words of this full and strictly scientific account are: “Inductive political science must now admit that the democracy of Athens does not deserve the position which the delusion of centuries has been good enough to assign to it in the history of mankind” (p. 589). *

One single trait moreover suffices to characterise the whole political

economy of the Greeks — the fact that Socrates found it necessary to prove at such length that to be a statesman one must understand something of the business of State! He was condemned to death for preaching this simple elementary truth. “The cup of poison was given purely and simply to the political

* It is the first part (published 1877) of a larger work: *Die Demokratie*, the second part of which appeared in two volumes in 1891 and 1898 under the title *Die Römische Massenherrschaft*.

67 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

reformer,“ * not to the atheist. These ever-gossiping Athenians combined in themselves the worst conceit of an arrogant aristocracy and the passionate spitefulness of an ignorant impudent rabble. They had at the same time the fickleness of an Oriental despot. When, shortly after the death of Socrates, as the story goes, the tragedy *Palamedes* was acted, the assembled spectators burst into tears over the execution of the noble, wise hero; the tyrannical people lamented its mean act of vengeance. † Not a jot more did it listen to Aristotle and other wise men, on the contrary it banished them. And these wise men! Aristotle is wondrous acute and as a political philosopher as worthy of our admiration as the great Hellenes always are, when they rise to artistically philosophical intuition; he, however, played no part as a statesman, but calmly and contentedly watched the conquests of Philip, which brought ruin on his native land, but procured for him the skeletons and skins of rare animals; Plato had the success in statesmanship which one would expect from his fantastic constructions. And even the real statesmen — a Draco, a Solon, a Lycurgus, yes, even a Pericles — seem to me, as I said already in the preface to this chapter, rather clever dilettanti than politicians who in any sense laid firm foundations. Schiller somewhere characterises Draco as a “beginner“ and the constitution of Lycurgus as “schoolboyish.“ More decisive is the judgment of the great teacher of Comparative History of Law, B. W. Leist: “The Greek, without understanding the historical forces that rule the life of nations, believed himself to be completely master of the present. Even in his highest aspirations he looked upon the actual present of the State as an object

* Schvarcz, *loc. cit.* p. 394 ff.

† According to Gomperz, *Griechische Denker*, ii 95, this anecdote is an “empty tale“: but in all such inventions, as in the *eppur si muove*, &c., there lives an element of higher truth; they are just the reverse of “empty.“

68 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

in which the philosopher might freely realise his theory, taking over from history as a guide only so much as might suit this theory.“ * In this sphere the Greeks lack all consistency and self-control; no being is more immoderate than the Hellene, the preacher of moderation (Sophrosyne) and the “golden mean“; we see his various constitutions sway hither and thither between hyperfantastic systems of perfection and purblind prejudice for the interests of the immediate present. Even Anacharsis complained, “In the councils of the Greeks it is the fools who decide.“ And so it is clear we should seek to admire and emulate not Greek history in truth, but Greek historians, not the heroic acts of the Greeks — which are paralleled everywhere — but the artistic celebration of their deeds. It is quite unnecessary to talk nonsense about Occident and Orient, as if “man“ in the true sense could arise only in a definite longitude; the Greeks stood with one foot in Asia and the other in Europe; most of their great men are Ionians or Sicilians; it is ridiculous to seek to oppose their fictions with the weapons of earnest scientific method, and to educate our children with phrases; on the other hand, we shall ever admire and emulate in Herodotus his grace and naturalness, a higher veracity, and the victorious eye of the genuine artist. The Greeks fell, their wretched characteristics ruined them, their morality was already too old, too subtle and too corrupt to keep pace with the enlightenment of their intellect; the Hellenic intellect, however, won a greater victory than any other intellect has won; by it — and by it alone — “man entered into the daylight of life“; the freedom which the Greek hereby won for mankind was not political freedom — he was and remained a tyrant and a slave-dealer — it was the freedom to shape not merely instinctively but with conscious creative power — the freedom to invent as a poet. This is the freedom of

* *Graeco-italische Rechtsgeschichte*, pp. 589, 595, &c.

69 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

which Schiller spoke, a valuable legacy, for which we should be eternally grateful to the Hellenes, one worthy of a much higher civilisation than theirs and of a much purer one than ours.

It has been necessary for me to discuss these matters as paving the way for a last consideration.

DECLINE OF RELIGION

If we realise the fact that the educationist has the power to restore dead bodies to life and to force mummies as models upon an active, industrious generation, then we must on closer investigation see that others can do the same thing in a still higher degree, since among the most living portions of our Hellenic inheritance we find a really considerable part of our Church doctrine — not indeed its bright side, but the deep shade of weird and stupid superstition, as well as the arid thorns of scholastic sophistry, bereft of all the leaves and blossoms of poetry. The angels and devils, the fearful conception of hell, the ghosts of the dead (which in this presumably enlightened nineteenth century set tables in motion to such an extent with knocking and turning), the ecstatically religious delirium, the hypostasis of the Creator and of the Logos, the definition of the Divine, the conception of the Trinity, in fact the whole basis of our Dogmatics we owe to a great extent to the Hellenes or at least to their mediation; at the same time we are indebted to them for the sophisticated manner of treating these things: Aristotle with his theory of the Soul and of the Godhead is the first and greatest of all schoolmen; his prophet, Thomas Aquinas, was nominated by the infallible Pope official philosopher of the Catholic Church towards the end of the nineteenth century (1879); at the same time a large proportion of the logic-chopping

70 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

free-thinkers, enemies of all metaphysics and proclaimers of a new “religion of reason,” like John Stuart Mill and David Strauss, &c., based their theories on Aristotle. Here, as is evident, we have to deal with a legacy of real living force, and it reminds us that we should speak with humility of the advances made in our time.

The matter is an exceedingly complicated one; if in this whole chapter I have had to be satisfied with mere allusions, I shall here have to confine myself to hinting at allusions. And yet in this very matter relations have to be pointed out, which, so far as I know, have never been revealed in their proper connection. I wish to do this with all modesty, and yet with the utmost precision.

It is the common practice to represent the religious development of the Hellenes as a popular superstitious polytheism, which in the consciousness of some pre-eminent men had gradually transformed itself into a purer and more spiritualised faith in a single God; — the human spirit thus advancing from darkness to ever brighter light. Our reason loves simplifications: this gradual soaring of the Greek spirit, till it was ripe for a higher revelation, is very much in tune with our inborn sluggishness of thought. But this conception is in reality utterly false and proved to be false: the faith in gods, as we meet it in Homer, is the most

elevated and pure feature of Greek religion. This religious philosophy, though, like all things human, compassed and limited in many ways, was suited to the knowledge, thought and feeling of a definite stage of civilisation, and yet it was in all probability as beautiful, noble and free as any of which we have knowledge. The distinguishing-mark of the Homeric creed was its intellectual and moral freedom — indeed, as Rohde says, “almost free-thinking“; this religion is the faith acquired through artistic intuition and

71 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

analogy (that is, purely by way of genius) in a cosmos — an “order of the world,“ which is everywhere perceived, but which we are never able to think out or comprehend, because we after all are ourselves elements of this cosmos — an order which nevertheless reflects itself of necessity in everything, and which therefore in Art becomes visible and directly convincing. The conceptions which are held by the people, and have been produced by the poetical and symbolising faculty of each simple mind as yet innocent of dialectics, are here condensed and made directly visible, and that, too, by lofty minds, which are still strong enough in faith to possess the most glowing fervour and at the same time free enough to fashion according to their own sovereign artistic judgment. This religion is hostile to all faith in ghosts and spirits, to all clerical formalism; everything of the nature of popular soul-cult and the like which occurs in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* is wonderfully cleared, stripped of all that is terrible, and raised to the eternal truth of something symbolical; it is equally hostile to every kind of sophistry, to all idle inquiries regarding cause and purpose, to that rationalistic movement, therefore, which has subsequently shown itself in its true colours as merely the other side of superstition. So long as these conceptions, which had found their most perfect expression in Homer and some other great poets, still lived among the people, the Greek religion possessed an ideal element; later (particularly in Alexandria and Rome) it became an amalgam of Pyrrhonic, satirical, universal scepticism, gross superstitious belief in magic and sophistical scholasticism. The fine structure was undermined from two different quarters, by men who appeared to possess little in common, who, however, later joined hands like brothers, when the Homeric Parthenon (*i.e.*, “temple of the Virgin“) had become a heap of ruins within which a philological “stone-polishing workshop“ had been set

72 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

up: it was these two parties that had found no favour with Homer, priestly superstition and hypersubtle hunting after causality. *

The results of anthropological and ethnographic study allow us, I think, to distinguish between superstition and religion. Superstition we find everywhere, over the whole earth, and that too in definite forms which resemble each other very much in all places and among the most different races, and which are subject to a demonstrable law of development; superstition cannot in reality be eradicated. Religion, on the other hand, as being a collective image of the order of the world as it hovers before the imagination, changes very much with times and peoples; many races (for instance the Chinese) feel little or no religious craving; in others the need is very pronounced; religion may be metaphysical, materialistic or symbolistic, but it always appears — even where its external elements are all borrowed — in a completely new, individual form according to time and country, and each of its forms is, as history teaches us, altogether transitory. Religion has something passive in it; while it lives it reflects a condition of culture; at the same time it contains arbitrary moments of inestimable consequence; how much freedom was manifested by the Hellenic poets in their treatment of the material of their faith! To what an extent did the resolutions of the Council of Trent, as to what Christendom should believe and should not believe, depend on diplomatic moves and the fortune of arms! This cannot be said of superstition; its might is assailed in vain by power of Pope and of poets; it crawls along a thousand hidden paths, slumbers unconsciously in every

* It matters little that in Homer's time there may have been no “philosophers”; the fact that in his works nothing is “explained,” that not the least attempt at a cosmogony is found, shows the tendency of his mind with sufficient clearness. Hesiod is already a manifest reaction, but still too magnificently symbolical to find favour with any rationalist.

73 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

breast and is every moment ready to burst out into flame; it has, as Lippert says, “a tenacity of life which no religion possesses”; * it is at the same time a cement for every new religion and an enemy in the path of every old one. Almost every man has doubts about his religion, no one about his superstition; expelled from the direct consciousness of the so-called “educated” classes, it nestles in the innermost folds of their brains and plays its tricks there all the more wantonly, as it reveals itself in the mummery of authentic learning, or of the noisiest freethinking. We have had plenty of opportunity † of observing all this in our century of Notre

Dame de Lourdes, "Shakers," phrenology, odic force, spirit photographs, scientific materialism, and "healing priestcraft," ‡ &c. To understand rightly the Hellenic inheritance we must learn to make a distinction there too. If we do so, our eyes will open to the fact that even in Hellas, at the brilliant epoch of the glorious art-inspired religion, an undercurrent of superstitions and cults of quite a different kind had never ceased to flow: at a later period, when the Greek spirit began to decline and the belief in gods was a mere form, it broke out in a flood and united with the rationalistic scholasticism which had in the meantime been abundantly fed from various sources, till finally it presented in pseudo-Semitic neo-Platonism the grinning caricature of lofty, free intellectual achievements. This stream of popular belief, restrained in the Dionysian cult, which through tragedy reached the highest artistic perfection, flowed on underground by Delphi and Eleusis; the ancient soul-cult, the awe-stricken and reverent remem-

* *Christentum, Volksglaube und Volksbrauch*, p. 379. In the second part of this book there is an instructive list of pre-Christian customs and superstitions still prevalent in Europe.

† "Even the most civilised nations do not easily shake off their belief in magic." — Sir John Lubbock, *The Prehistoric Age* (German edition, ii. 278).

‡ F. A. Lange used the expression, "medizinisches Pfaffentum," somewhere in his *Geschichte des Materialismus*.

74 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

brance of the dead formed its first and richest source; with this became gradually associated, by inevitable progression (and in various forms) the belief in the immortality of the soul. Doubtless the Hellenes had brought the original stock of their various superstitions from their former home; but new elements were constantly added, partly as Semitic * imports from the coasts and islands of Asia Minor, but with more permanent and disturbing influence from that North which the Greeks thought they despised. It was not poets that proclaimed these sacred "redeeming" mysteries but Sibyls, Bacchides, female utterers of Pythian oracles; ecstatic frenzy took hold of one district after the other, whole nations became mad, the sons of the heroes who had fought before Troy whirled round in circles like the Dervishes of today, mothers strangled their children with their own hands. It was these people, however, who fostered the real faith in souls, and even the belief in the immortality of the soul was spread by them from Thrace to Greece. †

* The Semitic peoples in old times do not seem to have believed in the immortality of the individual soul; but their cults supplied the Hellene, as soon as he grasped this thought, with weighty stimulus. The Phoenician divine system of the Cabiri (*i.e.*, the

seven powerful ones) was found by the Greeks on Lemnos, Rhodes and other islands, and with regard to this Duncker writes in his *Geschichte des Altertums*, I, 279, "The myth of Melcart and Astarte, of Astarte who was adopted into the number of these gods, and of Melcart, who finds again the lost goddess of the moon in the land of darkness and returns from there with her to new light and life — gave the Greeks occasion to associate with the secret worship of the Cabiri the conceptions of life after death, which had been growing among them since the beginning of the sixth century."

† We need not be surprised that this belief (according to Herodotus, iv. 93) was prevalent in the Indo-European race of the Getae and from there found its way into Greece; it was an old racial possession; it is very striking, on the other hand, that the Hellene at the period of his greatest strength had lost this belief or rather was quite indifferent to it. "An everlasting life of the soul is neither asserted nor denied from the Homeric standpoint. Indeed, this thought does not come into consideration at all" (Rohde, *Psyche*, p. 195); a remarkable confirmation of Schiller's assertion that the aesthetic man, *i.e.*, he in whom the sensual and the moral are not diametrically opposed in aim "needs no

75 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

In the mad Bacchantic dance the soul for the first time (among the Greek people] separated itself from the body — that same soul about which Aristotle from the stillness of his study had so much that was edifying to tell us; in the Dionysian ecstasy man felt himself one with the immortal gods and concluded that his individual human soul must also be immortal, a conclusion which Aristotle and others at a later time attempted ingeniously to justify. * It seems to me that we are still suffering from something of this vertigo! And for that reason let us attempt to come to a sensible conclusion regarding this legacy which clings so firmly to us.

To this belief in a soul Hellenic poetry as such has contributed nothing; it reverently adapted itself to the conventional — the ceremonious burial of Patroclus, for instance, who otherwise could not enter on his last rest — the performance of the necessary acts of consecration by Antigone beside the corpse of her brother — and nothing more. It did unconsciously help to promote the belief in immortality, by maintaining that the gods must be conceived not indeed as uncreated but, for their greater glorification, as undying — an idea quite foreign to the Aryan Indians. † The idea of sempiternity, that is, the

immortality to support and hold him" (Letter to Goethe, August 9, 1796). Whether or not the Getae were Goths and so belonged to the Teutonic peoples, as Jacob Grimm asserted, does not here much matter; however, a full discussion of this interesting question is to be found in Wietersheim-Dahn, *Geschichte der Völkerwanderung*, i. 597; the result of the investigation is against Grimm's view. The story that the Getic King Zalmoxis learned the doctrine of immortality from Pythagoras is characterised by Rohde as an "absurd pragmatism" (*Psyche*, p. 320).

* On this very important point, the genesis of the belief in immortality among the Greeks, see especially Rohde, *Psyche*, p. 296.

† In an old Vedic hymn, which I quoted on [p. 35](#), a verse runs, “The Gods have arisen on this side of creation“; in their capacity as individuals, however, they too cannot, according to the Indian conviction, possess “sempiternity,“ and [Sankara](#) says in the *Vedānta Sutra's*, when speaking of the individual gods, “Such words as Indra, &c., signify, like the word 'General,' only occupation of a definite post. Whoever therefore occupies the post in question bears the title Indra“ (i. 3, 28, p. 170 of Deussen's translation).

76 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

immortality of an individual who at some time had come into being, was in consequence familiar to the Greeks as an attribute of their gods; poetry probably found it already existing, but at any rate it was first raised to a definite reality by the power of poetical imagination. Art had no greater share in it than this. Art rather endeavours as far as possible to remove, to temper, to minimise that “belief in daemons which has everywhere to be taken as primeval,“ * the conception of a “lower world,“ the story of “islands of the blest“ — in short, all those elements which, growing up out of the subsoil of superstition, force themselves on the human imagination — and all this in order to gain a free, open field for the given facts of the world and of life, and for their poetically religious, imaginative treatment. Unlike art, popular belief, not being satisfied with a religion so lofty and poetic, preferred the teaching of the barbarous Thracians. Neither was it accepted by philosophy, which held a position inferior to such poetical conceptions, until the day came when it felt itself strong enough to set history against fable, and detailed knowledge against symbol; but the stimulus in this direction was not drawn by philosophy from itself nor from the results of empiric science, which had nowhere dealt with the doctrines of souls, the entelechies of Aristotle, immortality and the rest; it was received from the people, partly from Asia (through Pythagoras), partly from Northern Europe (as Orphic or Dionysian cult). The theory of a soul separable from the living body and more or less independent; the theory easily deduced therefrom of bodiless and yet living souls — those, for example, of the dead, which live on as mere souls, as also of a “soul-possessed“ divine principle (quite analogous to the *Nous* of Anaxagoras, that is, of power distinct from matter) — furthermore, the theory of

* Deussen, *Allgemeine Geschichte der Philosophie*, i. 39. See also Tylor.

77 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

the immortality of this soul — all these are, to begin with, not results of

quicken philosophical thought, nor do they form in any sense an evolutionary development, a glorification of that Hellenic national religion which had found its highest expression in the poets; it is rather that people and thinker here put themselves in opposition to poet and religion. And though obeying different impulses, people and thinker played into each other's hands, and together caused the decline and fall of poetry and religion. And when the crisis thus brought about was past, the result was that philosophers had taken the place of artists as the heralds of religion. To begin with, both poets and philosophers had of course derived their material from the people; but which of the two, I ask, has employed it the better and more wisely? Which has pointed the way to freedom and beauty, and which to bondage and ugliness? Which has paved the way for healthy empiric science and which has checked it for almost twenty centuries? In the meantime, from quite another direction, from the midst of a people that possessed neither art nor philosophy, a religious force had entered the world, so strong that it could bear, without breaking down, the madness of the whirling dance that had been elevated to a system of reason — so full of light that even the dark power of purely abstract logic could never dim its radiance — a religious power, qualified by its very origin to promote civilisation rather than culture; had that power not arisen, then this supposed elevation to higher ideals would have ended miserably in ignominy, or rather its actual wretchedness would never have remained concealed. If any one doubts this, let him read the literature of the first centuries of our era, when the State-paid, anti-Christian philosophers entitled their theory of knowledge "Theology" (Plotinus, Proclus, &c.), let him see how these worthies in the leisure hours which remained to

78 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

them after picking Homer to pieces, commenting on Aristotle, building up Trinities, and discussing the question whether God had the attribute of life as well as of being, and other such subtleties, wandered from one place to another in order that they might be initiated into mysteries, or admitted as hierophants into Orphic societies — the foremost thinkers sunk to the grossest belief in magic. Or if such reading appals him, let him take up the witty Heinrich Heine of the second century, Lucian, and complete the information there given by the more serious but no less interesting writings of his contemporary Apuleius * — and then say where there is more religion to be found and where more superstition, where there is free, sound, creative human power and where fruitless, slovenly working of the treadmill in a continual circle. And yet the men who stand in that Homeric circle seem to us childishly pious and superstitious, these on the other hand enlightened thinkers! †

One more example! We are wont according to old custom to commend Aristotle more warmly for his teleological theory of the universe than for anything else, whereas we reproach Homer with his anthropomorphism. If we did not suffer from artificially produced atrophy of the brain, we should be bound to see the absurdity of this. Teleology, that is, the theory of finality according to the measure of human reason, is anthropomorphism in its highest potency. When man can grasp the plan of the cosmos, when he can say whence the world comes, whither it goes and what the purpose of each individual thing is,

* See particularly in the eleventh book of the [Golden Ass](#) the initiation into the mysteries of Isis, Osiris, Serapis and the admission into the association of the Pastophori. Plutarch's writing *On Isis and Osiris* should also be read.

† Bussell, *The School of Plato*, 1896, p. 345, writes of this philosophical period: "The daemons monopolise a worship, which cannot be devoted to a mere idea, and philosophy breathes out its life on the steps of smoking sacrificial altars and amid the incantations and delusions of prophecy and magic."

79 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

then he is really himself God and the whole world is "human"; this is expressly stated by the Orphics and — Aristotle. But the poet's attitude is quite different. Every one quotes, and has done so even from the times of Heraclitus and down to those of Ranke, the charge which Xenophanes made against Homer that he forms the gods like Hellenes, but that the negroes would invent a black Zeus and horses would think of the gods as horses. No remark could be more senseless or superficial. * The reproach is not even correct in fact, since the gods in Homer appear in all possible forms. As K. Lehrs says in his fine but unfortunately almost forgotten book, *Ethik und Religion der Griechen* (pp. 136-7): "The Greek gods are by no means images of men, but antitypes. They are neither cosmic potencies (as the philosophers first regarded them) nor glorified men! They frequently occur in animal form and only bear as a rule the human form as being the noblest, most beautiful and most suitable, but every other form is in itself just as natural to them." Incomparably more important, however, is the fact that in Homer and the other great poets all teleology is wanting; for undeniable anthropomorphism did not appear till this idea did. Why should I not represent the gods in the image of man? Should I introduce them into my poem as sheep or beetles? Did not Raphael and Michael Angelo do the very same thing as Homer? Has the Christian religion not accepted the idea that God appeared in human form? Is the Jehovah of the Israelites not a prototype of the noble and yet quarrelsome and revengeful Jew? It would surely not be advisable to recommend to the imagination of the artist the Aristotelian "being without size which thinks

* Giordano Bruno, enraged at this fundamentally wrong and pedantically narrow judgment, writes: "Only *insensate bestie et veri bruti* would be capable of making such a statement" (*Italienische Schriften*, ed. Lagarde, p. 534). One should compare also M. W. Visser, *Die nicht menschengestaltigen Götter der Griechen*, Leyden, 1903.

80 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

the thing thought." On the other hand, the poetical religion of the Greeks does not presume to give information about the "uncreated" and to "explain according to reason" the future. It gives a picture of the world as in a hollow mirror and thinks thereby to quicken and to purify the spirit of man, and nothing more. Lehrs demonstrates, in the book mentioned above, how the idea of teleology was introduced by the philosophers, from Socrates to Cicero, but found no place in Hellenic poetry. "The idea of beautiful order, harmony, cosmos, which pervades Greek religion, is," he says (p. 117), "a much higher idea than that of teleology, which in every respect has something paltry about it." To bring the matter quite home to us, I ask, Which is the anthropomorphist, Homer or Byron? Homer, whose personal existence could be doubted, or Byron, who so powerfully grasped the strings of the harp and attuned the poetry of our century to the melody, in which Alps and Ocean, Past and Present of the human race only serve to mirror, and form a frame for the individual Ego? I should think it almost impossible for each of us to-day, surrounded as we are by human actions and permeated with the dim idea of an ordered Cosmos to remain to so small a degree anthropomorphic, so very "objective" as Homer.

METAPHYSICS

It is essential to distinguish between philosophy and philosophy, and I think I have above warmly expressed my admiration for the Hellenic philosophy of the great epoch, particularly where it appeared as a creative activity of the human spirit closely related to poetry; in this respect Plato's theory of ideas is unsurpassed, while Aristotle appears to be incomparably great in analysis and method, but at the same time, as a philosopher in the

81 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

sense given, the real originator of the decay of the Hellenic spirit. But here as elsewhere we must guard against over-simplification; we must

not attribute to a single man what was peculiar to his people and only found in him its most definite expression. In reality Greek philosophy from the very beginning contained the germ of its fatal development later; the inheritance which still lies heavily upon us goes back almost to Homer's time. For it will be found upon reflection, that the old Hylozoists are related to the Neoplatonists: whoever, like Thales, without further ado “explains“ the world as having arisen from water, will afterwards equally find an “explanation“ of God; his nearest successor, Anaximander, establishes as principle the “Infinite“ (the Apeiron), the “Unchangeable amid all changes“: here in truth we are already in the toils of the most unmitigated scholasticism and can calmly wait till the wheel of time sets down on the surface of the earth Ramon Lull and Thomas Aquinas. The fact that the oldest among the well-known Greek thinkers believed in the presence of countless daemons, but at the same time from the beginning * attacked the gods of the popular religion and of the poets — Heraclitus would “gladly have scourged“ † Homer — serves only to complete the picture. However, one thing must be added: a man like Anaximander, so subordinate as a thinker, was a naturalist and theorist of the first rank, a founder of scientific geography, a promoter of astronomy; all these people are presented to us as philosophers, but in reality philosophy was for them something quite apart; surely we should not reckon the agnosticism of Charles Darwin or the creed of Claude Bernard among the philosophical achievements of our

* Authenticated at least from Xenophanes and Heraclitus onwards.

† I quote from Gomperz: *Griechische Denker*, i. 50; according to Zeller's account so violent an expression would seem unlikely. If I remember rightly, it is Xenophanes who assigns the words to Heraclitus.

82 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

century? Here is a characteristic example of the many traditional consecrated confusions; we find the name of [Sankara](#) (certainly one of the greatest metaphysicians that ever lived) in no history of philosophy, while on the other hand the worthy olive-farmer Thales is ever paraded as the “first philosopher.“ And, if the matter be closely investigated, it will be found that almost all so-called philosophers at the zenith of Hellenic greatness are in a similar position: so far as we can judge from contradictory reports, Pythagoras did not found a philosophic school, but a political, social, dietetic and religious brotherhood; Plato himself, the metaphysician, was a statesman, moralist, practical reformer; Aristotle was a professional encyclopaedist, and the unity of his philosophy is due much more to his character than to his forced, half-traditional, contradictory metaphysics. Without therefore underestimating in any

way the achievements of the Greek thinkers, we shall yet, I think, be able to assert (and so put an end to the confusion), that these men have paved the way for our science (including logic and ethics), and for our theology, and that they, through their poetically creative genius, have poured a flood of light upon the paths which speculation and intellectual investigation were afterwards to follow; as metaphysicians, in the real narrower sense of the word, they were, however, with the solo exception of Plato, comparatively of much less importance.

That nothing may remain obscure in a matter so weighty that it strikes into the depths of our life to-day, I should like briefly to refer to the fact, that in the person of the great Leonardo da Vinci we have an example — closely related to modern thought and feeling — of the deep gulf which separates poetical from abstract perception, religion from theologising philosophy. Leonardo brands the intellectual sciences as “deceptive“ (le

83 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

bugiarde scientie mentali); “all knowledge,“ he says, “is vain and erroneous, unless brought into the world by sense-experience, the mother of all certainty“; especially offensive to him are the disputes and proofs regarding the entity of God and of the soul: he is of opinion that “our senses revolt against“ these conceptions, consequently we should not let ourselves be deluded: “where arguments of reason and clear right are wanting, clamour takes their place; in the case of things which are certain, however, this does not happen“; and thus he arrives at the conclusion: “dove si grida non è vera scientia,“ where there is clamour there is no genuine knowledge (*Libro di pittura*, Part I., Division 33, Heinrich Ludwig's edition). This is Leonardo's theology! Yet it is this very man — and surely the only one, the greatest not excepted — who paints a Christ which comes near being a revelation, “perfect God and perfect man,“ as the Athanasian creed puts it. Here we have close intrinsic relationship with Homer: all knowledge is derived from the experience of sense, and from this the Divine, proved by no subtleties of reasoning, is formed as free creation, with popular belief as its basis — something everlastingly true. Thanks to special circumstances and particular mental gifts, thanks above all to the advent of men of great genius who alone give life, this particular faculty had become so intensely developed in Greece that the sciences of experience received a new and greater impulse, as they did later among us through the influence of Leonardo, whereas the reaction of philosophising abstraction was never able to develop freely and naturally, but degenerated either into scholasticism or the clouds of fancy. The Hellenic artist awoke to life in an atmosphere which gave him at the same time personal freedom and the elevating

consciousness that he was understood by all; the Hellenic philosopher (as soon as he trod the path of logical abstraction) had not this gift; on the contrary

84 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

he was hemmed in on all sides, outwardly by custom, beliefs and civic institutions, inwardly by his whole personal education, which was principally artistic, by everything that surrounded him during his whole life, by all impressions which eye and ear conveyed to him; he was not free: because of his talent he did achieve great things, but nothing that satisfied — as his art did — the highest demands of harmony, truth and universal acceptance. In the case of Greek art the national element is comparable to pinions that raise the spirit to lofty heights, where “all men become brothers,” where the separating gulf of times and races adds to rather than detracts from the charm; Hellenic philosophy, on the contrary, is in the limiting sense of the word fettered to a definite national life and consequently hemmed in on all sides. *

It is exceedingly difficult with such a view to prevail against the prejudice of centuries. Even such a man as Rohde calls the Greeks the “most fruitful in thought among nations” and asserts that their philosophers “thought in advance for all mankind”; † Leopold von Ranke, who has no other epithet for Homeric religion than “idolatry“ (!) writes as follows: “What Aristotle says about the distinction between active and passive reason, only the first of which, however, is the true one, autonomous and related to God, I should be inclined to say was the best thing that could be said about the human spirit, with the exception of the Revelation of the Bible. We may say the same, if I am not mistaken, of Plato's doctrine of the soul.“ ‡ Ranke tells us further that the mission of Greek philosophy was to purge the old faith of its idolatrous element, to unite rational and

* Cf., further, vol. ii. pp. [270](#) and [554](#).

† *Psyche*, p. 104.

‡ *Weltgeschichte* (Text edition) i. 230. This axiom of wisdom reminds one perilously of the well-known story from the nursery: “Whom do you love most, papa or mamma? — Both!” For though Aristotle starts from Plato, one can hardly imagine anything more

85 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

religious truth; but that the democracy frustrated this noble design, because it “held fast to idolatry“ (i. 230). * These examples may suffice,

though one could quote many others. I am convinced that this is all illusion, indeed baneful illusion, and in essential points the very opposite of truth. It is not true that the Greeks have thought in advance for all mankind: before them, at their time and after them there has been deeper thinking, more acute and more correct. It is not true that the red-tape theology of Aristotle *ad usum* of the mainstays of society is “the best thing that could be said“: this Jesuitical scholastic sophistry has been the black plague of philosophy. It is not true that Greek thinkers have purified the old religion: they have rather attacked in it that very thing that deserved everlasting admiration, namely, its free, purely artistic beauty; and while they pretended to substitute rational for symbolical truth, they in reality only adopted popular superstition and set it, clad in logical rags, upon the throne, from which they — in company with the mob — had hurled down that poetry which proclaimed an everlasting truth.

As regards the so-called “thinking in advance,“ it will suffice to call attention to two circumstances to prove the erroneous nature of this assertion: in the first place, the Indians began to think before the Greeks, their thought was profounder and more consistent, and in their various systems they have exhausted more possibilities; in the second place, our own western European thought only began on the day when a great man said, “We must admit that the philosophy which we have received from

different than their theories of the soul (as well as their whole metaphysics). How then can both have said “the best thing“? Schopenhauer has expressed the matter correctly and concisely, “The radical contrast to Aristotle is Plato.“

* O twenty-fourth century! What sayest thou to this? I for my part am silent — at least with regard to personalities — and follow the example of wise Socrates in sacrificing a cock to the idols of my century!

86 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

the Greeks is childish, or at least that it rather encourages talk than acts as a creative stimulus.“ * To pretend that Locke, Gassendi, Hume, Descartes, Kant, &c., chewed the cud of Greek philosophy is one of the worst sins of Hellenic megalomania against our new culture. Pythagoras, the first great Hellenic thinker, offers a conclusive instance in reference to Hellenic thought. From his Oriental journeys he brought back all kinds of knowledge, significant and trifling, from the idea of redemption to the conception of the ether and the forbidding of the eating of beans: all of it was Indian ancestral property. One doctrine in particular became the central point of Pythagoreanism, its religious lever, if I may say so: this was the secret doctrine of the transmigration of souls. Plato afterwards robbed it of the aureole of secrecy and gave it a place in public philosophy. But among the Indians the belief in the

transmigration of souls long before Pythagoras formed the basis of all ethics; though much divided in politics, religion and philosophy, and though living in open opposition, the whole people was united in the belief in the never-ending series of rebirths.“ In India one never finds the question put, as to whether the soul transmigrates: it is universally and firmly believed.“ † But there was a class there, a small class, which did not believe in the transmigration of souls, in so far as they considered it to be a symbolical conception, a conception which to those wrapt in the illusions of world-contemplation allegorically conveys a loftier truth to be grasped more correctly by deep metaphysical thinking alone: this small class was (and is to-day) that of the philosophers. “The idea of

* Bacon of Verulam: *Instauratio Magna*, Introduction. “Et de utilitate aperte dicendum est: sapientiam istam, quam a Graecis potissimum hausimus, pueritiam quandam scientiae videri, atque habere quod proprium est puerorum; ut ad garriendum prompta, ad generandum invalida et immatura sit. Controversiarum enim ferax, operum effoeta est.“

† Schroeder, *Indiens Litteratur und Kultur*, p. 252.

87 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

the soul transmigrating rests on ignorance, while the soul in the sense of the highest reality is not transmigratory“: such is the teaching of the Indian thinker. * A really “secret doctrine,” such as the Greeks following Egyptian example loved, the Indians never knew: men of all castes, even women, could attain to the highest knowledge; but these profound sages knew very well that metaphysical thought requires special faculties and special development of those faculties; and so they let the figurative alone. And this figure, this magnificent conception of the transmigration of souls, which is perhaps indispensable for morals though essentially but a popular belief, while in India it was prevalent among the whole people from the highest to the lowest with the exception of the thinkers alone, became in Greece the most sublime “secret doctrine“ of their first great philosopher, never quite disappeared from the highest regions of their philosophical views, and received from Plato the alluring charm of poetical form. These are the people who are said to have paved the way for us in thought, “the richest in thought of nations“! No, the Greeks were no great metaphysicians.

THEOLOGY

But they have just as little claim to be considered great moralists and theologians. Here too one example

* Sankara: *Sûtra's des Vedânta*, i, 2, 11. Of course [Sankara](#) lived long after Pythagoras (about the eighth century of our era) but his teaching is strictly orthodox, he makes no risky assertion which is not based on old canonical Upanishads. It is clear that an actual "transmigration" was, even at the time of and according to the oldest Upanishads, for the man who truly had insight, a conception only serving popular ends. Further proof with regard to this matter will be found in Sankara in the introduction to the *Sûtra's* and in i. 1, 4, but especially in the magnificent passage ii. 1, 22, where the Samsâra, in conjunction with the whole creation, is described as an illusion, "which like the illusion of partings and separations by birth and death does not exist in the sense of the highest reality."

88 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

instead of many. The belief in daemons is everywhere current; the idea of a special intermediate race of daemons (between the gods in heaven and men on earth) was very probably derived by the Greeks from India (by way of Persia), * but that does not matter; in philosophy, or, as it may be called, in "rational religion," these creatures of superstition were first adopted by Plato. Rohde writes on this point as follows: † "Plato is the first of many to write about a whole intermediate hierarchy of daemons, entrusted with all that is wrought by invisible powers but seems beneath the dignity of the sublime gods. Thus the Divine itself is freed from everything evil and degrading." So with full consciousness and for the "rational" and flagrantly anthropomorphic purpose of "freeing" God of what seems evil to us men, that superstition which the Hellenes shared with bushmen and Australian blacks was adorned with a philosophical and theological aureole, recommended to the noblest minds by a noble mind and bequeathed to all future generations as an inheritance. The fortunate Indians had long before discarded the belief in daemons; it was retained only by the totally uneducated people; among the Indians the philosopher was bound no longer to any religious ceremony; for without denying their existence, like the superficial Xenophanes, he had learned to see in the gods symbols of a higher truth not able to be grasped by the senses — what use then had such people for daemons? Homer, however, it should be noticed, had been on the same path. It is true that the hand of Athene stops the hastily raised arm of Achilles, and Here inspires the hesitating Diomedes with courage — with such divine freedom does the poet interpret, inspiring all ages with poetical thoughts — but genuine

* Colebrooke, *Miscellaneous Essays*, p. 442.

† In a short summary, *Die Religion der Griechen*, published in 1895 in the *Bayreuther Blätter* (also printed separately in 1902).

89 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

superstition plays a very subordinate part in Homer, and by his “divine“ interpretation he raises it out of the sphere of real daemonism; his path was sunnier, more beautiful than that of the Indo-Aryan; instead of indulging in speculative metaphysics like the latter, he consecrated the empiric world and thereby guided mankind to a glorious goal. * Then came Socrates; — old, superstitious, advised by Pythian oracles, taught by priestesses, possessed by daemons, and after him Plato and the others. O Hellenes! if only you had remained true to the religion of Homer and the artistic culture which it founded! If you had but trusted your divine poets, and not listened to your Heraclitus and Xenophanes, your Socrates and Plato, and all the rest of them! Alas for us who have for centuries been plunged into unspeakable sorrow and misery by this belief in daemons, now raised to sacred orthodoxy, who have been hampered by it in our whole intellectual development, who even to this day are under the delusions of the Thracian peasants! †

SCHOLASTICISM

Not one whit better is that Hellenic thought which follows neither the path of mysticism nor that of poetical suggestion, but openly links itself to natural science and with the

* See, for example, in Book XXIV. of the *Iliad* (verse 300 ff.) the appearance “from the right“ of the eagle which presages good. Very significant are the words of Priam in the same book with regard to a vision he has seen (verse 220 ff.): “Had any other of mortal men bidden me believe it, an interpreter of signs or prophet or sacrificial priest, I should have called it deceit and turned from it with contempt.“ Magnificent, too, is the conception of “spirits“ in Hesiod, although he is much nearer to the popular superstition than Homer (*Works and Days*, 124 ff.): “They defend the right and hinder deeds of impiety: everywhere over the earth they wander, hidden in mist, and scatter blessings; this is the kingly office which they have received.“

† Döllinger calls the “systematic belief in daemons“ one of the “Danaan gifts of Greek imagining“ (*Akad. Vorträge*, i. 182).

90 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

help of philosophy and rational psychology undertakes to solve the great problems of existence. Here the Greek spirit at once falls into scholasticism, as already hinted. “Words, words, nothing but words!“ In this case detailed treatment would unfortunately go far beyond the scope of this book. But if any one is shy of the higher philosophy, let him take up a catechism, he will find plenty of Aristotle in it. Talk of the Divinity with such a man, and tell him that it “did not come into existence and

was not created; that it has been from all time and is immortal," and he will think that you are quoting from the creed of an oecumenical council, whereas, as a matter of fact, it is a quotation from Aristotle! And if you further say to him that God is "an everlasting, perfect, unconditioned being, gifted with life, but without bulk, one who in eternal actuality thinks himself, for (this serves as explanation) thinking becomes objective to itself by the thinking of the thing thought, so that thinking and the thing thought become identical," the poor man will fancy that you are reading from Thomas Aquinas or at least from Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, but again it is a quotation from Aristotle. * The rational doctrine of God, the rational doctrine of the soul, above all the doctrine of a purposed order of the world suitable to human reason, or teleology (through which Aristotle, by the way, introduced such grotesque errors into his natural science), that was the inheritance in this sphere! How many centuries did it take till there came a brave man who threw this ballast overboard and showed that one cannot prove the existence of God, as Aristotle had made twenty centuries believe: — till a man came who ventured to write the words, "Neither experience nor conclusions of reason adequately inform us whether man possesses a soul (as a substance dwelling in him, distinct from body and capable of thinking independently of it and

* *Metaphysics*, Book XII. chap. vii.

91 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

therefore a spiritual substance), or whether life may not rather be a property of matter." *

But enough. I think I have shown with sufficient clearness that Hellenic philosophy is only genuinely great when we take the word in its widest sense, somewhat in the English sense, according to which a Newton and a Cuvier, or a Jean Jacques Rousseau and a Goethe are called "philosophers." As soon as the Greek left the sphere of intuition — right from Thales onward — he became fatal; he became all the more fatal when he proceeded to use his incomparable plastic power (which is so strikingly absent in the metaphysical Indian) in giving a seductive shape to shadowy chimeras and in emasculating and bowdlerising deep conceptions and ideas that do not lend themselves to any analysis. I do not blame him because he had mystical tendencies and a plainly expressed need of metaphysics, but because he attempted to give shape to mysticism in a way other than the artistically mythical, and, going blindly past the central point of all metaphysics (I always naturally except Plato), tried to solve transcendent questions by prosaic empirical means. If the Greek had continued to develop his faculties on the one

hand purely poetically, on the other purely empirically, his influence would have become an unmixed and inexpressible blessing for mankind; but, as it is, that same Greek who in poetry and science had given us an example of what true creative power can effect, and so of the way in which the development of man has taken place, at a later time proved to be a cramping and retarding element in the growth of the human intellect.

CONCLUSION

It may be that these last remarks rather trespass on the province of a later part of my book. But I had to

* Kant: *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Tugendlehre*, Part I., *Ethische Elementarlehre*, § 4.

92 HELLENIC ART AND PHILOSOPHY

face the difficulty. Great as has been the influence which the Hellenic inheritance has exercised upon our century, as upon those which preceded it, there has been no little confusion and no lack of misunderstanding concerning it. In order that the sequel might be understood, it was necessary that the mental condition of the heirs should be set out as clearly as the many-sided and complex nature of the inheritance which they received.

No summary is needed. Indeed what I have said about our rich Hellenic inheritance, which so deeply penetrates our intellectual life, is of itself a mere summary — a mere indication. If we were to carry this experiment further we should arrive at a point where every concrete idea would become sublimated, where the sinuous lines of Life would shrivel into mere degrees in a scale, and there would remain nothing but a geometrical figure — a construction of the mind — instead of the representation of that manifold truth which has the gift of uniting in itself all contradictions. The philosophy of history, even in the hands of the most distinguished men, such as Herder for example, has a tendency rather to provoke contradiction than to encourage the formation of correct opinions. My object, moreover, is not so far-reaching. It is no part of my plan to pronounce judgment upon or to explain historically the spirit of ancient Greece: it suffices for me to bring home to our consciousness how boundless is the gift which it has brought us, and how actively that gift still works upon our poetry, our thought, our faith, our researches. I could not be exhaustive; — I have contented myself with the endeavour to give a vivid and truthful picture. In so doing I have

inflicted upon my readers some trouble, but this could not be avoided.

93

SECOND CHAPTER

ROMAN LAW

Von Jugend auf ist mir Anarchie verdriesslicher gewesen als der Tod. — GOETHE

DISPOSITION

TO define in clear terms what we have inherited from Rome, what out of that vast manufactory of human destinies still exercises a living influence, is certainly impossible, unless we have a clear conception of what Rome was. Even Roman Law in the narrower sense of the word (Private Law), which, as every one knows, forms the chief material on which all juristical minds are to this day trained, and provides the actual basis even for the freest, most divergent and more modern systems of law, cannot be judged in a way that will give a proper estimate of its peculiar value, if it be simply regarded as a kind of lay Bible, a canon, which has taken a permanent place, hallowed by tens of centuries. If this blind attachment to Roman legal dicta is the result of a superficial historical appreciation, the same may be said of the violent reaction against Roman Law. Whoever studies this law and its slow tedious development, even if only in general outlines, will certainly form a different judgment. For then he will see how the Indo-European races * even in earliest times possessed certain clearly expressed

* In another place I shall have to recur to the difficult question of races (see [chap. iv.](#)). I shall here only insert a very important remark:

94 ROMAN LAW

fundamental legal convictions, which developed in different ways in the different races, without ever being able to attain to any full development; he will see that they could not do so because no branch could succeed in founding a free and at the same time a lasting State; then he will be surprised to perceive how this small nation of men of strong character, the Romans, established both State and Law — the State by every one

desiring permanently to establish his own personal right, the Law by every one possessing the self-control to make the necessary sacrifices and to be absolutely loyal to the common weal; and whoever gains this insight will certainly never speak except with the greatest reverence of Roman Law as one of the most valuable possessions of mankind. At the same time he will certainly perceive that the highest quality of Roman Law and the one most worthy of imitation is its exact suitability to definite conditions of life. He cannot, however, fail to note that State and Law — both creations of the “born nation of lawyers“ *

while from various sides the existence of an Aryan race is called in question, while many philologists doubt the validity of the language criterion (*see* Salomon Reinach, *L'origine des Aryens*) and individual anthropologists point to the chaotic results of the measuring of skulls (*e.g.*, Topinard and Ratzel), the investigators in the sphere of history of law unanimously use the expression Aryans or Indo-Europeans, because they find a definite conception of law in this group of linguistically related peoples, who from the beginning and through all the branchings of a manifold development have fundamentally nothing in common with certain equally ineradicable legal conceptions prevalent among the Semites, Hamites, &c. (*See* the works of Savigny, Mommsen, Jhering and Leist.) No measuring of skulls and philological subtleties can get rid of this great simple fact — a result of painfully accurate, juristical research — and by it the existence of a moral Aryanism (in contrast to a moral non-Aryanism) is proved, no matter how varied are the elements of which the peoples of this group should be composed.

* Jhering: *Entwicklungsgeschichte des römischen Rechts*, p. 81. An expression which is all the more remarkable as this great authority on law is wont to deny vigorously that anything is innate in a people; he even goes the length in his *Vorgeschichte der Indoeuropäer* (p. 270) of making the extraordinary statement that the inherited physical (and with it simultaneously the moral) structure of man —

95 ROMAN LAW

— are here inseparable, and that we cannot understand either this State or this Law, if we have not a clear conception of the Roman people and its history. This is all the more indispensable, as we have inherited from the Roman idea of State as well as from Roman Private Law a great deal that still lives to-day — not to speak of the political relations actually created by the Roman idea of State, relations to which we owe the very possibility of our existence to-day as civilised nations. Hence it may be opportune to ask ourselves, What kind of people were the Romans? What is their significance in history? Naturally only a very hasty sketch can be given here: but it may, I hope, suffice to give us a clear idea of the political achievements of this great people in their essential outlines and to characterise with clearness the somewhat complicated nature of the legacy of politics and of political law that has been handed down to our century. Then and then only will it be feasible and profitable to consider

our legacy of private law.

ROMAN HISTORY

One would think that, as the Latin language and the history of Rome play such an important *rôle* in our schools, every educated person would at least possess a clear general conception of the growth and achievements of the Roman people. But this is not the case, and indeed it is not possible with the usual methods of instruction.

for this is surely what the term “race“ is intended to designate — has absolutely no influence on his character, but solely the geographical surroundings, so that the Aryan, if transferred to Mesopotamia, would *eo ipso* have become a Semite and *vice versa*. In comparison with this, Haeckel's pseudo-scientific phantasma of different apes, from each of which a different race of men derives its origin, seems a sensible theory. Of course one must not forget that Jhering had to contend all his life against the mystic dogma of an “innate *corpus juris*,” and that it is his great achievement to have paved a way for true science in this matter; that explains his exaggerations in the opposite direction.

96 ROMAN LAW

Of course every person of culture is, to a certain point, at home in Roman history: the legendary Romulus, Numa Pompilius, Brutus, the Horatii and Curiatii, the Gracchi, Marius, Sulla, Caesar, Pompey, Trajan, Diocletian and countless others, are all at least just as familiar to us (*i.e.*, in regard to names and dates) as our own great men; a youth who could not give information about the Second Punic War or confused the different Scipios would feel just as ashamed as if he could not explain the advantages of the Roman legions and maniples over the Macedonian phalanx. One must also admit that Roman history, as it is usually presented to us, is a remarkably rich store of interesting anecdotes; but the knowledge one derives from it is one-sided and absolutely defective. The whole history of Rome almost assumes the appearance of a great and cruel sport, played by politicians and generals, whose pastime it is to conquer the world, whereby they achieve many marvellous results in the art of systematic oppression of foreign peoples and egging on of their own, as well as in the equally noble art of inventing new stratagems of war and of putting them into practice with as large herds of human cattle as possible. There is beyond doubt some truth in this view. There came a time in Rome when those who considered themselves aristocrats chose war and politics as their life-work, instead of taking them up only in time of necessity. Just as with us a short time ago, a man of family could only become an officer, diplomatist or administrative official, so the “upper ten

thousand“ in later Rome could enter only three professions that did not degrade them socially — *res militaris*, *juris scientia* and *eloquentia*. * And as the world was still young and the province of science not too large to be covered, a man of ability could master all three; if in addition he had plenty of money, his qualifications

* Cf. Savigny: *Geschichte des römischen Rechtes im Mittelalter*, chap. i.

97 ROMAN LAW

for politics were complete. It is only necessary to read over again the letters of Cicero to see from his simple confessions, hopelessly entrammelled as he was in the ideas of his time, and unable to look beyond his own nose, how mighty Rome and its destinies became the play-ball of idle dawdlers and how much truth there is in the assertion that Rome was not made but unmade by its politicians. Politics have their peculiarities in other countries as well as in Rome. From Alexander to Napoleon, one can hardly over-estimate the power of criminal obstinacy in purely political heroes. A brief discussion of this point is all the more appropriate in this chapter, as Rome in particular is rightly regarded as a specifically political State and we may therefore hope to learn from it how and by whom great and successful politics are achieved.

What Gibbon says about kings in general, that “their power is most effective in destruction,” is true of almost all politicians — as soon as they possess sufficient power. I am not sure that it was not the wise Solon who made a prosperous development of the Athenian State impossible for all time, by doing away with the historically given composition of the population from various tribes and introducing an artificial class-division according to property. This so-called timocracy (honour to him who has money) comes in, it is true, of its own accord almost everywhere to a smaller or greater extent, and Solon at least took the precaution of making duties increase with increase of wealth; nevertheless he it was with his constitution that laid the axe to the root, from which — however painfully — the Athenian State had grown. * A less

* Many will think, but unjustly so, that the constitution of Lycurgus is still more arbitrary. For Lycurgus does not undermine the foundations provided by historical development; on the contrary, he strengthens them. The peoples that had migrated, one after another, into Lacedaemonia, formed layers above each other, the latest comers at the top — and Lycurgus allowed this to remain so. Though the

98 ROMAN LAW

important man would not have ventured to make such a revolutionary change in the natural course of development, and that would probably have been a blessing. And can we form a different opinion of Julius Caesar? Of the famous generals in the history of the world as a politician he probably played the greatest part; in the most widely different spheres (think only of the improvement of the calendar, the undertaking of a universal legal code, the founding of the African colony) he revealed a penetrating understanding; as an organising genius he would, I think, not have been surpassed by Napoleon, under equally favourable conditions — and withal he had the inestimable advantage of being not a foreign *condottiere*, like Napoleon or Diocletian, but a good genuine Roman, firmly rooted in his hereditary fatherland, so that his individual arbitrariness (as in the case of Lycurgus) would certainly not have erred far from the plumb-line of what suited his nation. And yet it is this very man and no other who bent the tough tree of life of the Roman con-

Pelasgians (Helots) tilled the land, the Achaeans (*περιοίκοι*) engaged in trade and industry, and the Dorians (Spartiateae) waged war and in consequence ruled, that was no artificial division of labour but the confirmation of a relationship actually existing. I am also convinced that life was in Lacedaemonia for a long time happier than in any other part of Greece; slave-trade was forbidden, the Helots were hereditary tenants, and though not bedded on roses they yet enjoyed considerable independence; the *περιοίκοι* had freedom to move about, even their limited military service being frequently relaxed in the interests of their industries, which were hereditary in the various families; for the Spartiateae, finally, social intercourse was the principle of their whole life, and in the rooms where they met at their simple meals, there stood resplendent one single statue as protecting deity, that of the god of laughter (Plutarch, *Lycurgus*, xxxvii.) Lycurgus, however, lays himself open to the reproach that he tried to fix these existing and so far sound conditions, and thus robbed the living organism of its necessary elasticity; secondly, that on the substantial and strong foundation he erected a very fantastic structure. Here again we see the theorising politician, the man who tries to decide by way of reasoning how things must be, while as a matter of fact the function of logical reason is to record and not to create. But to the fact that Lycurgus, in spite of everything, took historical data as his starting-point, are due that strength and endurance which his constitution enjoyed above those of the rest of Greece.

99 ROMAN LAW

stitution and gave it over to inevitable decay and ruin. For the remarkable thing in pre-Caesarean Rome is not that the city had to experience so many violent internal storms — in the case of a structure so incomparably elastic that is natural, the clash of interests and the never-resting ambition of professional politicians saw to that in Rome as elsewhere — no, what fills us with wonder and admiration is rather the vitality of this constitution. Patricians and Plebeians might periodically

be at each other's throats: yet an invisible power held them firmly together; as soon as new conditions were provided for by a new compromise, the Roman State stood once more stronger than ever. * Caesar was born in the midst of one of these severe crises; but perhaps it appears to us in history worse than all previous ones — both because it is nearer to us in time, and we are therefore more fully

* The expression “Aristocracy and Plebs,” which Ranke likes to use for Patricians and Plebeians, is to the layman most misleading. Niebuhr already objected to the confusion of Plebs and *Pöbel* (rabble). Patricians and Plebeians are rather like two powers in the one State, the one certainly privileged politically, the other the reverse in many ways (at least in former times), both, however, composed of free, independent, altogether autonomous yeomen. And for that reason Sallust can write, even of the oldest times: “The highest authority certainly lay with the Patricians, but the power most assuredly with the Plebeians” (*Letter to Caesar*, i. 5); we also see the Plebeians from earlier times play a great part in the State, and their families intermarry to a large extent with the Patricians. The uneducated man among us is therefore quite misled if he receives the idea that in Rome it was a question of an aristocracy and a proletariat. The peculiarity and the remarkable vitality of the Roman State had its foundation in this, that it contained from the first two differentiable parts (which present in their political efficacy in many points an analogy to Whigs and Tories, only that here it is a question of “born parties”), which, however, had grown up together with the State through exactly the same interests of property, law and freedom; from this the Romans derived, internally, continuous freshness of life, and in foreign affairs, perpetual unswerving unanimity. Of the Plebeian portions of the army Cato says, “*virii fortissimi et milites strenuissimi*”; they were indeed free-men, who fought for their own homes and hearths. In ancient Rome, as a matter of fact, only freeholders could serve in the army, and Plebeians held the rank of officer equally with Patricians (see Mommsen: *Abriss des römischen Staatsrechtes*, 1893, p. 258; and Esmarch: *Römische Rechtsgeschichte*, 3rd ed., p. 28 ff.).

100 ROMAN LAW

informed of it, and because we know the issue which Caesar brought about. I for my part consider the interpretation which the philosophy of history gives to these events a pure abstraction. Neither the rough hand of the impetuous, passionate Plebeian Marius nor the tiger-like cruelty of the coolly calculating Patrician Sulla would have inflicted fatal wounds upon the Roman constitution. Even the most critical danger — the freeing of many thousands of slaves and the bestowing of citizenship on many thousands of those freed-men (and that for political, immoral reasons) — Rome would soon have surmounted. Rome possessed the vitality to ennoble slavery, that is, to give it the definite Roman character. Only a mighty personality, one of those abnormal heroes of will, such as the world scarcely produces once in a thousand years, could ruin such a State. It is said that Caesar was a saviour of Rome, snatched away too soon, before he could finish his work: this is false. When the great man arrived with his army on the banks of the Rubicon, he is said to have

hesitatingly commanded a halt and reflected once more on the far-reaching consequences of his action; if he did not cross, he himself would be in danger, if he did cross the boundary marked by sacred law, he would involve the whole world (*i.e.*, the Roman State) in danger: he decided for ambition and against Rome. The anecdote may be invented, Caesar at least lets us see no such inner struggle of conscience in his *Civil War*; but the situation is exactly described thereby. No matter how great a man may be, he is never free, his past imperatively prescribes the direction of his present; if once he has chosen the worse part, he must henceforth do harm, whether he wills it or not, and though he raise himself to an autocracy, in the fond hope that he henceforth has it in his power to devote himself wholly to doing what is good, he will experience in himself that “the might of Kings is most effective in destruction.” Caesar had written

101 ROMAN LAW

to Pompey even from Ariminum to the effect that the interests of the republic were nearer his heart than his own life; * and yet Caesar had not long been all-powerful to do good, when his faithful friend Sallust had to ask him whether he had really saved or despoiled the republic? † At the best he had saved it as Virginius did his daughter. Pompey, as several contemporary writers tell us, would allow no one beside him, Caesar no one over him. Imagine what might have been the result for Rome if two such men, instead of being politicians, had acted as the servants of the Fatherland, as had been Roman custom hitherto!

It is not my business to enter more fully into the subject briefly sketched here; my only object has been to show what a superficial knowledge we have of a people, if we study only the history of its politicians and generals. This is particularly the case with Rome. Whoever studies Rome merely from this point of view, no matter how industriously he may examine its history, can certainly arrive at no other result than did Herder, whose interpretation therefore will remain classic. To this man of genius Roman history is “the history of demons,” Rome a “robbers' cave,” what the Romans give to the world “devastating night,” their “great noble souls, Caesars and Scipios,” spend their life in murdering, the more men they have slaughtered in their campaigns, the warmer the praise that is paid them. ‡ This is from a certain point of view correct; but the investigations of Niebuhr, Duruy and Mommsen (especially the last), as well as those of the brilliant historians of law in our century — Savigny, Jhering and many others — have brought to light another Rome, to the existence of which Montesquieu had been the first

* *Civil War*, i. 9. Thoroughly Roman, by the way, to use such a commonplace expression at such a time!

† Second Letter to Caesar.

‡ *Ideen zur Geschichte der Menschheit*, Bk XIV.

102 ROMAN LAW

to call attention. Here the important thing was to discover and put in its right light what the old Roman historians, intent on celebrating battles, describing conspiracies, slandering enemies and flattering politicians who paid well, had passed by unnoticed or at any rate had never duly appreciated. A people does not become what the Romans have become in the history of mankind by means of murder and robbery, but in spite of it; no people produces statesmen and warriors of such admirably strong character as Rome did, if it does not itself supply a broad, firm and sound basis for strength of character. What Herder and so many after him call Rome can therefore be only a part of Rome, and indeed not the most important part. The exposition of Augustine in the fifth book of his *De civitate Dei* is, in my judgment, far happier; he calls attention particularly to the absence of greed and selfishness among the Romans and says that their whole will proclaimed itself in the one resolution, “either to live free or die bravely” (aut fortiter emori aut liberos vivere); and the greatness of the Roman power, as well as its durability, he ascribes to this moral greatness.

In the [general introduction](#) to this book I spoke of “anonymous” powers, which shape the life of peoples; we have a brilliant example of this in Rome. I believe we might say without exaggeration that all Rome's true greatness was such an anonymous “national greatness.” If in the case of the Athenians genius unfolded itself in the blossom, here it did so in the trunk and the roots; Rome was of all nations that with the strongest roots. Hence it was that it defied so many storms, and the history of the world required almost five hundred years to uproot the rotten trunk. Hence too, however, the peculiar grisaille of its history. In the case of the Roman tree everything went to wood, as the gardeners say; it bore few leaves, still fewer blossoms, but

103 ROMAN LAW

the trunk was incomparably strong; by its support later nations raised themselves aloft. The poet and the philosopher could not prosper in this atmosphere, this people loved only those personalities in whom it recognised itself, everything unusual aroused its distrust; “whoever

wished to be other than his comrades passed in Rome for a bad citizen.“
* The people were right; the best statesman for Rome was he who did not move one hair's-breadth from what the people as a whole wished, a man who understood how to open the safety-valve now here, now there, to meet the growing forces by the lengthening of pistons and by suitably arranged centrifugal balls and throttles, till the machine of State had quasi-automatically increased its size and perfected its administrative power; he must be, in short, a reliable mechanician: that was the ideal politician for this strong, conscious people whose interests lay entirely in the practical things of life. As soon as any one overstepped this limit, he necessarily committed a crime against the common weal.

Rome, I repeat — for this is the chief point to grasp, and everything else follows from it — Rome is not the creation of individual men, but of a whole people; in contrast to Hellas everything really great is here “anonymous“; none of its great men approaches the greatness of the Roman people as a whole. And so what Cicero says in his *Republic* (ii. I) is very correct and worth taking to heart: “The constitution of our State is superior to that of others for the following reason: in other places it was individual men who by laws and institutions founded the constitution, as, for example, Minos in Crete, Lycurgus in Lacedaemonia, in Athens (where change was frequent) at one time Theseus, at another Draco, then Solon, Clisthenes and many others; on the other hand, our Roman Commonwealth is founded

* Mommsen: *Römische Geschichte*, 8th ed., i. 24.

104 ROMAN LAW

not on the genius of a single man but of many men, nor did the span of a fleeting human life suffice to establish it, it is the work of centuries and successive generations.“ Even the General in Rome needed only to give free play to the virtues which his whole army possessed — patience, endurance, unselfishness, contempt of death, practical common sense, above all the high consciousness of civic responsibility — and he was sure of victory, if not to-day, then to-morrow. Just as the troops consisted of citizens, their commanders were magistrates who only temporarily changed the office of an administrator or councillor and judge for that of commander-in-chief; in general too it made little difference when in the regular routine of office the one official relieved the other in command; the idea “soldier“ came into prominence only in the time of decline. It was not as adventurers but as the most domiciled of citizens and peasants that the Romans conquered the world.

ROMAN IDEALS

The question here forces itself upon us: is it at all admissible to apply the term conquerors to the Romans? I scarcely think so. The Teutonic peoples, the Arabians and the Turks were conquerors; the Romans, on the other hand, from the day they enter history as an individual, separate nation are distinguished by their fanatical, warm-hearted, and, perhaps, narrow-minded love for their Fatherland; they are bound to this spot of earth — not particularly healthy nor uncommonly rich — by inseverable ties of heart, and what drives them to battle and gives them their invincible power is first and foremost the love of home, the desperate resolve to yield up the independent possession of this soil only with their lives. That this principle entailed gradual extension of the State does not prove lust for conquest, it was the natural

105 ROMAN LAW

outcome of a compulsion. Even to-day might is the most important factor in international law, and we have seen how in our century the most peaceful of nations, like Germany, have had unceasingly to increase their military power, but only in the interests of their independence. How much more difficult was the position of Rome, surrounded by a confused chaos of peoples great and small — close at hand masses of related races constantly warring against each other, farther afield an ever-threatening unexplored chaos of barbarians, Asiatics and Africans! Defence did not suffice; if Rome wished to enjoy peace, she had to spread the work of organisation and administration from one land to the other. Observe the contemporaries of Rome and see what a failure those small Hellenic States were owing to the lack of political foresight; Rome, however, had this quality as no people before or after. Its leaders did not act according to theoretical conceptions, as we might almost be inclined to believe to-day when we see so strictly logical a development; they rather followed an almost unerring instinct; this, however, is the surest of all compasses — happy he who possesses it! We hear much of Roman hardness, Roman selfishness, Roman greed; yes! but was it possible to struggle for independence and freedom amid such a world without being hard? Can we maintain our place in the struggle for existence without first and foremost thinking of self? Is possession not power? But one fact has been practically disregarded, viz., that the unexampled success of the Romans is not to be looked upon as a result of hardness, selfishness, greed — these raged all around in at least as high a degree as among the Romans, and even to-day no great change has taken place — no, the successes of the Romans are based on intellectual and moral superiority. In truth a

one-sided superiority; but what is not one-sided in this world? And it cannot be denied that in certain respects the Romans felt more

106 ROMAN LAW

intensely and thought more acutely than any other men at any time, and they were in addition peculiar in this, that in their case feeling and thinking worked together and supplemented each other.

I have already mentioned their love of home. That was a fundamental trait of the old Roman character. It was not the purely intellectual love of the Hellenes, bubbling over and rejoicing in song, yet ever prone to yield to the treacherous suggestions of selfishness; nor was it the verbose love of the Jews: we know how very pathetically the Jews sing of the "Babylonian captivity," but, when sent home full-handed by the magnanimous Cyrus, prefer to submit to fines and force only the poorest to return, rather than leave the foreign land where they are so prosperous; no, in the case of the Romans it was a true, thoroughly unsentimental love that knew few words, but was ready for any sacrifice; no man and no woman among them ever hesitated to sacrifice their lives for the Fatherland. How can we explain so unmeasured an affection? Rome was (in olden times) not a wealthy city; without crossing the boundaries of Italy one could see much more fruitful regions. But what Rome gave and securely established was a life morally worthy of man. The Romans did not invent marriage, they did not invent law, they did not invent the constitutional freedom-giving State; all that grows out of human nature and is found everywhere in some form and to some degree; but what the Aryan races had conceived under these notions as the bases of all morality and culture had nowhere been firmly established till the Romans established it. * Had the Hellenes got too

* For the Aryan peoples in particular, see Leist's excellent *Gräco-italienische Rechtsgeschichte* (1884) and his *Altarisches Jus civile* (1896), also Jhering's *Vorgeschichte der Indoeuropäer*. The ethnical investigations of the last years have, however, shown more and more that marriage, law and State exist in some form everywhere, even among the savages of least mental development. And this must be strongly emphasised, for the evolution mania and the pseudo-scientific dogma-

107 ROMAN LAW

near Asia? Were they too suddenly civilised? Had the Celts, who were by nature endowed with almost as much

tism of our century have brought into most of our popular books absolutely invented descriptions, which are very difficult to remove from them, in spite of the sure results of exact research; and from here these descriptions also force their way into valuable and serious books. In Lamprecht's famous *Deutsche Geschichte*, vol. i., for instance, we find what is supposed to be a description of the social conditions of the old Teutonic peoples, sketched "under the auspices of comparative ethnology"; here we are told of a time when among these peoples a "community of sex limited by no differences of any kind prevailed, all brothers and sisters were husbands and wives to each other and all their children brothers and sisters, &c."; the first progress from this state, as we are to suppose, was the establishment of the mother's right, the so-called *Matriarchate* — and so the tale continues for pages; one fancies one is listening to the first stuttering of a new mythology. As far as the mother-right is concerned (*i.e.*, family name and right of inheritance after the mother, as the fatherhood was always a common one), Jhering has convincingly shown that even the oldest Aryans, before the breaking off of a Teutonic branch, knew nothing of it (*Vorgeschichte*, p. 61 ff.), and the very oldest parts of the Aryan language point already to the "supreme position of the husband and father of the household" (Leist, *Gräco-ital. Rechtsgeschichte*, p. 58); that supposition therefore lacks every scientific basis. (This was meantime confirmed by Otto Schrader, *Reallexicon der indogermanischen Altertumskunde*, 1901, p. xxxiii.) It is still more important to establish the fact that the "comparative ethnography" appealed to by Lamprecht has found community of sex nowhere in the world among human beings. In the year 1896 a small book appeared which summarises in strictly objective fashion all the researches that refer to this, Ernst Grosse's *Die Formen der Familie und die Formen der Wirtschaft*, and there we see how the so-called empirical philosophers, with Herbert Spencer at their head, and the so-called strictly empirical anthropologists and ethnologists, honoured as "authorities" (with praiseworthy exceptions like Lubbock), simply started from the *à priori* supposition that there must be community of sex among simpler peoples, since the law of evolution demands it, and then everywhere discovered facts to confirm this. But more exact and unprejudiced investigations now prove for one race after the other that community of sex does not exist there, and Grosse may put down the apodictic assertion: "There is, in fact, no single primitive people whose sexual relations approached a condition of promiscuity or even hinted at such a thing. The firmly knit individual family is by no means a late achievement of civilisation, it exists in the lowest stages of culture as a rule without exception" (p. 42). Exact proofs are to be found in Grosse; besides, all anthropological and ethnological accounts of recent years testify how very much we have undervalued the so-called savages, how superficially we have observed and how thoughtlessly we have drawn conclusions about primitive conditions, of which we know absolutely nothing with surety,

108 ROMAN LAW

fire, become so savage in the wild North that they were no longer able to construct anything, to organise anything,

[Lately Heinrich Schurtz, in his *Altersklassen und Männerbunde, eine Darstellung der Grundformen der Gesellschaft*, 1902, has fully shown that the arguments for promiscuity in early times, which are wont to be drawn from phenomena of "free love" to-day, are to be interpreted quite differently, and that, on the contrary, "with the most primitive races marriage, and in connection with it the formation of society on a purely sexual basis, is more strongly developed" (p. 200).] As this subject is essentially of the greatest importance and throws a peculiar and very noteworthy sidelight upon scientific

modes of thought and power of thought in our century, I should like to add one more instructive example. The original inhabitants of central Australia are, as is well known, supposed to belong to the most backward, intellectually, of all peoples; Lubbock calls them "wretched savages, who cannot count their own fingers, not even the fingers of one hand" (*The Prehistoric Age*, Germ. trans., ii. 151). One can imagine with what contempt the traveller Eyre wrote of the "remarkably peculiar cases where marriage is forbidden" in this wretched race, "where a man may not marry a woman who has the same name as he, even though she be by no means related to him." Strange! And how could these people come to have such inexplicable caprices when it would have been their duty, according to the theory of evolution, to have lived in absolute promiscuity? Since that time two English officials, who lived for years among these savages and gained their confidence, have given us a detailed account of them (*Royal Society of Victoria*, April 1897, summary in *Nature*, June 10, 1897), and it appears that their whole intellectual life, their "conceptive life" (if I may say so) is so incredibly complicated that it is almost impossible for one of us to comprehend it. These people, for example, who are supposed not to be able to count up to five, have a more complicated belief than Plato with regard to the transmigration of souls, and this faith forms the basis of their religion. Now as to their marriage laws. In the particular district spoken of here there lives an ethnically uniform race, the Aruntas. Every marriage union with strange races is forbidden; thereby the race is kept pure. But the extremely baneful effects of long-continued inbreeding (Lamprecht's Teutons would long have become Cretins before ever they entered into history!) are prevented by the Australian blacks by the following ingenious system: they divide (mentally) the whole race into four groups; for simplicity I designate them *a b c d*. A youth from the group *a* may only marry a girl from group *d*, the male *b* only the female *c*, the male *c* only the female *b*, the male *d* only the female *a*. The children of *a* and *d* form once more the group *b*, those of *b* and *c* the group *a*, those of *c* and *b* the group *d*, those of *d* and *a* the group *c*. I simplify very much and give only the skeleton, for I fear my European reader would otherwise soon reach the stage of likewise not being able to count up to five. That such a system imposes important restrictions on the rights of the heart cannot be denied, but I ask, how could a scientifically trained selector have hit upon a more ingenious expedient to satisfy the two laws of breeding

109 ROMAN LAW

or to found a State? * Or was it not rather that blood-mixtures within the common mother race, and at the same time the artificial selection necessitated by geographical and historical conditions tended to produce abnormal gifts (naturally with accompanying phenomena of reversion)? † I do not know. Certain it is, however, that previous to the Romans there was no sacred, worthy and at the same time practical regulation of matters

which are established by strict observation, namely, (1) the race must be kept pure, (2) continuous inbreeding is to be avoided? (see [chap. iv.](#)). Such a phenomenon calls for reverence and silence. When contemplating it one gladly keeps silent regarding such systems as those already mentioned as belonging to the end of the nineteenth century. But what must we feel when we turn our glance from the extremely laboured efforts of these worthy Australian Aruntas to Rome and behold here, in the middle of a frightful world, the sacredness of marriage, the legal status of the family, the freedom of the

head of the household rising up out of the heart of the people, for it was at a much later period that it was engraved on bronze tables?

* Thierry, Mommsen, &c.

† Till a short time ago it was a favourite practice to represent the population of Rome as a kind of medley of peoples living side by side: it was supposed to have borrowed its traditions from Hellenic units, its administration from Etruscan ones, its law from Sabines, and its intellect from Samnites, &c. Thus Rome would have in a way been a mere word, a name, the common designation of an international trysting-place. This soap-bubble, too, which rose from the brain foam of pale professors, has burst, like so many others, in Mommsen's hands. Facts and reason both prove the absurdity of such a hypothesis, "which attempts to change the people, which, as few others, has developed its language, state, and religion purely and popularly, into a confused rubble of Etruscan, Sabine, Hellenic, and unfortunately even Pelasgic ruins" (*Röm. Gesch.*, i. 43). The fact, however, that this thoroughly uniform and peculiar people originated from a crossing of various related races is undeniable, and Mommsen himself clearly shows this; he admits two Latin and one Sabellian race; at a later time all kinds of elements were added, but only after the Roman national character was firmly developed so that it assimilated the foreign portion. It would, however, be ridiculous to "assign Rome to the number of mixed peoples" (see p. 44). It is quite a different thing to establish the fact that the most extraordinary and most individual talents and the sturdiest power are produced by crossing. Athens was a brilliant example, Rome another, Italy and Spain in the Middle Ages equally so, just as Prussia and England prove it at the present day (more details in [chap. 4](#)). In this respect the Hellenic myth that the Latins were descended from Hercules and a Hyperborean maiden is very noteworthy as one of those incomprehensible traits of innate wisdom; whereas the desperate efforts of Dionysius of Halicarnassus (who lived at the time of the

110 ROMAN LAW

relating to marriage and family; no more was there a rational law resting on a sure foundation capable of being widened, or a political organisation able to resist the storms of a chaotic time. Though the simply constructed mechanism of the old Roman State might frequently be awkward in its working and require thorough repairs, it was yet a splendid structure well adapted to the time and to its purpose. In Rome, from the first, the idea of Law had been finely conceived and finely carried into effect; moreover its limitations were in keeping with the conditions. Still more was this the case with the family. This institution was to be found in Rome alone — and in a form more beautiful than the world has ever since seen! Every Roman citizen, whether Patrician or Plebeian, was lord, yea, king in his house: his will extended even beyond death by the unconditional freedom of bequest, and the sanctity of the last testament; his home was assured against official interference by more solid rights than ours; in contrast to the Semitic patriarchate he had introduced the principle of agnation * and thereby swept entirely aside the interference of mothers-in-law and women as a whole; on the other hand, the *materfamilias* was honoured, treasured, loved like a queen. Where was there anything to compare with this in the world at

that time? Outside of civilisation perhaps; inside it nowhere. And so it was that the Roman loved his home with such enduring love and gave his heart's blood for it. Rome was for him the family and the law, a rocky eminence of human dignity in the midst of a surging sea.

birth of Christ) to prove the descent of the Romans from Hellenes, "as they could not possibly be of barbarian origin," shows with touching simplicity how dangerous a conjunction of great learning with preconceived opinions and conclusions of reason can become!

* The family resting upon relationship to the father alone, so that only descent from the father's side by males, and not that from the mother's side, establishes relationship at law. Only a marriage contracted in the right forms produces children who belong to the agnate family.

111 ROMAN LAW

Let no one fancy that anything great can be achieved in this world unless a purely ideal power is at work. The idea alone will of course not suffice; there must also be a tangible interest, even should it be, as in the case of the martyrs, an interest pertaining to the other world; without an additional ideal element the struggle for gain alone possesses little power of resistance; higher power of achievement is supplied only by a "faith," and that is what I call an "ideal impulse" in contrast to the direct interest of the moment — be that last possession or anything else whatever. As Dionysius says of the ancient Romans, "they thought highly of themselves and could not therefore venture to do anything unworthy of their ancestors" (i. 6); in other words, they kept before their eyes an ideal of themselves. I do not mean the word "ideal" in the degenerate, vague sense of the "blue flower" of Romance, but in the sense of that power which impelled the Hellenic sculptor to form the god from out the stone, and which taught the Roman to look upon his freedom, his rights, his union with a woman in marriage, his union with other men for the common weal, as something sacred, as the most valuable gift that life can give. A rock, as I said, not an Aristophanic Cloud-cuckoo-land. As a dream, the same feeling existed more or less among all Indo-Europeans: we meet with a certain holy awe and earnestness in various forms among all the members of this family; the persevering power to results things practically was, however, given to no one so much as to the Roman. Do not believe that "robbers" can achieve results such as the Roman State, to the salvation of the world, achieved. And when once you have recognised the absurdity of such a view, search deeper and you will see that these Romans were unsurpassed as a civilising power, and that they could only be that because, though they had great faults and glaring intellectual deficiencies, they yet possessed high mental and moral qualities.

THE STRUGGLE AGAINST THE SEMITES

Mommsen tells (i. 321) of the alliance between the Babylonians and the Phoenicians to subdue Greece and Italy, and is of opinion that “at one stroke freedom and civilisation would have been swept off the face of the earth.” We should weigh carefully what these words mean when uttered by a man who commands the whole field as no one else does; freedom and civilisation (I should rather have said culture, for how can one deny civilisation to the Babylonians and Phoenicians, or even to the Chinese?) would have been destroyed, blotted out for ever! And then take up the books which give a detailed and scientific account of the Phoenician and Babylonian civilisation, in order to see clearly what foundation there is for such a far-reaching statement. It will not be difficult to see what distinguishes a Hellenic “Colony” from a Phoenician Factory: and from the difference between Rome and Carthage we shall readily understand what an ideal power is, even in the sphere of the driest, most selfish politics of interest. How suggestive is that distinction which Jhering (*Vorgeschichte*, p. 176) teaches us to draw between the “commercial highways” of the Semites and the “military roads” of the Romans: the former the outcome of the tendency to expansion and possession; the latter the result of the need of concentrating their power and defending the homeland. We shall also learn to distinguish between authentic “robbers,” who only civilise in as far as they understand how to take up and utilise with enviable intelligence all discoveries that have a practical worth and to encourage in the interests of their commerce artificial needs in foreign peoples, but who otherwise rob even their nearest relations of every human right — who nowhere organise anything but taxes and absolute

slavery, who in general, no matter where they plant their foot, never seek to rule a country as a whole under systematic government, and, being alive only to their commercial interests, leave everything as barbarous as they find it: we shall, as I say, learn to distinguish between such genuine robbers and the Romans, who, in order to retain the blessings that attend the order reigning in their midst, are compelled — beginning from that unchanging centre, the home — slowly and surely to extend their ordering and clearing influence all round; they never really conquer (when they can help it); they spare and respect every individuality; but

withal they organise so excellently that people approach them with the prayer to be allowed to share in the blessings of their system; * their own splendid “Roman law“ they generously make accessible to ever-increasing numbers, and they at the same time unite the various foreign legal systems, taking the Roman as a basis, in order gradually to evolve therefrom a “universal international law.“ † This is surely not how robbers act. Here we have rather to recognise the first steps towards the permanent establishment of Indo-European ideals of freedom and civilisation.

* One of the last instances are the Jews who (about the year 1) came to Rome with the urgent request that it should deliver them from their Semitic sovereigns and make them into a Roman province. It is well known what gratitude they afterwards showed to Rome, which ruled them so mildly and generously.

† Esmarch, in his *Römische Rechtsgeschichte*, 3rd ed., p. 185, writes as follows on the frequently very vaguely developed and defined *jus gentium*: “This law in the Roman sense is to be regarded neither as an aggregate of accidentally common clauses, formed from a comparison of the laws that were valid among all the nations known to the Romans, nor as an objectively existing commercial law recognised and adopted by the Roman State; it should be regarded, according to its essential substance, as a system of order for the application of private law to international relations, evolved out of the heart of Roman popular consciousness.“ Within the several countries the conditions of law were as little changed as possible by the Romans, one of the surprising proofs of the great respect which in the period of their true greatness they paid to all individuality.

114 ROMAN LAW

Livy says with justice: “It was not only by our weapons but also by our Roman legislation that we won our far-reaching influence.“

It is clear that the commonly accepted view of Rome as the conquering nation above all others is very one-sided. Indeed even after Rome had broken with its own traditions, or rather when the Roman people had in fact disappeared from the earth, and only the idea of it still hovered over its grave, even then it could not depart far from this great principle of its life: even the rough soldier-emperors were unable to break this tradition. And thus it is that the real military hero — as individual phenomenon — does not occur at all among the Romans. I will not make any comparisons with Alexander, Charles XII. or Napoleon; I ask, however, whether the one man Hannibal, as an inventive, audacious, arbitrary prince of war, has not displayed more real genius than all the Roman imperators taken together.

It need scarcely be stated that Rome fought neither for a Europe of the future nor in the interests of a far-reaching mission of culture, but simply for itself; but thanks to this very fact, that it fought for its own interests with the reckless energy of a morally strong people, it has preserved from sure destruction that “intellectual development of

mankind which depends upon the Indo-Teutonic race.“ This is best seen clearly in the most decisive of all its struggles, that with Carthage. If Rome's political development had not been so strictly logical up till then, if it had not betimes subdued and disciplined the rest of Italy, the deadly blow to freedom and civilisation mentioned above would assuredly have been dealt by the allied Asiatics and Carthaginians. And how little a single hero can do in the face of such situations of world-wide historical moment, although he alone, it may be, has taken a comprehensive view of them, is shown by the fate of Alexander, who having destroyed

115 ROMAN LAW

Tyre meditated embarking on a campaign against Carthage, but at his early death left nothing behind but the memory of his genius. The long-lived Roman people, on the other hand, was equal to that great task, which it finally summed up in the monumental sentence, *delenda est Carthago*.

What laments and moralisings we have had on the destruction of Carthage by the Romans, from Polybius to Mommsen! It is refreshing to meet a writer who, like Bossuet, simply says: “Carthage was taken and destroyed by Scipio, who in this showed himself worthy of his great ancestor,” without any moral indignation, without the well-worn phrase that all the suffering which later befell Rome was a retribution for this misdeed. I am not writing a history of Rome and do not therefore require to sit in judgment on the Romans; but one thing is as clear as the noonday sun; if the Phoenician people had not been destroyed, if its survivors had not been deprived of a rallying-point by the complete destruction of their last city, and compelled to merge in other nations, mankind would never have seen this nineteenth century, upon which, with all due recognition of our weaknesses and follies, we yet look back with pride, justified in our hopes for the future. The least mercy shown to a race of such unparalleled tenacity as the Semites would have sufficed to enable the Phoenician nation to rise once more; in a Carthage only half-burned the torch of life would have glimmered beneath the ashes, to burst again into flame as soon as the Roman Empire began to approach its dissolution. We are not yet free of peril from the Arabs, * who long seriously threatened our existence, and their

* The struggle which in late years raged in Central Africa between the Congo Free State and the Arabs (without being much heeded in Europe) is a new chapter in the old war between Semites and Indo-Europeans for the supremacy of the world. It is only in the last fifty years that the Arabs have been advancing from the East Coast of Africa into the interior and almost up to the Atlantic Ocean; the famous Hamed ben Mohammed ben Juna, called Tippu-Tib, was for a long time absolute ruler of an immense realm which reached almost

creation, Mohammedanism, is the greatest of all hindrances to every progress of civilisation, hanging like a sword of Damocles over our slowly and laboriously rising culture in Europe, Asia and Africa; the Jews stand morally so high above all other Semites that one may hardly name them in conjunction with these (their ancestral enemies in any case from time immemorial), and yet we should need to be blind or dishonest, not to confess that the problem of Judaism in our midst is one of the most difficult and dangerous questions of the day; now imagine in addition a Phoenician nation, holding from the earliest times all harbours in their possession, monopolising all trade, in possession of the richest capitals in the world and of an ancestral national religion (Jews so to speak who had never known Prophets)...! It is no fantastic philosophising on history but an objectively demonstrable fact that, under such conditions, that which we to-day call Europe could never have arisen. Once more I refer to the learned works on the Phoenicians, but above all, because available to every one, to the splendid summary in Mommsen's *Römische Geschichte*, Book III. chap. i., "Carthage."

straight across all Africa with a breadth of about 20 degrees. Countless tribes which Livingstone in his time found happy and peace-loving have since then in some cases been destroyed entirely — since the slave-trade to foreign parts is the chief occupation of the Arabs and never, in the history of mankind, was carried on to such an extent as in the second half of the nineteenth century — in other cases the natives have undergone a remarkable moral change by contact with Semitic masters; they have become cannibals, great stupid children changed to wild beasts. It is, however, noteworthy that the Arabs, where they found it paid them, have revealed their culture, knowledge and shrewdness in laying out magnificent stretches of cultivated land, so that parts of the Congo river district are almost as beautifully farmed as an Alsatian estate. In Kassongo, the capital of this rich country, the Belgian troops found magnificent Arabian houses with silk curtains, bed-covers of satin, splendidly carved furniture, silver ware, &c.; but the aboriginal inhabitants of this district had in the meantime degenerated into slaves and cannibals. A real tangible instance of the difference between civilising and spreading culture. (See especially Dr. Hinde: [The Fall of the Congo Arabs](#), 1897, p. 66 ff., 184 ff., &c.)

The intellectual barrenness of this people was really horrifying. Although destiny made the Phoenicians brokers of civilisation, yet this never inspired them to invent anything whatever; civilisation remained for them altogether something absolutely external; of what we call "culture" they had not the least notion, even to the last: clad in magnificent

garments, surrounded by works of art, in possession of all the knowledge of their time, they continued as before to practise sorcery, offered human sacrifices and lived in such a pit of unspeakable vice that the most degraded Orientals turned in disgust from them. With regard to their share in the spread of civilisation Mommsen says: "This they have done more as the bird scatters the seed * than as the sower sows the corn. The Phoenicians absolutely lacked the power, possessed by the Hellenes and even the Italic peoples, of civilising and assimilating the nations capable of being educated, with whom they came in contact. In the sphere of Roman conquest the Iberian and Celtic languages have disappeared before the Romance tongue; the Berbers of Africa speak the same language to-day as they did at the time of Hanno and the Barcidae. But the Phoenicians like all Aramaic peoples, in contrast to the Indo-Teutonic, lack above all the impulse to form States — the brilliant idea of freedom that is self-governing." Where the Phoenicians settled, their constitution was, fundamentally, merely a "government of capitalists, consisting on the one hand of a city mob, without property, living from hand to mouth, treating the conquered people in the country districts as mere slave-cattle without rights, and on the other hand of merchant princes, plantation-owners and aristocratic governors." These are the men, this the fatal branch of the Semitic family, from which we have been saved by the brutal

* Every reader knows by what automatic process the bird unwittingly contributes to the spread of plant life.

118 ROMAN LAW

delenda est Carthago. And even if it should be true that the Romans in this case listened more than was their wont to the mean promptings of revenge, perhaps even of jealousy, all the more am I bound to admire the unerring certainty of instinct which induced them, even where they were blinded by evil passions, to strike down that which any cool, calculating politician gifted with the eye of the prophet would have been bound to urge them to destroy for the salvation of mankind. *

A second Roman *delenda* has for the history of the world an almost equally inestimable importance: the *delenda est Hierosolyma*. Had it not been for this achievement (which we certainly owe as much to the Jews who have at all times rebelled against every system of government as to the long-suffering Romans) Christianity would hardly ever have freed itself from Judaism, but

* Mommsen, who feels bound strongly to condemn the action of the Romans against Carthage, admits at a later point (v. 623) that it was in his opinion neither lust of

empire nor of possession but fear and jealousy that prompted it. This very distinction is of importance for our reasoned view of the part played by Rome in the history of the world. If in a world which recognises might alone as the norm of international law, we can say with certainty of a people that it was not greedy of possessions or power, it seems to me that we have given it a testimonial to its moral character which makes it tower high above all contemporary peoples. As regards "fear," it was thoroughly justified, and it is surely permitted to think that the Roman senate formed a more correct judgment of the situation than Mommsen. — The arbitrary Caesar, of whom even his zealous friend Caelius must say that he sacrifices the interests of the State to his personal ends, built Carthage again at a later time. And what did it become? The most notorious pit of vice in the world, where all whose destiny cast them thither — Romans, Greeks, Vandals — degenerated to the very marrow of their bones. Such devastating magic was still possessed by the curse which rested on the spot where Phoenician horrors had reigned supreme for five hundred years! From its houses of evil repute there arose a mighty cry of indignation against everything called civilisation: That it bore Tertullian and Augustine is the only merit that we can attribute to this shortsighted and shortlived creation of Caesar. — To characterise the nineteenth century, let me quote the opinion of one who is among its so-called greatest historians. Professor Leopold von Ranke says: "The Phoenician element has by means of commerce, colonisation and, finally, also by war, in the main exercised a quickening influence upon the Occident" (*Weltgeschichte*, i. 542).

119 ROMAN LAW

would have remained, in the first instance, a sect among sects. The might of the religious idea, however, would have prevailed in the end; as to that there can be no question: the enormous and increasing spread of the Jewish Diaspora * before the time of Christ proves it;

* Diaspora is the name given to the widened Jewish community. Originally the term was applied to those Jews who had preferred not to return from the Babylonian captivity, because they were better off there than in their home. Soon there was no prosperous city in the world without a Jewish community; nothing is more erroneous than the widespread belief that it was the destruction of Jerusalem that first scattered the Jews over the world. In Alexandria and its neighbourhood alone there were reckoned to be under the first Roman emperors a million Jews, and Tiberius already recognised the great danger of this theocratic State in the midst of the legal State. The men of the Diaspora were keen and successful propagandists, and their considerate adoption of men as "half Jews" under remission of the painful initiatory ceremony, helped them greatly; in addition, material advantages contributed to their success, since the Jews pleaded their religion as an excuse for exemption from military service and a series of other burdensome civic duties; but the Hebrew missionaries had the greatest success with women. Now it is a noteworthy fact that this international community, which contained Hebrews and non-Hebrews, and in which all shades of faith were represented, from the most bigoted Pharisaism to open scoffing irreligion, held together like one man as soon as it was a question of the privileges and interests of the common Jewry; the Jewish freethinker would not for the world have omitted to send in his yearly contribution to Jerusalem for the temple offerings; Philo, the famous Neoplatonist, who believed in Jahve as little as in Jupiter, nevertheless represented the Jewish community of Alexandria in Rome in favour of the synagogues threatened by Caligula; Poppaea Sabina, the mistress and later the wife of Nero, though no Hebrew

but a keen member of the Jewish Diaspora, supported the prayers of the Jewish actor Alityrus, the favourite of Nero, to root out the sect of the Christians, and thereby became very probably morally responsible for that frightful persecution of the year 64, in which it is said that the apostles Peter and Paul met their death. The fact that the Romans, who otherwise at that time could not distinguish Christians from orthodox Jews, were on this occasion able to do so accurately, is regarded by Renan as conclusive proof of this charge, which was made against the Diaspora even in the first century (in Tertullian's *Apologeticus*, chap. xxi., for example, somewhat reserved but yet clear; see also Renan, *L'Antéchrist*, chap. vii.). Newer convincing proofs that up to Domitian's time, and so till long after Nero's death the Romans regarded the Christians as a Jewish sect, are to be found in Neumann: *Der römische Staat und die allgemeine Kirche* (1890), pp. 5 ff. and 14 ff. That Tacitus distinguished clearly between Jews and Christians manifestly proves nothing in this matter, as he wrote fifty years after Nero's persecu-

120 ROMAN LAW

we should therefore have received a Judaism reformed by Christian influence and ruling the world. Perhaps the objection may be urged that that has come to pass, and that it correctly describes our Christian Church. Certainly, the objection is in part justifiable; no rightly thinking man will deny the share that Judaism has in it. But when we see how in earliest times the followers of Christ demanded the strict observance of the Jewish law,“ how they, less liberal than the Jews of the Diaspora, took into their community no “heathens“ who had not submitted to the mark of circumcision common to all Semites; when we think of the struggles which the Apostle Paul (the Apostle of the heathen) had to wage till his death with the Jew-Christians, and that even much later, in the *Revelation of St. John* (iii. 9) he and his followers are scorned as being “of the synagogue of Satan which say they are Jews and are not, but do lie“; when we see the authority of Jerusalem and its temple continue to be simply invincible, even inside the Pauline Christendom, so long as both actually did stand intact, * then we cannot doubt that the religion of the civilised world would have pined under the purely Jewish primacy of the city of Jerusalem, if Jerusalem had not been destroyed by the Romans. Ernst Renan, certainly no enemy of the Jews, has in his *Origines du Christianisme* (iv. chap. xx.) eloquently shown what an “immense danger“ would have lain therein. † Still worse than the commercial monopoly of the Phoenicians would have been the religious monopoly of the Jews; under the leaden weight of these born dogmatists and fanatics all freedom of thought and faith would have

tion and in his narrative transferred the knowledge of a later time to an earlier. (See, too, in connection with the “Jewish jealousy,“ Paul Allard: *Le Christianisme et l'Empire romain de Néron à Théodose* (1897), chap. i.)

* Cf. on this, Graetz, *Volksth. Geschichte der Juden*, i. 653.

† In his *Discours et Conférences*, 3rd ed., p. 350, he calls the destruction of Jerusalem “un immense bonheur.”

121 ROMAN LAW

disappeared from the world; the flatly materialistic view of God would have been our religion, pettifoggery our philosophy. This too is no imaginary picture, only too many facts speak for it; for what is that rigid, illiberal, intellectually narrow dogmatising of the Christian Church — a thing undreamt of by the Aryan — what is that disgraceful, bloodthirsty fanaticism which runs through all the ages down to our own nineteenth century, that curse of hatred that has clung to the religion of love from the beginning and from which Greeks and Romans, Indians and Chinese, Persians and Teutonic peoples turn with horror? What is it, if not the shadow of that temple, in which sacrifices were offered to the god of anger and vengeance, a dark shadow cast over the youth of the heroic race “that from out the darkness strives to reach the light“?

Without Rome it is certain that Europe would have remained a mere continuation of the Asiatic chaos. Greece always gravitated towards Asia, till Rome tore it away. It is the work of Rome that the centre of gravity of culture has been once and for all removed to the west, that the Semitic-Asiatic spell has been broken and at least partly cast aside, that the predominantly Indo-Teutonic Europe became henceforth the beating heart and thinking brain of all mankind. While this State fought for its own practical (but, as we saw, not unideal) interests without the least regard for others — often cruelly, always sternly, but seldom ignobly — it has put the house in readiness, the strong citadel in which our race, after long aimless wanderings, was to settle down and organise itself for the salvation of mankind.

For the accomplishment of Rome's work so many centuries were necessary, and in addition so high a degree of that unerring, self-willed instinct, which hits the mark, even where it seems to be going senselessly astray, doing good even where its will is baneful, that it was not the fleeting existence of pre-eminent individuals but

122 ROMAN LAW

the dogged unity of a steel-hardened people, working almost like a force of nature, that was the right and only efficacious thing. Hence it is that so-called “political history,” that history which tries to build up the life of a people from the biographies of famous men, the annals of war and diplomatic archives, is so inappropriate here; it not only distorts, but

fails to reveal in any way those things that are the most essential. For what we, looking back and philosophising, regard as the office or vocation of Rome in the history of the world, is surely nothing else than an expression for the bird's-eye view of the character of this people as a whole. And here we must admit that the politics of Rome moved in a straight and — as later times have shown — perfectly correct line, so long as they were not in the hands of professional politicians. Caesar's period was the most confused and most productive of evil; both people and instinct were then dead, but the work continued to exist, and, embodied with it, the idea of the work, but it was nowhere capable of being set apart as a formula and as a law for future actions, for the simple reason that the work had not been reasoned, considered and conscious, but unconscious and accomplished of necessity.

ROME UNDER THE EMPIRE

After the fall of the true Roman people this idea — the idea of the Roman State — came again to life in very different ways in the brains of individuals who were called to power. Augustus, for example, seems really to have been of the opinion that he had restored the Roman republic, otherwise Horace would certainly not have gone the length of praising him for it. Tiberius, who transformed “the insult to the majesty of the Roman people,” the *crimen majestatis*, which was punished

123 ROMAN LAW

even in former times, into quite a new crime, viz., “the insult to his own Caesarean person,” took thereby a very great step towards dissipating into a mere idea the actual free State created by the people of Rome — a step from which in the nineteenth century we have not yet gone back. But so firmly was the Roman idea planted in every heart that a Nero took his own life, because the Senate had branded him an “enemy of the republic.” Soon, however, the proud assembly of Patricians found itself face to face with men who did not tremble before the magic words *senatus populusque Romanus*: the soldiers chose the bearer of the Roman Imperium; it was not long before Romans, and Italians as well, were excluded for ever from this dignity: Spaniards, Gauls, Africans, Syrians, Goths, Arabs, Illyrians followed one another; not one of them probably was even distantly related to those men who with sure instinct had created the Roman State. Amid yet the idea lived on; in the Spaniard Trajan it even reached a climax of brilliancy. Under him and his immediate followers it worked so expressly as an ordering civilising power, resorting to conquest only where the consolidation of peace

unconditionally demanded it, that we are justified in saying that during the Antonine century Roman imperialism — which had lived in the people previously only as an impulse, not as an end in view — came to be conscious of itself, and that in a manner which was only possible in the minds of nobly thinking foreigners, who found themselves face to face with a strange idea, which they henceforth embraced with full objectivity, in order to set it in operation with loyalty and understanding. This period had a great influence on all future time; wherever with noble purpose the idea of a Roman Empire was again taken as a starting-point, it was done under the influence and in imitation of Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius. And yet there is a peculiar

124 ROMAN LAW

soullessness in this whole period. Here the sway of understanding is supreme, the heart is dumb; the passionless mechanism affects even the soul, which does right not from love but from reason: Marcus Aurelius' "Monologues" are the mirror of this attitude of mind, and the inevitable reaction appears in the sexual aberrations of his wife Faustina. The root of Rome, the passionate love of the family, of the home, was torn out; not even the famous law against bachelors, with premiums for children (*Lex Julia et Papia Poppaea*) could again make marriage popular. Where the heart does not command, nothing is enduring. And now other foreigners usurped supreme power, this time men full of passion but devoid of understanding, African half-breeds, soldier Emperors, who saw in the Roman State nothing more than a gigantic barracks, and had no idea why Rome in particular should be the permanent headquarters. The second of them, Caracalla, even extended the Roman franchise to all the inhabitants of the Empire: thereby Rome ceased to be Rome. For exactly a thousand years the citizens of Rome (with whom those of the other cities of Italy and of other specially deserving States had gradually been put on an equal footing) had enjoyed certain privileges, but they had gained them by burdensome responsibility as well as by restless, incomparably successful, hard work; from now onward Rome was everywhere, that is, nowhere. Wherever the Emperor happened to be was the centre of the Roman Empire. Diocletian transferred his residence to Sirmium, Constantine to Byzantium, and even when a separate Western Roman Empire arose, the imperial capital was Ravenna or Milan, Paris, Aachen, Vienna, never again Rome. The extension of the franchise to all had another result: there were no longer any citizens. Caracalla, * the murderous, pseudo-Punic savage, used

* For an understanding of the character of Caracalla and his motives

to be commended for his action and even to-day he has his admirers (see Leopold von Ranke, *Weltgeschichte*, ii. 195). In reality, however, he had, by cutting the last thread of historical tradition, *i.e.*, of historical truth, destroyed also the last trace of that freedom, the indomitable, self-sacrificing and thoroughly ideal power of which had created the city of Rome and with it Europe. Political law was, of course, henceforth the same for all; it was the equality of absolute lawlessness. The word citizen (*civis*) gave way now to the term subject (*subjectus*): all the more remarkable, as the idea of being subject was as strange to all branches of the Indo-Europeans as that of supreme kingship, so that we see in this one transformation of the legal idea the incontestable proof of Semitic influence (according to Leist, *Gräco-italische Rechtsgeschichte*, pp. 106, 108). The Roman idea certainly still lived on, but it had concentrated itself or, so to speak, become merged in one person — the Emperor; the privileges of the Romans and their summary

I recommend the little book of Prof. Dr. Rudolf Leonhard, *Roms Vergangenheit und Deutschlands Recht*, 1889, pp. 93-99. He shows in the course of a few pages how this Syrian, “a descendant of the Carthaginian human butchers and the countrymen of those priests of Baal who were wont to throw their enemies into hot ovens“ (the Jews did the same; see 2 *Samuel*, xii. 31), had adopted as his aim in life the annihilation of Rome and the destruction of the still living remains of Hellenic culture, and at the same time the flooding of the cultured European world with the pseudo-Semitic refuse of his home. This was all done systematically, maliciously and under cover of such phrases as universal franchise and religion of mankind. Thus in one single day he succeeded in destroying Rome for ever; thus unsuspecting Alexandria, the centre of art and science, became a victim of the raceless, homeless bestiality that tore down all barriers. Let us never — never for a moment — forget that the spirit of Caracalla is among us and waiting for its chance! Instead of repeating by rote the deceptive phrases about humanity which were the fashion even 1800 years ago in the Semitic *salons* in Rome, we should do better to say with Goethe:

Du musst steigen oder sinken,
Du musst herrschen und gewinnen,
Oder dienen und verlieren,
Leiden oder triumphieren,
Amboss oder Hammer sein.

powers had not disappeared from the world, they had all been delegated to a single man: that is the course of events from Augustus to Diocletian and Constantine. The first Caesar had been satisfied with uniting in his own hands all the most important offices of State, * and that had been granted to him only for one definite object limited in respect of time,

namely, to restore legal order in the civilised world (*restauratio orbis*); within three centuries things had come to this, that a single individual was invested not only with all offices but with all the rights of all the citizens. Just as in early times (at the time of the first successor to Augustus) the “majesty of the people“ had become the “majesty“ of one man, so gradually each and every power, each and every right passed over to him. Augustus had, like every other citizen, still given his vote in the Comitia; now there sits a monarch on the throne, whom one may only approach “reverentially“ on one's knees, amid before him all men are alike, for all, from the foremost statesman to the lowest peasant, are his subjects. And while thus the “great king“ and with him all that belonged to his Court continually increased in riches and dignity, the rest sank ever lower: the citizen could no longer even choose his profession; the peasant, formerly the free proprietor of his ancestral estate, was the bond-man of a master and bound to the soil; but death looses all bonds, and the day came when the tax-collector had to mark what were formerly the most fertile parts of the Empire in their papers as *agri deserti*.

* Augustus was at once: (1) *Princeps*, that is, first citizen, at that time really only a title of honour; (2) *Imperator*, commander-in-chief; (3) tribune of the people for life; (4) *Pontifex maximus* — the highest religious office, an office for life from earliest times; (5) *Consul* — not, it is true, for life, but still in continuous possession of consular power; (6) likewise of proconsular power which embraced the government of all the provinces; and (7) likewise of censorial power, which embraced the control of morals, the right to appoint and remove from the list senators, knights, &c.

127 ROMAN LAW

It is not my intention to trace further through history the idea of the Roman State; something will still have to be said on this matter in a later chapter; I shall restrict myself to reminding the reader that a Roman Empire — in idea a direct continuation of the old Imperium — legally existed till August 6, 1806, and that the oldest Roman office, that of *Pontifex maximus*, which was held by Numa Pompilius himself, is still in existence; the Papal stool is the last remnant of the old heathen world which has continued to live to the present day. * If what I have briefly pointed out is known to all, it has been brought forward in the hope that I might be able to demonstrate more vividly amid suggestively than could be done by theoretical analysis the peculiarly complicated form of the political legacy which our century received from Rome. Here as elsewhere in this book learned considerations have no place; these are to be found in histories of constitutional law; here I bring forward only general observations, which are accessible and stimulating to all. In purely political matters we have inherited from Rome not a simple idea, not even anything so simple as what is embraced by the phrase “Hellenic art,“

however full of meaning that may be, but on the other hand there has come down to us a remarkable mixture of possessions of the greatest reality — civilisation, law, organisation, administration, &c.; and at the same time of ideas which, though we may not comprehend them, are yet all-powerful; of notions which no one can fully grasp and which, nevertheless, for good and for evil, still influence our public life. We certainly cannot understand our own century thoroughly and critically, if we have not clear conceptions regarding this double political legacy.

* Details in [vol. ii. chap. vii.](#)

128 ROMAN LAW

THE LEGACY OF CONSTITUTIONAL LAW

Now that we have discussed political matters in the narrower sense, let us, before passing on to the consideration of Private Law, cast a glance at the constitutional and ideal legacy in general.

So long as Rome was effectively engaged in positively creative work — more than five hundred years before Caesar and then for more than a century in its agony * — it might seem to us totally destitute of ideas; it only creates, it does not think. It creates Europe and destroys, as far as possible, Europe's nearest and most dangerous enemies. That is the positive legacy of this time. The countries, too, which Rome never subdued, as for example the greatest part of Germany, have received from Rome all the germs of constitutional order, as the fundamental condition of every civilisation. Our languages still show us that all administration goes back to Roman teaching or suggestion. We live to-day in conditions so securely established by order that we can scarcely conceive that it was ever otherwise; not one among ten thousand of us has the faintest idea of the organisation of the machine of State; everything seems to us necessary and natural, law, morals, religion, even State itself. And yet the establishment of this, the ordered, secure State, worthy of free citizens, was — as all history proves — a task extremely difficult to accomplish; India had a most noble religion, Athens perfect art, Babylonia a wondrous civilisation — everything had been achieved by the founding of a free and at the same time stable State that guaranteed conditions of law; for this Herculean task an individual hero did not suffice, a whole nation of heroes was necessary — each one strong enough to command, each one

* The issue of the *Edictum perpetuum* by Hadrian is perhaps the last great creative benefaction.

proud enough to obey, all unanimous, each one standing up for his own personal right. When I read Roman history I feel compelled to turn away with horror; but when I contemplate the two incomparable creations of this people, the ordered State and private law, I can only bow in silent reverence before such intellectual greatness.

But this heroic people died out, and after its complete extinction there came, as we saw, a second period of Roman politics. Foreigners occupied the supreme power and foreign lawyers became the masters of public law and constitutional law as well as of the incomparable private law which had grown like a living thing, and which they preserved, so to speak, in alcohol, in the wise conviction that it could not be made more perfect but at most might degenerate. These advisers of the crown were mostly natives of Asia Minor, Greeks and Semites, that is to say, the recognised masters in the handling of abstractions and in juristic subtleties. And now there came an episode of the Roman constitution in which, if nothing absolutely new was invented, there were many new interpretations, which were sublimated to principles, and then crystallised into rigid dogmas. The process is very analogous to that described in the passage dealing with Hellenic art and philosophy. The Roman republic had been a living organism, in which the people was constantly and industriously introducing improvements; the formal question of leading "principles" had never arisen, the present had never wished to hold the future in bondage. That went so far that the highest officials of the law-court, the praetors, nominated for a year, each issued on his entry into office a so-called "praetorian edict," in which he published the principles which he intended to follow in his administration of the law; and thus it became possible to adapt the existing code to changing

times and conditions. Similarly everything in this State was elastic, everything remained in touch with the needs of life. But exactly as the poetical inspirations of the Greek philosophers and their mystical interpretations of the Inscrutable had been transformed in Helleno-Semitic Alexandria to dogmas of faith, so here State and law were changed to dogmas, and pretty much by the same people. We have inherited these dogmas, and it is important that we should know whence they come and how they arose.

For example, our idea of the monarch is derived neither from the

Teutonic nations, nor from the Oriental despots, but from the learned Jurists who were in the service of the Illyrian shepherd Diocletian, of the Illyrian cowboy Galerius and of the Illyrian swineherd Maximinus, and is a direct parody — if the truth must be told — of the greatest State-ideas of Rome. “The State-idea among the Romans,” writes Mommsen, “rests upon the ideal transmission of the individual's capacity for action to the whole body of citizens, the *populus*, and upon the submission on the part of each physical member of the community of his individual will to this universal will. The repression of individual independence in favour of the collective will is the criterion of a constitutional community.” * To picture to oneself what is implied by this “transmission,” this “repression of individual independence,” one must recall to memory the uncontrollable, individual love of freedom characteristic of each Roman. Of the oldest legal monument of the Romans, the famous twelve bronze tables (450 B.C.), Esmarch says, “The most pregnant expressions in these tables are the guarantees of the autocracy of the private rights of Roman citizens,” † and when three hundred and fifty years later the first detailed system of law was

* I quote from the abridged edition of his Roman Constitutional Law in Binding's *Systematisches Handbuch der deutschen Rechtswissenschaft*, p. 81 ff.

† *Römische Rechtsgeschichte*, 3rd ed., p. 218.

131 ROMAN LAW

compiled and written down, all the storms of the intervening period had caused no difference in this one point. * As a free self-governing man the Roman accordingly transmits to the collective will, whose spontaneous member he is, as much of his freedom as is necessary for the defence of that freedom. “The collective will is now in itself, if one is permitted to apply to it an expression of Roman private law, a fiction of constitutional law. Representation is in fact required for it. The action of will of the one man who represents it in the special case is equivalent constitutionally to the action of the collective will. The constitutional act of will in Rome is always the act of one man, since will and action in themselves are inseparable; collective action by majority of votes is from the Roman point of view a *contradictio in adjecto*.” In every clause of this Roman constitutional law one sees a nation of strong, free men: the representation of the common cause, that is, of the State, is entrusted for a definite time to individual men (consuls, praetors, censors); they have absolutely plenary power and bear full responsibility. In case of need this conferring of absolute power goes so far that the citizens nominate a dictator, all in the interest of the common weal and in order that the freedom of each individual may remain unimpaired. — Now the later

emperors, or rather their advisers, did not, as one might have expected, overthrow this constitutional idea; no, they made it the legal foundation for monarchical autocracy, a thing unprecedented in history. Elsewhere despots had ruled as the sons of gods, as for instance in Egypt and even at the present day in Japan — others, in former times and to-day, as representatives of God (I need only mention the Jewish kings and the Khalifs) — others again by the so-called *jus gladii*, the right of the sword. But the soldiers who

* Certain limitations of the freedom of leaving property by will formed certainly a first indication of future times.

132 ROMAN LAW

had usurped what had once been the Roman Empire founded their claims to rule as absolute autocrats upon Roman constitutional law! They had not in their opinion usurped the power like a Greek tyrant and overthrown the constitutional order; on the contrary, the all-powerful monarch was the flower, the perfection of the whole legal development of Rome: this the Oriental jurists had by their subtlety contrived to establish. With the help of the transmission theory just explained, the trick had been accomplished — in the main as follows. One of the main pillars of Roman constitutional law is that no enactment has the force of law, if it is not approved by the people. Under the first emperors appearances were still maintained in this respect. But after Caracalla “Rome” had come to mean the whole civilised world. And now all rights of the people were “transmitted” to the Senate to simplify the issuing of new laws, &c. In the *Corpus juris* it stands thus: “As the Roman people has grown to such an extent that it would be difficult to call it together to one spot for the purpose of approving laws, it was held to be right to consult the Senate instead of the people.” As we now speak of a Viceroy, so the Senate was called henceforth *vice populi*. The approval of the Senate too had become purely a matter of form — once in possession of so beautiful an abstract principle, there was no stopping half-way; and so the text continues: “but that also which it pleases the Prince to decree has the power of law, for the people has transmitted to him its whole plenitude of power and all its rights.” * We

* Secs. 5 and 6, J. *de jure naturali*, i. 2. The last words of the second excerpt I have had to translate somewhat freely. The original is: “omne suum imperium et potestatem”; how difficult it is to give these words the exact legal sense of ancient Rome can be seen in Mommsen, p. 85. *Imperium* means originally “utterance of the will of the community”; hence the bearer of this absolute will was called *imperator*; more limited and defining rather the sphere of private law is *potestas*. Therefore I have translated them by

plenitude of power and rights (German *Machtfülle* and *Rechte*), and think I have thereby expressed the sense.

133 ROMAN LAW

have here accordingly the strictly legal derivation of an absolute monarchy and that too in the way in which it certainly could be developed from the Roman constitution alone — with its rejection of the principle of majority and with its system of transmitting supreme power to individual men. * And this Roman “principate,” as it is called, for the title of King was borne by no Caesar, forms to the present day the basis of all European kingships. By the introduction of constitutionalism, but still more by the manipulation of the law there is at present in many countries a movement back to the free standpoint of the ancient Romans; but everywhere “monarchical rule” is still in principle what the legal authorities of the fallen Roman State had made it, an institution which stands in direct contradiction to the true spirit of genuine Rome. The army is not even at the present day the army of the people, defending the home of that people, it is everywhere (even in England) called the army of the king; the officials are not appointed and invested with authority by the collective will, they are servants of the king. That is all Roman, but, as has been said, Roman of the cowboy, shepherd and swineherd age. I unfortunately cannot go into greater detail here, but must refer my readers to the classical works of Savigny, *Geschichte des römischen Rechtes im Mittelalter*, and Sybel, *Entstehung des deutschen Königtums*, as also to Schulte, *Deutsche Reichs- und Rechtsgeschichte*. Among us the absolute monarchy has everywhere arisen through contact with the Roman Empire. Formerly the Teutonic Kings had everywhere limited rights; the touchstone of high treason was either not recognised as a crime or punished simply by a “wergild” (Sybel, 2nd ed., p. 352); the nomination of counts as officials of the king does not

* As a not unimportant fact, I may be allowed to mention that rule by majority is just as little Teutonic or Greek as it was Roman. (See Leist, *Gräco-italische Rechtsgeschichte*, pp. 129, 133 ff., 727.)

134 ROMAN LAW

occur till the conquest of Roman lands, in fact there is a long period in which the Teutonic kings have greater authority over their Roman subjects than over their free Franks (Savigny, I., chap. iv. div. 3). — Above all the idea of a subject, the Roman *subjectus*, is a legacy which

still clings fast to us, and which should let us see very clearly what to this day connects us with the Roman Empire at the time of its fall, and how much still separates us from the genuine heroic people of Rome.

In all this I have no wish to moralise in the interests of any tendency. The old Roman forms of government would not have been applicable to new conditions and new men; indeed they no longer sufficed even for Rome itself when once it had extended its boundaries. Add to this that Christianity had arisen, making the suppression of slavery an obvious command. All that made a strong kingdom a necessity. But for the kings, slavery would never have been abolished in Europe, the nobles would never have set their slaves free, they would rather have made free-born men their bondmen. The strengthening of the kingly office has everywhere for a thousand years been the first condition of the strengthening of an ordered state of society and civic freedom, and even to-day there is probably no country in Europe where an absolutely free plebiscite would proclaim as the will of the people any other form of government than the monarchical. Public consciousness, too, is penetrating through the deceptive veils which sophists and pettifoggers have hung round it, and is recognising the genuine legal meaning of the King, namely, the old Roman view of the first official of State, glorified by that sacred element which finds a not unsuitable mystical expression in the words, "by the Grace of God." Many things which we have noticed around us in the nineteenth century justify us in believing that without a kingship and without a special grace of God we could not, even to-day, rule ourselves.

135 ROMAN LAW

For that possibly not only the virtues but also the faults of the Romans, and above all their excessive intellectual sobriety, were necessary.

However that may be, we see that the legacy of political and constitutional law which Rome has given us forms a complicated and confused mass, and that principally for two reasons: first of all, because Rome, instead of flourishing like Athens for a short time and then disappearing altogether, lived on for 2500 years, first as a world-ruling State, later as a mighty State-idea, whereby what had been a single impulse broke up into a whole series, which frequently neutralised each other; in the second place, because the work of an incomparably energetic, Indo-European race was revised and manipulated by the subtlest minds of the West-Asiatic mixed races, this again leading to the obliteration of unity of character.

I hope that these brief allusions with regard to the extraordinarily complicated conditions of universal history have sufficed to guide the reader. For clear thinking and lucid conception it is above all

indispensable to separate rightly and to connect rightly. This has been my endeavour, and to this I must needs confine myself.

JURISPRUDENCE AS A TECHNICAL ART

Besides this legacy which we have more or less unconsciously carried along with us, we Europeans possess an inheritance from Rome that has become more than any other inheritance from antiquity an essential element in our life and science, viz., Roman law. By that we have to understand public law (*jus publicum*) and private law (*jus privatum*). * To write about this is an

* That the public law of the Romans has not exercised upon us moderns the same influence as the private does not justify us in leaving it unmentioned, since a model of private law could not come into existence without an excellent public law.

136 ROMAN LAW

easy task, inasmuch as this law is available to us in a very late codification, that of the Emperor Justinian, dating from the middle of the sixth century A.D. Besides, the efforts of jurists and historians have succeeded in tracing far back the growth of this law, and in recent years they have even been able on the one hand to demonstrate the connection of its origins with old Aryan law, and on the other to follow its fate in the various countries of Europe through centuries of vague ferment up to the present day. Here we have accordingly definite and clearly sifted material, and a legal expert can easily prove how much Roman law is contained in the law-books of our States to-day; it must also be easy for him to prove that the thorough knowledge of Roman law will for indefinite ages remain the canon of all strictly juridical thought. Here too in the Roman legacy we have to distinguish between two things: actual legal tenets, which have stood for centuries and to some extent are still valid, and besides this a treasure of ideas and methods. The legal expert can explain all this easily, but only when he is speaking to those who know law. Now I am no authority on law (though I have industriously and lovingly studied its fundamental principles and the general course of its history), nor am I entitled to suppose that my readers are informed on the subject; my task is therefore different and quite clearly defined by the purpose of this book. It is only from a summary and universally human standpoint that I can venture briefly to indicate in what sense Roman law was in the history of the Indo-European nations a factor of such unparalleled significance that it has remained a part of our culture to the present day.

Why is it utterly impossible to speak of jurisprudence except to an audience equipped with a large store of technical juristical knowledge? This preliminary question will lead us at once to the heart of our subject, and

137 ROMAN LAW

will point the way to a perhaps not detailed, but at any rate accurate, analysis of what the Romans have accomplished in this department.

Law is a technical subject: that is the whole answer. Like medicine, it is neither pure science nor pure art; and while every science in its results and every art by the impression which it makes can be communicated to all and so is in its essentialities common property, a technical subject remains accessible only to the expert. Cicero indeed compares jurisprudence with astronomy and geometry and expresses the opinion that “all these studies are in pursuit of the truth,” * but this is a perfect example of a logically false comparison. For astronomy and geometry investigate actual, fixed, unchangeable conditions, some outside of, others inside the mind, † whereas legal decisions are derived first of all from the observation of variable, contradictory and ever undefinable tendencies, habits, customs and opinions, and jurisprudence as a discipline must according to the nature of things confine itself to the subject before it, formulating it more definitely, expressing it more exactly, making it more intelligible by comparison, and — above all — classifying it accurately by the finest analysis and adapting it to practical needs. Law is, like the State, a human, artificial creation, a new systematic arrangement of the conditions arising out of the nature of man and his social instincts. The progress of jurisprudence does not imply by any means an increase of knowledge (which must surely be the object of science), but merely a perfecting of the technical art; that is, however, a great deal and may presuppose high gifts. An abundant material is thus consistently and with

* *De Officiis*, i. 6.

† I say this without any metaphysical *arrière-pensée*: whether mathematical conceptions are judgments *à priori* (as Kant asserts) or not, every one will admit that geometry is the purely formal activity of the mind, in contrast to the investigation of the heavens.

138 ROMAN LAW

increasing skill employed by the human will in working out the life-

purpose of man.

I shall introduce a comparison to make this clearer.

How conditional and, consequently, how little to the purpose would be the statement that the God who formed iron also caused the smithy to be built! In a certain sense the remark would be undeniably correct: without definite tendencies which impelled him to search further and further, without definite capacities for invention and manipulation, man would never have attained to the working of iron; he did live long on the earth before he reached that stage. By acuteness and patience he at last succeeded: he learnt how to make the hard metal pliant and serviceable to himself. But here we have clearly not to deal with the discovery of any eternal truth, as in the case of astronomy and every genuine science, but on the one hand with patience and skill, on the other hand with suitability to practical purposes; in short, working iron is no science but, in the true sense of the Greek word, a technique, *i.e.*, a matter of skill. And the conditions of this technique, since they depend on the human will (showing their relationship with art), vary with the times, with the tendencies and the habits of races, just as on the other hand they are influenced by the progress of knowledge (showing their relationship with science). In the nineteenth century, for example, the working of iron has passed through great changes which would have been inconceivable but for the progress of chemistry, physics, mechanics and mathematics; a practical art may thus demand manifold scientific knowledge from those who pursue it — but it does not for all that cease to be a practical art. And because it is a practical art, it can be learned by any one, however poor his mental endowments, provided only he has some skill, whereas on the other hand it is a dead letter even for the more gifted of men if he has not made himself familiar with its methods.

139 ROMAN LAW

For while science and art contain something which is of interest to every intelligent person, an applied art is merely a method, a procedure, a manipulation, something artificial and not artistic, an application of knowledge, not really knowledge itself, a power, yet not a creative power, and so only that which is produced by it, *i.e.*, the finished object, in which there is nothing technical left, can claim universal interest.

It is exactly the same with jurisprudence, with this one difference, that the material here to be worked up is purely intellectual. In principle jurisprudence is and remains an applied art, and many an almost ineradicable misunderstanding would have been avoided if the legal authorities had not lost sight of this simple fundamental truth. From Cicero to the present day * excellent jurists have only too often looked upon it as their duty to claim for their branch of study the designation

“science,” cost what it might; they seem to fear that they will be degraded if their claims are held to be absurd. Naturally people will continue to speak of a “science of law”; but only in the derived sense; the mass of the material on law, history of law, &c., is so gigantic that it, so to speak, forms a little world for itself, in which research is made and this research is called science (*Wissenschaft*). But this is obviously an improper use of the word. The root “vid” denotes in Sanscrit to find; if language is not to pale into colourless ambiguity, we must see to it that a knowing (*Wissen*) always denotes a finding. Now a finding presupposes two things: in the first place, an object which is and exists before we find it; and secondly, the fact that this object has not yet been found and discovered; neither of the two things can be said of jurisprudence; for “law” does not exist till men make it, nor does it exist as a subject outside of our consciousness; besides, the science

* See, for example, Holland; *Jurisprudence*, 6th ed., p. 5.

140 ROMAN LAW

of law does not reveal or find anything but itself. And so those ancient authorities were perfectly right who, instead of speaking of *juris scientia*, preferred to say *juris notitia*, *juris peritia*, *juris prudentia*, that is, practically, knowledge, skill, experience in the manipulation of law.

NATURAL LAW

This difference is of far-reaching importance. For it is only when we have recognised what law essentially is, that we can follow its history intelligently and comprehend the decisive importance of Rome in the development of this applied art. Now and now only can we not merely cut but untie that Gordian knot, the question of natural law. This great question, which has been the subject of dispute for centuries, arises solely and simply from a misunderstanding of the nature of law; whether we answer it by yes or no does not help us out of the maze. Cicero, in the confused manner peculiar to him, has used all sorts of oratorical flourishes on this subject; at one time he writes: in order to explain law, one must investigate the nature of man — there he seemed to be on the right track; immediately after he says that law is a “sublime reason” which exists outside of us and is “implanted in us”; then again we hear that law “arises out of the nature of things”; finally, that it was “born simultaneously with God, older than mankind.” * I do not know why these quibbling platitudes are quoted everywhere; I do so merely lest I should be reproached with having heedlessly passed by so famous a

fount of wisdom; however, I would draw the reader's attention to Mommsen's verdict: "Cicero was a journalist in the worst sense of the term, over-rich in words, as he himself confesses, and beyond all imagination poor in thoughts." † It was worse when

* *De legibus*, i. 5 and 6, ii. 4, &c.

† *Römische Geschichte*, iii. 620.

141 ROMAN LAW

their Asiatic love of dogmatism and sticking for principle induced the really important legal teachers of the so-called "classical jurisprudence" to formulate clearly the quite un-Roman idea of a natural law and to introduce it systematically. Ulpian calls natural law that "which is common to animals and men." A monstrous thought! Not merely in art is man a free creator, in law too he proves himself a magnificent inventor, an incomparably skilled, thoughtful workman, the forger of his own fate. Roman law is as characteristic a creation of the one individual human spirit as Hellenic art. What would be said of me if I were to speak of a "natural art" and then tried to draw an analogy, however far-fetched, between the spontaneous chirping of a bird and a tragedy of Sophocles? Because the jurists form a technical guild, many of them have for centuries talked nonsense like this without the world noticing it. Gaius, another classical authority whom the Jews claim as their countryman and who, history tells us, was "not deep but very popular," gives a less extravagant but equally invalid definition of natural law: he identifies it with the so-called *jus gentium*, that is, with the "common law" which grew out of the legal codes of the various races of the Roman provinces; in ambiguous words he explains that this law was common to "all nations of the earth": a fearful assertion, since the *jus gentium* is just as much the work of Rome as its own *jus civile* and represents only the result of the systematising activity of Roman jurisprudence amidst the confusion of contradictory and antagonistic codes. * The very existence of the *jus gentium* beside and in contrast to the Roman *jus civile*, as well as the confused history of the origin of this "Law of nations," should have made clear to the dullest eye that there is not one law but many; also that law is not an entity, which can be

* See p. [113](#).

142 ROMAN LAW

scientifically investigated, but a product of human skill, which can be viewed and carried out in very different ways. But the ghost of natural law still merrily haunts certain brains; for example, legal theorists, as far apart as Hobbes and Rousseau, agree in this one idea; but the greatest achievement was the famous Hugo Grotius' division in natural, historical, and divine law, which makes one ask whether then the divine law was unnatural? or the natural a work of the devil? It needed the brilliant intellect and the outspoken impertinence of a Voltaire to venture to write: "Rien ne contribue peut-être plus à rendre un esprit faux, obscur, confus, incertain, que la lecture de Grotius et de Pufendorf." * In the nineteenth century, however, this pale abstraction has been sharply attacked; the historians of law, and with them the brilliant theorist Jhering, have dealt the finishing blow. For this all that was really necessary was to understand that law is an applied art.

Considered from this point of view it is easy to comprehend that in reality the idea "natural law" (*jus naturae*) contains a flagrant *contradictio in adjecto*. As soon as a legal agreement is come to among men — it does not at all need to be written, a convention silent or by word of mouth is in principle the same thing as a bulky civil code of law — for the state of nature has ceased; but if the pure natural impulse still prevails, *eo ipso* there is no law. For even if men in a natural state were to live together in association, no matter how mild and humane they might be towards one another, there would be no law, no *jus*; there would be just as little law as if the brutal power of the fist were the decisive factor with them. Law is a regulation of the relations of an individual to others, artificially arranged and enforced upon him by the community. It is an em-

* *Dictionnaire philosophique*. J. J. Rousseau, too, calls Grotius "un enfant, et qui pis est, un enfant de mauvaise foi" (*Emile*, v.).

143 ROMAN LAW

ployment or these instincts which impel man to live together in societies, and, at the same time, of that necessity which forces him *nolens volens* to unite with his like: love and fear, friendship and enmity. If we read in the dogmatic metaphysicians, "Law is the abstract expression of the general will, existing of its own accord and for its own benefit," * we feel that we are getting air instead of bread to eat; when the great Kant says, "Law is the essence of the conditions under which the arbitrary will of the one can be harmonised with that of the other according to a universal law of freedom," † we must at once see that this is the definition of an ideal, the definition of a possible or at least thinkable state of law, but not an all-embracing definition of law in general, as it

presents itself to us; besides, it contains a dangerous error. It is indeed a fallacy to suppose arbitrary will in the soul of the individual and then to construe law into a reaction against it; rather every individual manifestly acts according to the necessity of his nature, and the element of arbitrariness only comes in with the measures whereby this natural action is restricted; it is not the natural man that is arbitrary, it is the man of law. If we wished to attempt a definition with Kant's ideas as basis, we should have to say: Law is the essence of the arbitrary conditions, which are introduced into a human society, in order that the necessary action of one man may be counterbalanced by the necessary action of another and so harmonised as to give as large an amount of freedom as possible. The simplest formulation of the idea would be as follows: Arbitrariness in place of instinct in the relations of men to men is law. And by way of explanation it would have to be added that the *non plus ultra* of arbitrariness consists in declaring an arbitrarily established form (for punishment, buying,

* Hegel, *Propädeutik*, Kursus i. § 26.

† *Metaphysische Anfangsgrunde der Rechtslehre*, Einleitung, § B.

144 ROMAN LAW

marriage, testaments, &c.) to be henceforth and for ever unchangeable, so that all actions thereby covered are invalid and have no legal support, whenever the prescribed form is not observed. Law is accordingly the lasting rule of definite arbitrary relations between men. Moreover, it is unnecessary to enter into speculations with regard to quite unknown prehistoric times, in order to see *jus* in simple forms, where this central element of arbitrariness clearly appears; we need only to look at the inhabitants of the Congo State to-day. Every little tribe has its chief; he alone decides matters of law and his decision is irrevocable. The legal disputes which occupy him are under such simple conditions of a very simple nature; they have to deal mostly with crimes against life and property; the penalty is death, seldom slavery; if the chief by motion of hand has given his decision against the accused, the latter is hacked into a hundred pieces by the bystanders and then eaten. The ideas of law therefore are very elementary on the Congo; and yet the idea of law is there; the natural man, that is, the man acting instinctively, would himself kill the supposed murderer or thief; here he does not do that, the criminal is dragged to the place of assembly and judged. Similarly the chief decides disputes of inheritance and the regulation of boundaries. The unlimited arbitrary power of the chief is accordingly the "law" of the land, it is the cement by which society is held together, instead of falling to pieces in a lawless condition of nature. * The progress of law lies in the

practical development and the ethical clarification of this arbitrary element. †

* I have no doubt that there, too, certain rules are rendered sacred by custom and binding also on the chief, but legally he is quite free; only the fear of being roasted and eaten himself can restrain him from any arbitrary procedure.

† In reference to law as a “living power,” as the product of “the creative thoughts of great individualities,” in contrast to all the dogmatics of the supposed law of nature, read the interesting lecture of

145 ROMAN LAW

ROMAN LAW

I think we have now sufficient material to enable us without technical discussions, and at the same time without phrase-making, to understand the special merits of the Roman people in regard to law, or at least the special character of those merits. The nature of our legacy will at the same time be exactly characterised.

If law is not an inborn principle nor an exact science capable of investigation, but a useful adaptation of human capabilities to the building up of a society fitted for civilisation, then it is clear from the first that there will be and must be codes of law varying very much in value. Fundamentally a law will be influenced principally by two forces from which it will receive its characteristic colouring: first, by the moral character of the people in whose midst it comes into force, and, secondly, by the analytical acuteness of that people. By the happy union of both — a union occurring only once in the history of the world — the Roman people found themselves in a position to build up a legal code of great perfection. * Mere egoism, the greed of possession, will never suffice to found

Prof. Eugen Ehrlich, *Freie Rechtsfindung und freie Rechtswissenschaft*, Leipzig, 1903.

* The assertion that history constantly repeats itself belongs to the countless untruths which are in circulation as wisdom among the “nonocentists.” Never in history — as far as our knowledge goes — has anything repeated itself, never! Where is the repetition of Athens and Sparta? of Rome? of Egypt? Where has the second Alexander flourished? where a second Homer? Neither nations nor their great men return again. And so mankind does not become wiser by “experience”; the past offers it no paradigm for the present to form its judgment; it is made worse or better, wiser or more foolish, simply by the influences that are brought to bear on its intellect and character. Gutzkow's Ben Akiba was fundamentally wrong in his famous remark, “All has occurred before“! Such an ass as he himself never lived before, and, it is to be hoped, will never appear again. And even if this were so, it would only be the repetition of the individual who under new circumstances would commit new follies for our amusement.

146 ROMAN LAW

a lasting code of law; we have rather learned from the Romans that the inviolable respect for the claims of others to freedom and possession is the moral foundation upon which alone we can build for all time. One of the most important authorities on the Roman law and people, Karl Esmarch, writes: "The conscience of the Italian Aryans in regard to right and wrong is strong and unadulterated; in self-control and, when necessary, self-sacrifice, that virtue of theirs which springs from inner impulse and is supported by a most profound inner nature reaches its culmination." Because he knew how to rule himself the Roman was qualified to rule the world and to develop a strong idea of the State; by the fact that he could sacrifice his own interests to the universal weal, he proved his capacity to establish valid principles in regard to the rights of private property and of individual freedom. But these high moral qualities had to be supported by exceptional intellectual qualities. The Romans, quite insignificant in philosophy, were the greatest masters in the abstraction of firm principles from the experiences of life — a mastery which becomes specially remarkable when we compare other nations with them, as, for example, the Athenians, who, though marvellously gifted, and delighting in legal quarrels and sophisticated law riddles, never were anything but blunderers in this branch of thought. * This peculiar capacity, to elevate definite practical relations to clearly defined principles implies a great intellectual achievement; for the first time order and lucidity of arrangement were brought into social conditions, just as language, by the formation of abstract collective words, had made higher systematic thinking possible. It is no longer a question of vague instincts nor of obscure and changing conceptions of justice and injustice; all relations stand definitely grouped before our

* Cf. Leist, *Gräco-italische Rechtsgeschichte*, p. 694, and for the following quotation, p. 682.

147 ROMAN LAW

eyes, and these relations are to be regulated by the invention of new legal rules or the further development of those already existing. And since life gradually widens experience, or itself assumes more complicated forms, the Roman acuteness little by little inside the individual "groups" discovers the "species." "In point of fine, carefully pondered ideas of right, Roman law is and will remain the permanent teacher of the civilised world," says Professor Leist, the very man who has done more than any other to prove that the Universities should give up the present one-sided Roman standpoint of history of law and should teach students to

recognise Roman law as a link in the chain, as one of the steps “which the Aryan mind has mounted in the clearing up of legal conceptions.” The more carefully we study the numerous attempts at legislation previous to and contemporary with the Roman, the more we recognise what incomparable services were rendered by Roman law and realise that it did not fall from heaven but was the creation of the intellects of grand and sturdy men. One thing must not be overlooked: in addition to the qualities of self-control, of abstraction, and the finest analysis, the Roman possessed a special gift of plastic shaping. Here appears their relationship to Hellenism, which we seek in vain elsewhere. The Roman too is an artist of mighty creative power — an artist in the clear, plastic shaping of the complicated machine of State. No theorist in the world could have thought out such an organism of State, which perhaps should rather be pointed to as a work of art than as a work of reason. He is still more an artist in the plastic working out of his conceptions of law. Highly characteristic too is the manner in which the Roman strives to give visible expression to his artistically moulded conceptions even in legal actions, everywhere “to give an outward expression to the inner diversity, to bring what is inward, so to speak, to the sur-

148 ROMAN LAW

face.” * Here we have a decidedly artistic instinct, the outcome of specifically Indo-European tendencies. In this artistic element too lies the magic power of the Roman legacy; that is the indestructible and ever incomparable part of it.

On one point indeed we must be quite clear; — Roman law is just as incomparable and inimitable as Hellenic art. Our ridiculous Germanomania will make no change in that. People tell marvels about a “German law,” supposed to have been stolen from us by the introduction of the Roman; but there never was a German law, but merely a chaos of rude contradictory laws, a special one for each tribe. It is also absolutely inaccurate to speak of “adopting” Roman law between the thirteenth and the sixteenth centuries; for the Teutonic peoples have “adopted” continuously from the time when they first came into contact with the Roman Empire. Burgundians and East Goths as early as the fifth century of the Christian era (or at the very beginning of the sixth) introduced modified (corrupted) forms of Roman law, † and the oldest sources of Saxon, Frankish, Bavarian and Alemannic law, &c., are so interlarded with Latin words and half-understood principles, that the need of a reasoned codification of law is only too apparent. One might well relegate German law as an ideal to the future, but to seek it in the past is hypocritical twaddle. ‡ Another hindrance

* For examples, read the splendid chapter *Plastik des Rechtes* in Jhering's *Geist des römischen Rechtes*, § 23. Of the modern undramatic life of law, Jhering says: "One would have liked to give law, instead of a sword, a quill as its attribute, for the feathers were scarcely more necessary to the bird than to it, except that in the case of law the attribute produced the opposite effects and speed stood in converse relation to the amount of feathers employed."

† Savigny, *Geschichte des römischen Rechtes im Mittelalter*, chap. i.

‡ I know no more conclusive proof of the original incapacity of the Teutonic peoples to judge acutely in questions of law than that such a man as Otto the Great could not decide, otherwise than by a duel, the fundamental question whether descendants should inherit or not;

149 ROMAN LAW

to the proper estimation of Roman law is due to the frenzy produced by the dogma of evolution, which has led to such confusion of thought in the nineteenth century. The feeling for the Individual, the established view that the Individual alone has everlasting importance, has been seriously injured by it. Although the only effective powers that history reveals are absolutely individualised nations and great personalities that never recur, the theory of evolution leads to the idea that capacities and beginnings were everywhere identical and that essentially analogous structures must "develop" from these same germs. The fact that this never happens and that Roman law, for example, came into being once for all, does not disturb our dogmatists in the least. With this is connected the further conception of unceasing progress towards "perfection," in consequence of which our law must as a matter of course surpass the Roman, because it is later, and yet nature never offers an example of development taking place in anything living without entailing a corresponding loss. * Our civilisation stands high above the Roman; in respect of the vividness of our legal sense, on the other hand, an educated man of the nineteenth century can certainly not come up to a Roman peasant of the year 500 B.C. No one who has any thinking power and knowledge will dispute that. I said in relation to law, not to justice. When Leist writes, "The unprejudiced inquirer will not find that the present age as compared with the Roman has made such glorious advance in the practice or even in the knowledge of real justice," † he makes a remark well worth taking to heart; but I quote these words

this judgment of Heaven was then adopted as a piece of law for good by a *pactum sempiternum!* (See Grimm, *Rechtswörterbuch*, 3rd ed. p. 471.)

* The detailed proof that the ideas of a progress and decline of humanity have no concrete significance will be found in the ninth chapter.

† *Gräco-italische Rechtsgeschichte*, p. 441.

150 ROMAN LAW

to make it clear that I do not here speak of justice, but of law, and to ensure that the difference between the two may be obvious. Our noble conception of the duties of humanity points, I am sure, to more enlightened ideas with regard to justice; the legal sense is, however, quite a different thing and is neither proved nor promoted even by the possession of the most perfect and yet imported systems of law.

To understand how incomparable was the achievement of the Romans, one circumstance must certainly not be overlooked: the Justinian *corpus juris* with which we are familiar is only the embalmed corpse of Roman law. * For centuries skilled legal authorities kept in it a semblance of life by galvanic means; now all civilised nations have worked out a law of their own; but this would not have been possible without the Roman, we all lack the necessary talent. A single observation will suffice to show the cleft between the Romans and ourselves: Roman law of the real heroic period was firm as a rock but nevertheless incredibly elastic — “incredibly,” I mean, to our modern, timid conceptions, for we have taken everything from that law, except its living character. The Roman law was always “in a state of growth,” and capable, thanks to certain brilliant contrivances, of adapting itself to the changing needs of the times. The law, which in the fifth century B.C. was in its general outlines engraved in bronze tables by the decemvirs nominated for that purpose, was not a new and improvised code, nor one which from that time forth was immutable, but was more or less a codification of already existing laws which had grown up historically; the Romans knew how to invent ways and means to keep it even then from crys-

* Francis Bacon points out how inferior the *corpus juris* of Justinian is to the genuine Roman law, and blames so “dark an age” for taking the liberty of laying hands upon the work of so “brilliant an age” in order to improve it. (See the dedication of the *Law Tracts*.)

151 ROMAN LAW

tallising. In dealing with the Twelve Tables, for example, the officials did good service by their acumen in “interpreting” — not with the object of twisting the statutes to suit some special purpose, but of adapting them half-automatically to wider conditions; brilliant inventions — as, for example, that of the legal “fiction,” by which means were found (if I may express myself as a layman) of putting to use existing legal norms to forestall others that were not yet existent — and constitutional arrangements, like those of the Praetors, by which a place was assured to that law of custom which is so necessary in a living organism, till the

best law has been provided by practice, arrangements by means of which the *jus gentium* also gradually developed in close touch with the narrower Roman *jus civile* — all these things brought about a fresh pulsating life in law — a life which no one can appreciate unless he has studied law, inasmuch as we have nothing of the kind, absolutely nothing. *

Moreover, in order to estimate the gulf between us and the Romans, we must remember that real scholarly and trained jurists did not come into existence till the end of the republic, and that this splendid, and in most parts most delicately chiselled product of legal applied art is the work of peasants and rude warriors. The reader should try to make clear to an average philistine of the present day the juristical difference between property and possession, to bring home to him that a thief is the legal possessor of the stolen object, and as such enjoys legal protection for his possession, as does also the pawnbroker and the hereditary landlord; he will not succeed, I know it from experience; I purposely choose this as a simple example. The Roman peasant, on the other hand, who could neither read

* Especially of the year's edicts of the Praetors. Leist says that they had become "the principal moment in the finer development of Roman law" (as quoted above, p. 622).

152 ROMAN LAW

nor write, knew all this quite accurately five hundred years before Christ. * He certainly did not know much more, but his law he knew and employed with as exact knowledge as he did his plough or his oxen; and by knowing it and thinking about it, † by striving to obtain for himself, his possessions, and his relatives an ever firmer and more definite legal protection, he built up that legal structure, under which at a later time other races found shelter in stormy days, and which we at the present day with more or less success, with more or less changes, seek to extend, finish and perfect. No people but the Romans could of themselves have created and built it up, for nowhere else was there present the necessary conjunction of qualities of character and of intellect, and this law had to be lived before it was thought, before the arrival of those worthies who could tell us so much that was edifying in regard to a "natural law," and thought it comparable to the geometry which the scholar puzzles out in his lonely room.

In later times Hellenes and Semites have rendered great services as dogmatists and advocates, Italians as teachers of law, Frenchmen as systematisers, Germans as historians; in none of the races mentioned, however, could one have found the soil that could bring that tree to maturity. In the case of the Semites, for instance, the moral subsoil was wanting, in the case of the Germans acumen. The Semites have great

moral qualities, but not those from which a law for civilised nations could have been developed. For the disregard of the legal claims and the freedom of others is a feature that ever reappears in all races strongly imbued with Semitic blood. Already in ancient Babylon they had a finely worked out law of commerce and obligations; but even in this limited

* See the clear distinction between property and possession in Table VII., clause 11.

† In Cicero's time every boy still learned the Twelve Tables by heart.

153 ROMAN LAW

branch nothing was done to suppress the frightful exaction of usury, and as for safeguarding personal rights, that of freedom, for instance, no one ever even thought of it. * But even under more favourable circumstances, for instance, among the Jews, there is not even the beginning of a genuine formation of law; strange as that may appear, a single glance at the legal clauses of the greatest Jewish thinker, Spinoza, solves the riddle. In his *Political Tractate* (ii. 4 and 8) we read, "The right of each one is in proportion to his power." Here we might of course imagine that it was merely a question of establishing actual relations, for this second chapter bears the title "On Natural Law." † However, in his *Ethics* (Part IV., Supplement, 8) we find in black and white: "According to the highest law of nature every man has unlimited power to do that which in his opinion will be in his interest"; and in the treatise *On True Freedom* we find the words: "To obtain that which we demand for our salvation and our peace, we need no other principle than this, to lay to heart what is for our own interests." ‡ That it does not disconcert so honest a man to build up a pure theory of morals upon such foundations is the finest testimony to his inborn casuistical gifts; but it proves that Roman law could never have grown on Jewish soil. No, there

* Compare the very minute information in Jhering's *Vorgeschichte der Indoeuropäer*, p. 233 ff. The usual rate of interest in Babylon was 20 to 25 per cent. Jhering asserts that interest was a Babylonian, a Semitic (not a Sumarian) invention; he says, "all other peoples owe their acquaintance with it to the Babylonians." Honour to whom honour is due! Also the subtlest form of interest, for instance, the favourite plan of lending money without interest, by immediately taking it from the capital, was well known in ancient Babylon, even before Homer had begun to write verses. When, then, shall we be spared the old fiction that it was only in recent centuries that the Semites were forced by the persecution of Christians to become usurers?

† How astonished Cicero and Seneca, Scaevola and Papinian would have been at such a conception of natural law!

‡ The resemblance between the principles (not the conclusions) of Spinoza and of Nietzsche is striking enough to claim our attention.

154 ROMAN LAW

would have been at the most a simplified code, such as King Tippu Tib, for instance, may use on the Congo. * It was only on the foundation of a law invented and worked out in detail by Indo-Europeans that the Jew could display his astonishing juristical abilities. — The drawbacks in the case of the German lie in quite a different direction. Self-sacrifice, the impulse “to build from within outwards,” the emphasising of the ethical moment, the unswerving love of freedom, in short, all the requisite moral qualities they would have possessed in abundance; — not the intellectual ones. Acumen was never a national possession of the Teutons; that is so manifest that it requires no proof. Schopenhauer asserts that “the real national characteristic of the German is dullwittedness (*Schwerfälligkeit*).” Moreover, the peculiar gifts of the Germans are a hindrance in the formation of law — his incomparable fancy (in contrast to the flat empiricism of the Roman imagination), the creative passion of his mind (in contrast to the cool sobriety of the Roman), his scientific depth (in contrast to the practical political tendencies of the born legal race), his lively sense of fairness (in social relations always a weak reed in comparison with the strictly legal attitude of the Roman). No, this people could never have brought the applied art

* A few years ago I met in society an educated Jew, an owner of petroleum wells and a member of the notorious petroleum-ring. No argument could convince the honest man, who would not have harmed a fly, how morally condemnable such a ring was; his constant answer was, “I can, and therefore I may!” Spinoza word for word, as one can see. — This brings up the grave question as to whether in Teutonic countries men of Jewish race should be appointed judges. Without any passion or prejudice, without doubting the knowledge and the spotless honour of those in question, one ought to ask oneself, on the ground of historical and ethical data, whether it should be taken for granted that these men are capable of completely assimilating a conception of law which is so thoroughly in opposition to their natural tendencies; whether they really understand and feel this law which they use so masterfully. Whoever has come to recognise the clearly marked individuality of the various races of mankind can bring up such a question in all seriousness and without any ill-will.

155 ROMAN LAW

of law to high perfection; it resembles too closely the Indo-Aryans, whose “complete lack of the juristical power of distinguishing” is demonstrated by Jhering in his *Vorgeschichte der Indoeuropäer*, § 15.

THE FAMILY

I should like to introduce another national comparison with regard to the formation of law, that between the Hellenes and the Romans. It reveals the essence of Roman law, the one point to which I may call special attention in this book. At the same time it will make us feel how deeply our civilisation is indebted to the Roman legacy. My discussion will be brief, and though it deals with the simple beginnings of the remote past, it will also introduce us to the burning questions of the immediate present.

Every educated person knows that the Greeks were not only great politicians but at the same time great theorists in law. The “lawsuit about the shadow of the ass” * is an ancient Attic witticism, which satirises excellently the love of this thoughtless, litigious people for actions at law. I recall too the *Wasps* of Aristophanes with the heartrending prayers of Philocleon when shut in by his son: “Let me out, let me out — to judge!” But we should look further around. Homer has a court scene represented on the shield of Achilles (*Iliad*, xviii. 497 ff.), Plato's largest works are on politics and the theory of law (the *Republic* and the *Laws*), Aristotle's *Rhetoric* is in parts simply a handbook for advocates beginning their profession; notice, for example, how in chap. xv. of the first book he expounds a detailed theory of deceptive sophistry for hedge-lawyers, gives them

* An Athenian hires an ass to carry his baggage to Megara. At a resting-place he sits down in the shadow of it; the driver will not permit this without extra payment, as he had hired the ass but not its shadow.

156 ROMAN LAW

hints how to twist the law to the advantage of their clients, and advises them to let their clients swear false oaths in court, whenever it is to their advantage... *

We see that, except in Sparta (where according to Plutarch's assurance there were absolutely no cases), the Hellenic atmosphere was charged with questions of law. The Romans, always ready to recognise the merits of others, had, from time immemorial, recourse to the Greeks, particularly to the Athenians, for advice in the development of their law. Even when they were about to fix their fundamental legal principles (in the Twelve Tables) for the first time, they sent a commission to Greece, and in the final editing of this earliest monument, an Ephesian, Hermodorus, who was banished from his native city, is said to have been of considerable service. Time made no change in this. The great authorities on law, a Mucius Scaevola, a Servius Sulpicius, have a thorough knowledge of Hellenic legal enactments; Cicero, and all that this name stands for, derives his obscure remarks on divine justice,

natural law, &c., from Greek philosophers: in the pseudo-Platonic *Minos* he might have read that law is the discovery of an objective thing, not a human invention, and from Aristotle he quotes the words, "The universal law, because it is the natural law, never changes, but the written law, on the other hand, often does." † In the later period of the imperial decay, when the

* This belongs, according to the great philosopher, to "the means of persuasion that lie outside of art."

† Up to the present day one finds this passage quoted in juristical works, but with little justification, as Aristotle is here giving merely a rhetorical trick for use in court and on the next page teaches the use of the opposite assertion. Still less to the point is the passage from the *Nicomachean Ethics*, v. 7, which culminates in the sentence, "Law is the mean between a certain advantage and a certain disadvantage." How great does Democritus show himself here as always when he says, with that clear insight characteristic of him, that "laws are the fruits of human thinking in contrast to the things of nature" (Diogenes Laertius, ix. 45).

157 ROMAN LAW

Roman people had disappeared from the face of the earth, the so-called "classical jurisprudence" was founded and put into shape almost entirely by Greeks more or less of Semitic descent. There is a remarkable want of information with regard to the antecedents and history of the most famous teachers of law in the later Roman ages; all of a sudden they appear in office and dignity, no one knowing whence they have come. * But at the beginning of the Imperial rule with its inevitable influence upon the life of law the passionate struggle between Labeo, the irrepressible, free old plebeian, and Capito the upstart, who is striving for wealth and honour, is truly pathetic; it is the struggle for organic free development in opposition to the faith in authority and dogma. And dogma conquered in the legal sphere as in that of religion. — But in the meantime, as we have said, the practical Romans had learned a great deal in Greece, especially from Solon, who had, as a builder of States, achieved little that lasted, but accomplished all the more in the sphere of law. Whether Solon was the originator of written legislation and the momentous principle of *actiones* (the division of suits according to definite principles), or whether he merely systematised and fixed them — I know not: at any rate both are derived from Athens. † This I mention only as an instance of the great importance of Greece in the development of Roman law. Later, when all Hellenic countries were under Roman administration, the Greek cities contributed most to the formation of the *jus gentium* and in that way to the perfecting of Roman law. Here we may ask, how is it that the Hellenes, so superior intellectually to the Romans, created nothing

* With regard to the predominantly Semitic and Syrian race-connection of the later codifiers and embalmers of the Roman law, for whom we have shown too much admiration, see p. 91 ff. of the address of Leonhard quoted on p. 125.

† Leist, *Gräco-italische Rechtsgeschichte*, p. 585.

158 ROMAN LAW

in the branch of knowledge that was lasting or perfect, but shared in the great civilising work of the formation of law solely through the medium of the Romans?

A single but fatal mistake was at the bottom of it: the Roman started from the family, on which basis he erected State and law; the Greek, on the other hand, took as his starting-point the State, his ideal being always the organisation of the "polis," while family and law remained subordinate. All Greek history and literature prove the correctness of this assertion, and the fact that the greatest Hellene of post-Homeric times, Plato, considered the complete abolition of the family in the upper classes a desirable aim, shows to what fatal confusions such a fundamental error must in time lead. With perfect right Giordano Bruno says (I forget where), "The very smallest mistake in the way in which a thing is attacked leads finally to the very greatest erroneous discrepancies; thus the most trifling mistake in the ramification of thought can grow as an acorn does into an oak." * And this was not "the very smallest mistake" but a very great one. Herein lies all the misery of the Hellenic peoples; here we have to seek the reason of their inability to develop either State or Law in a lasting and ideal manner. If we take up a careful individual account, for example Aristotle's book *The Athenian Constitution*, discovered a few years ago, this succession of constitutions, all different and all breathing an essentially different spirit, makes us giddy: the pre-Draconian, those of Draco, Solon, Cleisthenes, Aristides, Pericles, the Four Hundred, &c. &c., all within two hundred and fifty years! Such a state of things would have been impossible where there existed a firmly knit family life. Without that it was easy for the Greeks to arrive at that characteristically

* The above words are perhaps from one of the very free translations by Kuhlenbeck. In Bruno's *De Immenso et Innumerabilibus* I found the following remark (Bk. II. chap. i): "Parvus error in principio, magnus in fine est."

159 ROMAN LAW

unhistorical view of theirs, that law was a subject for free speculation; and so they lost all feeling for the fact that in order to live, law must grow

out of actual conditions. * And how striking it is that even the most important questions of family law are regarded as subordinate, that Solon, for example, the most prominent Athenian as a lawyer, leaves the law of inheritance so obscure, that it is left to the caprice of the law-courts to interpret it (Aristotle, as above, division IX). — With Rome it was different. The strong tendency to discipline here finds its first expression in the firm organisation of the family. The sons remain under the control of the father, not merely till their fourteenth year, as in Greece, but till the death of the father; by the exclusion of relationship on the mother's side, by the legal recognition of the unlimited power of the *pater-familias*, even in regard to the life and death of his children, (although his son might have risen in the meantime to the highest offices in the State), by the greatest freedom and the most accurate individual enactments in reference to the law of wills and legacies, by the strictest protection of all the father's rights of property and legal claims (for he alone possessed a right to property and was a *persona sui juris*, i.e., a person with full rights at law) — by these things and many more the family became in Rome an impregnably firm, indissoluble unity, and it is essentially to this that we are indebted for the particular form of the Roman State and Roman law. One can easily imagine how such a strict conception of the family must affect the whole life, the morals of the men, the character of the children, the anxiety to retain and to bequeath what had been acquired, the love of country, which did not need to be artificially nourished, as in

* J. Jacques Rousseau makes an excellent remark in this connection: “Si quelquefois les lois influent sur les mœurs, c'est quand elles en tirent leur force“ (*Lettre à d'Alembert*).

160 ROMAN LAW

Greece: for the citizen fought for what was assured to him for ever, he fought for his sacred home, for the future of his children, for peace and order.

MARRIAGE

The intimate conception of marriage and the position of women in society are naturally connected with all this. Here we have evidently the positive element in the formation of the Roman family, that which could not be fixed by law but which on the contrary determined the forms of law. Among old Aryans marriage was already regarded as a “divine institution,” and when the young wife crossed the threshold of her new

home she was received with the cry, "Come into the house of thy husband, that thou mayest be called mistress; be therein as one who commands!" * In this very point, Greeks and Romans, otherwise so manifoldly related, differed from one another. In Homer's time we certainly see the woman highly respected by the Greeks, and the comrade of the man; but the Ionians who emigrated to Asia Minor took strange wives, "who did not venture to call the Greek husband by his name, but addressed him as master — this degeneration of the Asiatic Ionians has reacted on Athens." † The Roman, on the other hand, regarded his wife as his companion and equal, his life's mate, one who shared everything, divine as well as human, with him. The wife has, however, this position in Rome not because she is wife, but because she is a woman, *i.e.*, because of the respect which the Roman pays to the female sex as such. In all relations where the natural difference of sex does not make a distinction necessary, the Roman puts woman on an equality with himself. There is no more convincing proof of this than the old Roman law of inheritance,

* Zimmer, *Indisches Leben*, p. 313 ff.

† Etfried Müller, *Dorier*, 2nd ed, i. 78, ii. 282 (quoted from Leist).

161 ROMAN LAW

which makes absolutely no difference between the two sexes: the daughter receives exactly the same as the son, the kinswoman the same as the kinsman; if there are no children, the widow receives the whole inheritance and excludes the male line; the sister does the same when there is no widow. We must be acquainted with the slighting treatment to which the female sex is subjected in the laws of so many other nations to understand the significance of this point; in Greece, for instance, the nearer male relation excluded the wife altogether, and the lot of a daughter was indeed lamentable, the nearest male relation having the power to take her from her husband. * The Roman wife was honoured in her house as princess, *princeps familiae*, and the Roman law speaks of the *matronarum sanctitas*, the sacredness of wives who are blessed with children. Children who in any way sinned against their parents fell under the ban of gods and men; no penalty was enacted for the murder of a father, because, as Plutarch tells us, this crime was considered unthinkable — in fact it was more than five hundred years before a case of parricide occurred. † To form a right conception of this old Roman family, we must keep one other fact in view: that in Roman

* Jhering: *Entwicklungsgeschichte des römischen Rechtes*, p. 55. Among the Teutons it was no better. "The right of inheritance is in the oldest German laws either restricted

or denied to women altogether," says Grimm, *Deutsche Rechtsaltertümer*, 3rd ed. p. 407. The concessions gradually granted are to be traced to Roman influence. Where this was little or not at all felt, the German legal books, even in the Middle Ages, still show the "complete inequality of women." In the extreme North, in Scandinavia and in oldest Frisia, a woman could inherit nothing at all, neither movable nor fixed property: "the man enters into inheritance, the woman leaves it." Not till the thirteenth century did women receive a limited right of inheritance (Grimm, p. 473). These are the conditions of law to which the Germanomaniacs longingly desire to return!

† (*Romulus*, xxix.) It may be mentioned by way of contrast that it was the custom among the Germans till the introduction of Christianity (among the Wends even till the seventeenth century) to kill old weak parents! (See Grimm: *Rechtsaltertümer*, pp. 486-90.)

162 ROMAN LAW

life the sacred element, that is, the reverence for divine commands, played a great part. While the paterfamilias was, according to human law, an absolute despot in his house, the divine command forbade him to abuse this power. * The home was indeed a sanctuary, the hearth comparable to an altar; and while it is somewhat revolting to our feelings to-day to hear that parents in very great poverty sometimes sold their children as slaves, yet all histories of law give one the firm impression that any cruelty, according to ideas of that age, towards wife or children was almost or quite unknown. Indeed at law the wife is in relation to her husband *filiae loco* (equal to a daughter) in relation to her own children *sororis loco* (equal to a sister): but this is done in the interests of the unity of the family, and in order that, in constitutional as well as in private law relations, the family may appear as a sharply defined, autonomous, organic entity, represented at law by a single person, not as a more or less firm conglomerate of merely individual fragments. We have already seen in the political part of this chapter that the Roman loved to transmit power to single individuals, confident that from freedom united to responsibility, both focussed, so to speak, in a personality conscious of its individuality, moderate, and at the same time energetic and wise action would result. It is the same principle that prevails here. Later this family life degenerated; cunning means were invented to bring into usage substitutes for genuine marriage, in order that the wife should no longer come into the legal power of the husband; "marriage became a money matter like everything else; not in order to found families, but to improve shattered fortunes by means of dowries, were marriages contracted, and existing ones

* Besides he was subject to the censorial power, as much for too great strictness in the exercise of his paternal rights as for carelessness therein; see Jhering: *Geist des römischen Rechtes*, § 32.

dissolved, in order to form new unions“; * but in spite of this Publius Syrus could in Caesar's time still express the Roman conception of marriage by the line:

Perenne animus conjugium, non corpus facit.

The soul, not the body, makes marriage eternal.

WOMAN

This is the central point of Roman law; the contrast with Greece (and with Germany) gives us an idea of the importance of such an organic central point. Here too the Roman proves himself far from unideal, though he is absolutely without sentiment and almost painfully devoid of phantasy. Indeed, his “idea“ is so strong, that what he really in his heart desired never again altogether disappeared. We have already seen in the preceding section that ideas are immortal, and though the Roman State was destroyed, yet the idea of it lived on through the centuries, a still powerful influence; at the end of the nineteenth century four mighty monarchs of Europe still bear the title of Caesar, and the idea of *res publica* is still moulding the greatest State of the new world. But Roman law does not live on merely as a Justinian mummy or a technical secret, revealed only to members of the craft; no, I believe that the life-giving germ from which that law had fundamentally grown was never totally destroyed, but continues to live on among us as a most valuable possession, in spite of the darkness of disgracefully wicked centuries and the disintegrating ferment that followed them. We still talk of the sacredness of the family; any one who, like certain Socialists, denies it is struck from the list of politicians capable of forming a judgment, and even those who are not pious Catholics will a hundred times rather become reconciled to the concep-

* Esmarch: *Römische Rechtsgeschichte*, p. 317.

tion that marriage is a religious sacrament (as it indeed was in ancient Rome; the Pontificate in this as in so much else being directly based on old Roman Pontifical law and proving itself the last official representative of Heathendom), than admit that marriage is, as the learned Anarchist leader Elisée Reclus elegantly says, “merely legal prostitution.“ That we

feel thus is a Roman legacy. The high position of woman too, which makes our civilisation rank far above the Hellenic and the various degenerate Semitic and Asiatic types, is not, as Schopenhauer and so many others have taught, a “Christian-Teutonic,” but a Roman creation. As far as one can judge, the old Teutons cannot have treated their women particularly well; here Roman influence appears to have first brought about a change; the oldest German lawbooks are, in reference to the legal position of the wife, full of phrases taken literally from Roman law (see Grimm: *Deutsche Rechtsaltertümer*, II. chap. i., B. 7 and ff.). It was the work of the Romans to give woman a firm, secure, legal position in Europe. The “fair sex” was indeed first glorified in song by Germans, Italians, French, English and Spaniards; the Roman people had not thought of that. * But I ask, whether without the keen penetration and sense of justice, above all without the incomparable State-building instinct of the Romans, we should ever have advanced so far as to take woman into our political system as our life's comrade and the cornerstone of the family? I think I may answer a decided no. Christianity in no wise signifies a strengthening of the idea of the family. On the contrary, its real essence is to destroy all political and legal bonds and make every single individual rely upon himself. And it was from

* I speak of the true, chaste woman; for the adulteress and the courtesan were loudly celebrated by the most popular of degenerate Rome's poets, Catullus and Virgil especially.

165 ROMAN LAW

the Christian Emperor Constantine, who annulled the sovereignty of the *paterfamilias*, that the Roman family in fact received its death-blow. Christianity, moreover, being derived from Judaism, is from the first an anarchic, anti-political power. That the Catholic Church followed a different road and became a political power of the greatest magnitude, is to be attributed simply to the fact that it denied the clear teaching of Christ and adopted instead the Roman State-idea — though it was only the idea of the degenerate Roman State. The Church did more than any other power for the maintenance of Roman law; * Pope Gregory IX., for instance, aspired solely to the title of a “Justinian of the Church”; this recognition of his juristical services lay nearer his heart than sanctification. † Though the motives that impelled the Church and the Kings to retain and forcibly introduce Roman law in its degenerate Byzantine form were not particularly noble ones, yet that could not prevent many very noble Roman thoughts from being saved at the same time. And just as the tradition of Roman law never died, so, too, the Roman conception of the dignity of woman and of the political

importance of the family never quite disappeared from the consciousness of men. For several centuries (here as in so many things the thirteenth century is with Petrus Lombardus the almost exact border-line) we have come nearer and nearer to the old Roman conception, particularly since the Council of Trent and Martin Luther simultaneously emphasised the sacredness of marriage. That this approach is in many respects a purely ideal one does not matter; a perfectly new civilisation cannot too thoroughly free itself from old forms; as it is, we pour far too much new wine into old bottles; but I do not think

* See particularly Savigny: *Geschichte des römischen Rechtes im Mittelalter*, chaps. iii. xv. xxii., &c.

† Bryce: *The Holy Roman Empire*, p. 131 of the French edition.

166 ROMAN LAW

that any unprejudiced man will deny that the Roman family is one of the most glorious achievements of the human mind, one of those heights which cannot be scaled twice, and to which the most distant generations will look up in admiration, making sure at the same time that they themselves are not straying too far from the right path. In every study of the nineteenth century, *e.g.*, when discussing the burning question of the emancipation of women or when forming an opinion with regard to those socialistic theories which, in contrast to Rome, culminate in the formula, "No family, all State," the contemplation of this lofty height will be of invaluable service.

POETRY AND LANGUAGE

I have attempted a somewhat difficult task — that of speaking untechnically on a technical subject. I have had to confine myself to proving the peculiar fitness of the Romans for bringing to perfection this practical art; what I have tried to emphasise as their most far-reaching achievement for human society — the strong legal establishment of the family — is, as will have been noticed, similar in essence to the original impelling force from which the technical mastery had gradually grown up. All that lies between, that is, the whole real practical art, had to be neglected, and equally all discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of the preponderating influence of Roman law in the nineteenth century in its purely technical connection. And without needing to tread upon such dangerous quicksands, there are plenty of suggestive considerations for us laymen.

I have intentionally confined myself to politics and law. What did not

come down to us as a legacy does not fall within the scope of this book, and many things that have been preserved to us, as, for example, the works of

167 ROMAN LAW

Latin poets, claim the attention of the scholar and the dilettante, but do not form a living part of our life. To put Greek and Latin poetry together and call them “classical literature“ is a proof of incredible barbarism in taste and of a regrettable ignorance of the essence and value of the art of genius. Whenever Roman poetry attempts the sublime, as in Virgil and Ovid, it clings with a correct sense of its own hopeless unoriginality as slavishly as possible to Hellenic models. As Treitschke says, “Roman literature is Greek literature written in Latin.“ * What are our unhappy boys to think when in the forenoon the *Iliad* of the greatest poetical genius of all times is expounded to them and in the afternoon that servile epic the *Aeneid*, written by imperial command — both as classical models? The genuine and the false, the glorious, free creation arising out of the greatest creative necessity and the finely formed technique in the service of gold and dilettantism, genius and talent, presented as two flowers from the same stem, differing but little! As long as that pale abstraction, the idea of “classical literature,“ lives on among us as dogma, so long will the night of the chaos of races overshadow us, so long will our schools be sterilising institutions destroying every creative impulse. Hellenic poetry was a beginning — a dawn — it created a people, it lavished upon them all that the highest beauty can impart to make life sacred, all that poetry can do to elevate hapless, tortured human souls and to fill them with a feeling of invisible friendly powers — and this fount of life wells on and never again dries up: one century after the other is refreshed by it, one people after another draws from its waters the power of inspiration to create beauty themselves; for genius is like God: it indeed reveals itself at a definite time and under

* With regard to the great Lucretius as an exception, see the note on [p. 35](#).

168 ROMAN LAW

distinct conditions, but in its essence it is free from conditions; what becomes a fetter to others is the material out of which it makes for itself pinions, it rises out of time and time's death-shadow, and passes in all the glow of life into eternity. In Rome, on the other hand, one may boldly assert, genius was altogether forbidden. Rome has no poetry till it begins

to decline. It is not till the night sets in, when the Roman people is no longer there to hear, that the singers of Rome raise their voices; they are night flutterers; they write for the boudoirs of lascivious ladies, for the amusement of men of the world and for the court. Although Hellenes were close neighbours and from the earliest times scattered the seeds of Hellenic art, philosophy and science (for all culture in Rome was from the first of Greek origin), not a single grain took root. Five hundred years before the birth of Christ the Romans sent to Athens, to glean accurate information regarding Greek law; their ambassadors met Aeschylus in the fulness of his powers and Sophocles already active as a creative artist; what an artistic splendour must have sprung up in the all-vigorous Rome after such contact, if even the slightest talent had been there! But it did not. As Mommsen says, "The development of the arts of the Muse in Latium was rather a drying up than a growing up." The Latins until their decline had no word for poet, the idea was strange to them! — If now their poets were without exception devoid of genius, wherein lay the importance of those among them who, like Horace and Juvenal, have always excited the admiration of the linguistic artists? Manifestly, as with everything that comes from Rome, their importance lay in their art. The Romans were great builders — of sewers and aqueducts; * magnificent painters — of room-decorations; great

* And yet not inventors even here; see Hueppe's investigations into the waterworks of the ancient Greek, *Rassenhygiene der Griechen*, p 37.

169 ROMAN LAW

manufacturers — of objects belonging to the industrial arts; in their circuses, masters of the art of fighting fought for money and professional charioteers drove on the racecourse. The Roman could be a virtuoso, not an artist; all virtuosity interested him, but no art. The poems of Horace are technical masterpieces. Apart from their historically picturesque interest as descriptions of a life that has vanished, the virtuosity alone in these poems attracts us. The "wisdom of life," some one suggests by way of reproach? Yes, if such a matter-of-fact and prosaic wisdom were not better anywhere else than in the fairy realm of art, the wide-open, childlike eyes of which proclaim from every Hellenic work of poetry quite a different wisdom from that which occurs to Horace and his friends between cheese and dessert. One of the most truly poetical natures that ever lived, Byron, says of Horace:

It is a curse
To understand, not feel thy lyric flow,
To comprehend, but never love thy verse.

What kind of art is that which speaks to the intelligence, never to the heart? It can only be an artificial work, an applied art; if it came from the heart it would go to the heart. In truth we still stand in this matter under French tutelage as the French stand under Syrian-Jewish (Boileau — pseudo-Longinus); and though little of this inheritance has come into modern life, we should cast it off once for all in favour of our own poets in words and music, divinely inspired men, whose works tower high as the heavens above all that shot up in unhealthy haste like etiolated plants without root and without sap on the ruins of fallen Rome. *

* Of the very considerable literature which in the last years has been written on this question, and with which I have but little acquaintance, I recommend especially the small work of Prof. Albert Heintze, *Latein und Deutsch*, 1902, which is written with as much knowledge as it is to the point and devoid of passion.

170 ROMAN LAW

In the hands of the specialist, *i.e.*, of the philologist, Latin poetry will be as surely and suitably preserved as the *corpus juris* in those of the investigators of law. If, however, the Latin tongue is to be retained at all costs as the universal trainer of the mind (instead of teaching Greek alone but more thoroughly), then let it be seen at work where it accomplishes wonders, where it, in accordance with the particular tendency of the Roman people and with its historical development, does what no other language ever did or will be able to do — in the plastic moulding of legal notions. People say that the Latin language educates the logical sense; I will believe it, although I cannot help remarking that it was this very language in which during the scholastic centuries, in spite of all logic, more nonsense was written than in any other at any time; but whereby has the Latin language acquired a character of such conciseness and definiteness? By the fact that it was built up solely as the language of business, administration and law. This the most unpoetical of all languages is a magnificent monument of the momentous struggle of free men to obtain a sure code of law. Let our boys see it at work here. The great law-teachers of Rome have *eo ipso* written the finest Latin; that, and not verse-writing, was the business of the language; the faultlessly transparent formation of sentences, which shut out every possibility of misconstruction, was an important instrument of juristical applied art. From the study of law alone Cicero has taken his qualities of style. Mommsen says even of the oldest documents of the language of business and law that they were distinguished by “acumen and definiteness,” * and philologists are of opinion that in the language of Papinian, one of the last great teachers of law (in the time of Marcus Aurelius), we have “the culmination of the capacity always to find the

* *Römische Geschichte*, i. 471.

171 ROMAN LAW

expression which fully answers to the depth and clearness of the thought“; his sentences, they say, stand as though chiselled out of marble: “not a word too much, not one too few, every word in the absolutely right place, thus rendering, as far as this is feasible with language, every ambiguity impossible.“ * Intercourse with such men would indeed be a valuable addition to our education. And it seems to me that when every Roman boy knew the Twelve Tables by heart, it would be appropriate and intellectually beneficial to our youths to leave school not merely as stupid, learned *subjecti*, but with some accurate conceptions of private and constitutional law, thinking not merely according to formal logic, but also reasonably and practically, and steeled against all empty raving about “German law“ and such-like. In the meantime, because of the position we take up in reference to the Latin language, this legacy is badly administered and consequently of but little profit.

SUMMARY

We men of the nineteenth century should not be what we are if a rich legacy from these two cultures, the Hellenic and the Roman, had not come down to us. And so we cannot in the least judge what we truly are, and confess with modesty how little that is, if we do not form a quite clear conception of the nature of these inheritances. I hope that my endeavours in this direction will not have been quite fruitless and I hope also that the reader will especially have noticed that the legacy of Rome is utterly and fundamentally different from that of Greece.

In Hellas the personality of genius had been the decisive factor: whether on this side or on that of the Adriatic and the Aegean Seas, the Greeks were great so long as they

* Esmarch: *Römische Rechtsgeschichte*, p. 400.

172 ROMAN LAW

possessed great men. In Rome, on the other hand, there were only great individualities in so far and so long as the people was great, and it was great as long as it physically and morally remained genuinely Roman. Rome is the extreme example of a great corporate national power, which

works unconsciously but all the more surely. For that reason, however, it is less attractive than Hellas, and hence what Rome did for our civilisation is seldom justly estimated. And yet Rome commands our admiration and gratitude; its gifts were moral, not intellectual; but by this very fact it was capable of achieving great things. Not the death of a Leonidas could save Europe from the Asiatic peril, upholding man's dignity with man's freedom, and handing it over to future ages to cultivate in peace and consolidate; this could only be accomplished by a long-lived State, unbending and inexorably consistent in its politics. But neither theory nor fanaticism nor speculation could create this long-lived State; it had to be rooted in the character of the citizen. This character was hard and self-seeking, but great by reason of its high sense of duty, by its capacity for making sacrifices and by its devotion to the family. The Roman, by erecting amidst the chaos of contemporary attempts at State-building a strong and solid State of his own, provided a model for all ages to come. By bringing his law to a technical perfection previously unknown, he laid the foundations of jurisprudence for all mankind. By following his natural inclination and making the family the centre of State and law, by, in fact, almost assigning extravagant importance to this conception, he raised woman to equality with man and transformed the union of the sexes into the sacredness of marriage. While our artistic and scientific culture is in many essential points derived from Greece, our social culture leads us back to Rome. I am not speaking

173 ROMAN LAW

here of material civilisation, which is derived from many countries and epochs and especially from the inventive industry of recent centuries, but of the secure moral foundations of a dignified social life; the laying of these was a great work of culture.

174

THIRD CHAPTER

THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

By the virtue of One all have been truly saved.
MAHĀBHĀRATA.

INTRODUCTORY

BEFORE our eyes there stands a vision, distinct, incomparable. This picture which we behold is the inheritance which we have received from our Fathers. Without an accurate appreciation of this vision, we cannot measure and rightly judge the historical significance of Christianity. The converse, on the other hand, does not hold good, for the figure of Jesus Christ has, by the historical development of the Churches, been dimmed and relegated to the background, rather than unveiled to the clear sight of our eyes. To look upon this Figure solely by the light of a church doctrine, narrowed both in respect of place and of time, is voluntarily to put on blinkers and to narrow our view of the eternally Divine. The vision of Christ, moreover, is hardly touched upon by the dogmas of the Church. They are all so abstract that they afford nothing upon which either our understanding or our feelings can lay hold. We may apply to them in general what an artless witness, St. Augustine, said of the Dogma of the Trinity: "But we speak of three Persons, not because we fancy that in so doing we have uttered something, but simply

175 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

because we cannot be silent." * Surely we are guilty of no outrage upon due reverence if we say, it is not the Churches that constitute the might of Christianity, for that might is drawn solely from the fountain head from which the churches themselves derive all their power — the contemplation of the Son of Man upon the Cross.

Let us therefore separate the vision of Christ upon earth from the whole history of Christianity.

What after all are our nineteen centuries for the conscious acceptance of such an experience — for the transformation which forces itself through all the strata of humanity by the power of a fundamentally new aspect of life's problems? We should remember that more than two thousand years were needed before the structure of the Kosmos, capable as it is of mathematical proof and of demonstration to the senses, became the fixed, common possession of human knowledge. Is not the understanding with its gift of sight and its infallible formula of $2 \times 2 = 4$ easier to mould than the heart, blind and ever befooled by self-seeking? Here is a man born into the world and living a life through which the conception of the moral significance of man, the whole philosophy of life, undergoes a complete transformation — through which the relation of the individual to himself, to the rest of mankind, and to the nature by which he is surrounded, is of necessity illuminated by a new and hitherto unsuspected light, so that all motives of action, all ideals, all heart's-desires and hopes must be remoulded and built up anew from their very foundations. Is it to be believed that this can be the work of a

few centuries? Is it to be believed that this can be brought about by misunderstandings and lies, by politic intrigues and oecumenical councils, at the word of command of kings maddened by ambition, or of greedy priests,

* “Dictum est tamen tres personae, non ut aliquid diceretur, sed ne taceretur.” — *De Trinitate*, V. chap. ix.

176 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

by three thousand volumes of scholastic disputations, by the fanatical faith of narrow-minded peasants and the noble zeal of a small number of superior persons, by war, murder and the stake, by civic codes of law and social intolerance? For my part I disclaim any such belief. I believe that we are still far, very far, from the moment when the transforming might of the vision of Christ will make itself felt to its utmost extent by civilised mankind. Even if our churches in their present form should come to an end, the idea of Christianity would only stand out with all the more force. In the ninth chapter I shall show how our new Teuton philosophy is pushing in that direction. Even now, Christianity is not yet firm upon its childish feet: its maturity is hardly dawning upon our dim vision. Who knows but a day may come when the bloody church-history of the first eighteen centuries of our era may be looked upon as the history of the infantile diseases of Christianity?

In considering the vision of Christ, then, let us not allow our judgment to be darkened by any historical delusions, or by the ephemeral views of our century. We may be sure that up to the present we have only entered upon the smallest portion of this same inheritance, and if we wish to know what is its significance for all of us, be we Christians or Jews, believers or unbelievers, whether we are conscious of our privilege or not — then must we in the first place stop our ears against the chaos of creeds and of blasphemies which beshame humanity, and in the next place raise our eyes up to the most incomparable vision of all times.

In this section I shall be forced critically to glance at much that forms the intellectual foundation of various religions. But just as I leave untouched that which is hidden in the Holy of Holies of my own heart, so I hope to steer clear of giving offence to any other sensible man. It is as easy to separate the historic vision of

177 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

Christ from all the supernatural significance which dwells in it as it must

be to treat Physics upon a purely material basis without imagining that in so doing we have dethroned Metaphysics.

Christ indeed can hardly be spoken of without now and again crossing the boundary; still belief, as such, need not be touched, and if I as historian proceed logically and convincingly, I can bear with any refutation which the reader may bring forward as a question of feeling, as apart from understanding. With this consciousness I shall speak as frankly in the following chapters as I have done in those which have gone before.

THE RELIGION OF EXPERIENCE

The religious faith of more than two-thirds of all the inhabitants of the earth to-day starts from the life on earth of two men, Christ and Buddha, men who lived only a few centuries ago. We have historical proofs of their having actually existed, and that the traditions regarding them, though containing much that is fabulous and uncertain, obscure and contradictory, nevertheless give us a faithful picture of the main features of their real lives. Even apart from this sure result of the scientific investigations of the nineteenth century, * men of acute and sound judgment will never have doubted the actual existence of these great moral heroes: for although the historical and chronological material regarding them is extremely scanty and imperfect, yet their moral and intellectual individuality stands out so clearly and brilliantly before our eyes, and this individuality is so incomparable, that it could not be

* The existence of Christ was denied even in the second century of our era, and Buddha till twenty-five years ago was regarded by many theologians as a mythical figure. See, for example, the books of S nart and Kern.

178 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

an invention of the imagination. The imagination of man is very narrowly circumscribed; the creative mind can work only with given facts: it was men that Homer had to enthrone on Olympus, for even his imagination could not transcend the impassable boundary of what he saw and experienced; the very fact that he makes his gods so very human, that he does not permit his imagination to soar to the realm of the Extraordinary and Inconceivable (because never seen), that he rather keeps it in subjection, in order to employ its undivided force to create what will be poetical and visible, is one of a thousand proofs, and not the least important one, that intellectually he was a great man. We are not capable of inventing even a plant or animal form; when we try it, the most we do

is to put together a monstrosity composed of fragments of all kinds of creatures known to us. Nature, however, the inexhaustibly inventive, shows us a new thing whenever it so pleases her; and this new thing is for our consciousness henceforth just as indestructible as it formerly was undiscoverable. The figure of Buddha, much less that of Jesus Christ, could not be invented by any human poetical power, neither that of an individual nor that of a whole people; nowhere can we discover even the slightest approach to such a thing. Neither poets, nor philosophers, nor prophets have been able even in their dreams to conceive such a phenomenon. Plato is certainly often mentioned in connection with Jesus Christ; there are whole books on the supposed relation between the two; it is said that the Greek philosopher was a forerunner who proclaimed the new gospel. In reality, however, the great Plato is a quite irreligious genius, a metaphysician and politician, an investigator and an aristocrat. And Socrates! The clever author of grammar and logic, the honest preacher of a morality for philistines, the noble gossip of the Athenian gymnasia, — is he not in every respect

179 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

the direct contrast to the divine proclaimer of a Heaven of them “that are poor in spirit“? In India it was the same: the figure of a Buddha was not anticipated nor conjured up by the magic of men's longing. All such assertions belong to the wide province of that delusive historic philosophy which constructs after the event. If Christ and Christianity had been an historical necessity, as the neoscholastic Hegel asserts, and Pflleiderer and others would have us believe to-day, we should inevitably have seen not one Christ but a thousand Christs arise; I should really like to know in what century a Jesus would not have been just as “necessary“ as our daily bread? * Let us therefore discard these views that are tinged with the paleness of abstraction. The only effect they have is to obscure the one decisive and pregnant thing, namely, the importance of the living, individual, incomparable personality. One is ever and anon forced to quote Goethe's great saying:

Höchtes Glück der Erdenkinder
Ist nur die Persönlichkeit!

The circumstances in which the personality is placed — a knowledge of its general conditions in respect of time and space — will certainly contribute very much towards making it clearly understood. Such a knowledge will enable us to distinguish between the important and

* Hegel in his *Philosophie der Geschichte*, Th. III., A. 3, chap. ii., says about Christ: “He was born as this one man, in abstract subjectivity, but so that conversely finiteness is only the form of his appearance, the essence and content of which is rather

infiniteness and absolute being-for-self.... The nature of God, to be pure spirit, becomes in the Christian religion manifest to man. But what is the spirit? It is the One, the unchanging infinity, the pure identity, which in the second place separates itself from itself, as its second self, as the being-for-itself and being-in-itself in opposition to the Universal. But this separation is annulled by this, that the atomistic subjectivity, as the simple relativity to itself, is itself the Universal, Identical with itself.“ What will future centuries say to this clatter of words? For two-thirds of the nineteenth it was considered the highest wisdom.

180 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

the unimportant, between the characteristically individual and the locally conventional. It will, in short, give us an increasingly clearer view of the personality. But to explain it, to try to show it as a logical necessity, is an idle, foolish task; every figure — even that of a beetle — is to the human understanding a “wonder“; the human personality is, however, the *mysterium magnum* of life, and the more a great personality is stripped by criticism of all legendary rags and tatters, and the more successful that criticism is in representing each step in its career as something fore-ordained in the nature of things, the more incomprehensible the mystery becomes. This indeed is the final result of the criticism to which the life of Jesus has been submitted in the nineteenth century. This century has been called an irreligious one; but never yet, since the first Christian centuries, has the interest of mankind concentrated so passionately around the person of Jesus Christ as in the last seventy years; the works of Darwin, however widespread they were, were not bought to one-tenth the extent of those of Strauss and Renan. And the result of it all is, that the actual earthly life of Jesus Christ has become more and more concrete, and we have been compelled to recognise more and more distinctly that the origin of the Christian religion is fundamentally to be traced to the absolutely unexampled impression which this one personality had made and left upon those who knew Him. So it is that today this revelation stands before our eyes more definite and for that very reason more unfathomable than ever.

This is the first point to be established. It is in accordance with the whole tendency of our times, that we can grow enthusiastic only in regard to what is concrete and living. At the beginning of the nineteenth century it was different; the Romantic movement threw its shadows on all sides, and so it had become fashionable

181 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

to explain everything “mythically.“ In the year 1835 David Strauss,

following the example proffered on all sides, presented as a key to the gospels “the idea of the myth“! * Every one now recognises that this so-called key was nothing more than a new, mistily vague paraphrase of a still-unsolved problem, and that not an “idea,“ but only an actually lived existence, only the unique impression of a personality, whose like the world had never before known, supplies the “key“ to the origin of Christianity. The greater the amount of such useless ballast that was manifest on the one hand in the shape of pseudo-mythical (or rather pseudo-historical) legend-making, on the other in the form of philosophically dogmatic speculation, the greater is the power of life and resistance that must be attributed to the original impelling and creating force. The most modern, strictly philological criticism has proved the unexpected antiquity of the gospels and the extensive authenticity of the manuscripts which we possess; we have now succeeded in tracing, almost step for step, the very earliest records

* See first edition, i. 72 ff., and the popular edition (ninth) p. 191 ff. Strauss never had the least notion what a myth is, what mythology means, how it is produced by the confusion and mingling of popular myths, poetry and legends. That, however, is another story. Posterity will really not be able to understand the reception given to such dreary productions as those of Strauss: they are learned, but destitute of all deeper insight and of any trace of genius. Just as bees and ants require in their communities whole cohorts of sexless workers, so it seems as if we human beings could not get along without the industry and the widespread but ephemeral influence of such minds, marked with the stamp of sterility, as flourished in such profusion about the middle of the nineteenth century. The progress of historico-critical research on the one hand, and on the other the increasing tendency to direct attention not to the theological and subordinate, but to that which is living and decisive, causes one to look upon the mythological standpoint of Strauss as so unintelligent that one cannot turn over the leaves of this honest man's writings without yawning. And yet one must admit that such men as he and Renan (two concave mirrors which distort all lines, the one by lengthening, the other by broadening) have accomplished an important work — by drawing the attention of thousands to the great miracle of the fact of Christ and thus creating a public for profounder thinkers and wiser men.

182 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

of Christianity in a strictly historical manner. * But all this when considered from the universal human standpoint is of much less importance than the one fact, that in consequence of these researches the figure of the one Divine Man has been brought into relief, so that the unbeliever as well as the believer is bound to recognise it as the centre and source of Christianity, taking the word in the most comprehensive sense possible.

A few pages back I placed Buddha and Christ in juxtaposition. The kernel of the religious conceptions of all the more gifted races of mankind (with the two exceptions of the small family of the Jews on the one hand and their antipodes the Brahman Indians on the other) has been for the past few thousand years not the need for an explanation of the world, nor mythological Nature-symbolism, nor meditative transcendentalism, but the experience of great characters. The delusion of a “rational religion“ still haunts us; occasionally too in recent years there has been talk of a “replacing of religion by something higher,“ and on the hilltops of certain German districts new “worshippers of Wotan“ have offered up sacrifice at the time of the solstice; but none of these movements have exercised the slightest influence upon the world. For ideas are immortal — I have said so already and shall have to repeat it constantly — and in such figures as Buddha and Christ an idea — that is, a definite conception of human existence — acquires such a living bodily form, becomes so thoroughly an experience of life, is placed so clearly before the eyes of all men, that it can never more disappear from their conscious-

* Later there came a dark period upon which light has still to be thrown.

183 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

ness. Many a man may never have seen the Crucified One with his eyes; many a man may constantly have passed this revelation carelessly by; thousands of men, even among ourselves, lack what one might call the inner sense to perceive Christ at all; on the other hand, having once seen Jesus Christ — even if it be with half-veiled eyes — we cannot forget Him; it does not lie within our power to remove the object of experience from our minds. We are not Christians because we were brought up in this or in that Church, because we want to be Christians; if we are Christians, it is because we cannot help it, because neither the chaotic bustle of life nor the delirium of selfishness, nor artificial training of thought can dispel the vision of the Man of Sorrow when once it has been seen. On the evening before His death, when His Apostles were questioning Him as to the significance of one of His actions, He replied, “I have given you an example.“ That is the meaning not only of the one action but of His whole life and death. Even so strict an ecclesiastic as Martin Luther writes: “The example of our Lord Jesus Christ is at the same time a sacrament, it is strong in us, it does not, like the examples of the fathers, merely teach, no, it also effects what it teaches, it gives life, resurrection and redemption from death.“ The power of Buddha over the world rests on similar foundations. The true source of all religion is, I repeat, in the case of the great majority of living people not a doctrine but

a life. It is a different question, of course, how far we, with our weak capability, can or cannot follow the example; the ideal is there, clear, unmistakable, and for centuries it has been moulding with incomparable power the thoughts and actions of men, even of unbelievers.

I shall return to this point later in another connection. If I have introduced Buddha here, where only the figure of Christ concerns me, I have done so for this reason, that nothing shows up a figure so well as comparison.

184 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

The comparison, however, must be an appropriate one, and I do not know any other than Buddha in the history of the world whom we could compare with Christ. Both are characterised by their divine earnestness; they have in common the longing to point out to all mankind the way of redemption; they have both incomparably magnetic personalities. And yet if one places these two figures side by side, it can only be to emphasise the contrast and not to draw a parallel between them. Christ and Buddha are opposites. What unites them is their sublimity of character. From that source have sprung lives of unsurpassed loveliness, lives which wielded an influence such as the world had never before experienced. Otherwise they differ almost in every point, and the neo-Buddhism which has been paraded during recent years in certain social circles in Europe — in the closest relation, it is said, to Christianity and even going beyond it — is but a new proof of the widespread superficiality of thought among us. For Buddha's life and thought present a direct contrast to the thought and life of Christ: they form what the logician calls the “antithesis,” what to the natural scientist is the “opposite pole.”

BUDDHA

Buddha represents the senile decay of a culture which has reached the limit of its possibilities. A Prince, highly educated, gifted with a rich fulness of power, recognises the vanity of that education and that power. He professes what to the rest of the world seems to be the Highest, but with the vision of truth before him, this possession melts away to nothing. Indian culture, the outcome of the meditative contemplation incident to a pastoral life, had thrown itself with all the weight of its lofty gifts into the development of the one attribute

185 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

peculiar to mankind — Reason with the power of combination: so it came to pass that connection with the surrounding world — childlike observation with its practical adaptation to business — languished, at any rate among the men of higher culture. Everything was systematically directed to the development of the power of thought: every educated youth knew by heart, word for word, a whole literature charged with matter so subtle that even to this day few Europeans are capable of following it: even geometry, the most abstract of all methods of representing the concrete world, was too obvious for the Indians, and so they came instead to revel in an arithmetic which goes beyond all possibility of presentation: the man who questioned himself as to his aim in life, the man who had been gifted by nature with the desire to strive for some highest goal, found on the one side a religious system in which symbolism had grown to such mad dimensions that it needed some thirty years to find oneself at home in it, and on the other side a philosophy leading up to heights so giddy that whoso wished to climb the last rungs of this heavenly ladder must take refuge from the world for ever in the deep silence of the primeval forest. Clearly here the eye and the heart had lost their rights. Like the scorching simoom of the desert, the spirit of abstraction had swept with withering force over all other gifts of this rich human nature. The senses indeed still lived — desires of tropical heat: but on the other side was the negation of the whole world of sense: between these nothing, no compromise, only war, war between human perception and human nature, between thought and being. And so Buddha must hate what he loved; children, parents, wife, all that is beautiful and joyous — for what were these but veils darkening perception, bonds chaining him to a dream-life of lies and desire? and what had he to do with all the wisdom of the Brahmans? Sacrificial ceremonies which no

186 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

human being understood, and which the priests themselves explained as being purely symbolical and to the initiated futile: — beyond this a redemption by perception accessible to scarcely one man in a hundred thousand. Thus it was that Buddha not only cast away from him his kingdom and his knowledge, but tore from his heart all that bound him as man to man, all love, all hope: at one blow he destroyed the religion of his fathers, drove their gods from the temple of the world, and rejected as a vain phantom even that most sublime conception of Indian metaphysics, that of a one and only God, indescribable, unthinkable, having no part in space or time, and therefore inaccessible to thought, and yet by thought dimly imagined. There is nothing in life but suffering,

this was Buddha's experience and consequently his teaching. The one object worth striving for is "redemption from suffering." This redemption is death, the entering into annihilation. But to every Indian the transmigration of souls, that is the eternal reincarnation of the same individual, was believed in as a manifest fact, not even to be called in question. Death then, in its ordinary shape, cannot give redemption: it is the gift of that death only upon which no reincarnation follows: and this redeeming death can only be attained in one way, namely, that man shall have died during his life and therefore of his own free will: that is to say, that he shall have cut off and annihilated all that ties him to life, all love, all hope, all desire, all possession: in short, as we should say with Schopenhauer, that he shall have denied the will to live. If man lives in this wise, if while yet alive he makes himself into a moving corpse, then can the reaper Death harvest no seed for a reincarnation. A living Death! that is the essence of Buddhism! We may describe Buddhism as the lived suicide. It is suicide in its highest potentiality: for Buddha lives solely and only to die, to be

187 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

dead definitely and beyond recall, to enter into Nirvana — extinction. *

CHRIST

What greater contrast could there be to this figure than that of Christ, whose death signifies entrance into eternal life? Christ perceives divine Providence in the whole world; not a sparrow falls to the ground, not a hair on the head of a man can be injured, without the permission of the Heavenly Father. And far from hating this earthly existence, which is lived by the will and under the eye of God, Christ praises it as the entry into eternity, as the narrow gate through which we pass into the Kingdom of God. And this Kingdom of God, what is it? A Nirvana? a Dream-Paradise? a future reward for deeds done here below? Christ gives the answer in one word, which has undoubtedly been authentically handed down to us, for it had never been uttered before, and no one of His disciples evidently understood it, much less invented it; indeed, this eagle thought flashed so far in front of the slow unfolding of human knowledge that even to the present day few have seen the meaning of it — as I said before, Christianity is still in its infancy — Christ's answer was, "The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo here or lo there. For behold, the Kingdom of God is within you." This is what Christ himself calls the "mystery"; it cannot be

expressed in words, it cannot be defined; and ever and ever again the Saviour endeavours to bring home

* I have translated *das nichts* by *extinction*, which is the rendering of Nirvana by Rhys Davids. He says: "What then is Nirvana, which means simply *going out, extinction*"; and then he goes on to say that it ought to be translated "Holiness." But that will not do here, nor is it altogether incapable of being argued. Extinction gives Chamberlain's meaning better than "nothingness," which is not quite satisfactory. Perhaps "Holy Extinction" comes near to the Buddhist conception. The idea of Rhys Davids would thus not be lost. (Translator's Note.)

188 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

His great message of salvation by means of parables: the Kingdom of God is like a grain of mustard seed in the field, "the least of all seeds," but if it is tended by the husbandman, it grows to a tree, "so that the birds of the air come and lodge under its branches"; the Kingdom of God is like the leaven among the flour, if the housewife take but a little, it leavens the whole lump; but the following figure speaks most plainly: "the Kingdom of God is like unto a treasure hid in a field." * That the field means the world, Christ expressly says (see *Matthew* xiii. 38); in this world, that is, in this life, the treasure lies concealed; the Kingdom of God is buried within us! That is the "mystery of the Kingdom of God," as Christ says; at the same time it is the secret of His own life, the secret of His personality. An estrangement from life, as in the case of Buddha, is not to be found in Christ, there is, however, a "conversion" of the direction of life, if I may so call it, as, for example, when Christ says to His disciples, "Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of God." † At a later period this so easily grasped "conversion" received — perhaps from a strange hand — the more mystical expression, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God." The words do not matter, what is important is the conception underlying them, and this conception stands out luminously clear, because it gives form to the whole life of

* The expression Uranos or "Kingdom of Heaven" occurs only in *Matthew* and is certainly not the right translation into Greek of any expression used by Christ. The other evangelists always say "Kingdom of God." (Cf. my collection of the *Worte Christi*, large edition, p. 260, [small edition, p. 279](#), and for more learned and definite explanation see H. H. Wendt's *Lehre Jesu*, 1886, pp. 48 and 58.)

† The emphasis clearly does not lie on the additional clause "and become as little children"; this is rather an explanation of the conversion. What is it that distinguishes children? Unalloyed joy in life and the unspoilt power of throwing a glamour over it by their temperaments.

189 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

Christ. Here we do not find a doctrine like that of Buddha with a logical arithmetical development; nor is there, as has so frequently been asserted by the superficial, any organic connection with Jewish wisdom: read the words of Jesus Sirach, who is most frequently compared with Christ, and ask yourselves whether that is “Spirit of the same Spirit”? Sirach speaks like a Jewish Marcus Aurelius and even his finest sayings, such as “Seek wisdom until death, and God will fight for you,” or, “The heart of the fool lies upon his tongue, but the tongue of the wise man dwells within his heart,” are as a sound from another world when put beside the sayings of Christ: “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth; blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God; take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and you will find rest unto your souls, for my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” No one had ever spoken like that before, and no one has spoken so since. These words of Christ have, however, as we can see, never the character of a doctrine, but just as the tone of a voice supplements by a mysterious inexpressible something — which is the most personal element in the personality — what we already know about a man from his features and his actions, so do we seem to hear in them his voice: what he exactly said we do not know, but an unmistakable, unforgettable tone strikes our ear and from our ear enters our heart. And then we open our eyes and see this figure, this life. Down through the ages we hear the words, “Learn of me,” and we understand what they mean: to be as Christ was, to live as Christ lived, to die as Christ died, that is the Kingdom of God, that is eternal life.

In the nineteenth century, the ideas of pessimism and negation of the will, which have become so common, have been frequently applied to Christ; but though they fit Buddha and certain features of the Christian churches

190 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

and their dogmas, Christ's life is their denial. If the Kingdom of God dwells in us, if it is embraced in this life like a hidden treasure, what becomes of the sense of pessimism? * How can man be a wretch born only for grief, if the divinity lies in his breast? How can this world be the worst of all possible worlds (*see Schopenhauer: Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, vol. ii. chap. xlvi.) if it contains Heaven? For Christ these were all delusive fallacies; woe to you, He said of the learned, “who shut up the Kingdom of God against men; for ye neither go in yourselves neither suffer ye them that would enter to go in,” and He praised God that He had “revealed to babes and sucklings what He had hidden from

the wise and prudent“; Christ, as one of the greatest men of the nineteenth century has said, was “not wise, but divine“; † that is a mighty difference; and because He was divine, Christ did not turn away from life, but to life. This is eloquently vouched for by the impression which Christ made and left upon those who knew Him; they call Him the tree of life, the bread of life, the water of life, the light of life, the light of the world, a light from above sent to lighten those that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death; Christ is for them the rock, the foundation upon which we are to build our lives, &c, &c. Everything is positive, constructive, affirmative. Whether Christ really brought the dead to life may be doubted by any one who will; but such a one must estimate all the more highly the life-giving impression which radiated from this figure, for wherever Christ went people believed that they saw the dead come to life and the sick rise healed from their beds. Everywhere He sought out the suffering, the poor, those laden with sorrow,

* I need scarcely say that I take the word pessimism, which is capable of such a variety of interpretations, in the popular, superficial sense of a moral frame of mind, not a philosophical cognition.

† Diderot also, to whom one cannot attribute orthodox faith, says in the *Encyclopédie*: “*Christ ne fut point un philosophe, ce fut un Dieu.*“

191 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

and bidding them “weep not,“ consoled them with words of life. From inner Asia came the idea of flight from the world to the cloister. Buddhism had not in truth invented it, but gave it its greatest impulse. Christianity, too, imitated it later, closely following the Egyptian example. This idea had already advanced to the very neighbourhood of the Galilean; yet where does one find Christ preaching monastic doctrines of seclusion from the world? Many founders of religion have imposed penance in respect of food upon themselves and their disciples; not so Christ; He emphasises particularly that He had not fasted like John, but had so lived that men called Him a “glutton and a winebibber.“ All the following expressions which we know so well from the Bible — that the thoughts of men are vain, that the life of man is vanity, he passes away like a shadow, the work of man is vain, all is vanity — come from the Old, not from the New Testament. Indeed such words as those, for example, of the preacher Solomon, “One generation passeth away and another generation cometh, but the earth abideth for ever,“ are derived from a view of life which is directly contrary to that of Christ; because according to the latter Heaven and earth pass away, while the human breast conceals in its depths the only thing that is everlasting. It is true that Jesus Christ offers the example of an absolute renunciation of much

that makes up the life of the greater proportion of mankind; but it is done for the sake of life; this renunciation is the “conversion“ which, we are told, leads to the Kingdom of Heaven, and it is not outward but purely inward. What Buddha teaches is, so to speak, a physical process, it is the actual extinction of the physical and intellectual being; whoever wishes to be redeemed must take the three vows of chastity, poverty and obedience. In the case of Christ we find nothing similar: He attends marriages, He declares wedlock to be a holy

192 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

ordinance of God, and even the errors of the flesh he judges so leniently that He Himself has not a word of condemnation for the adulteress; He indeed speaks of wealth as rendering the “conversion“ of the will more difficult — as, for example, when He says that it is more difficult for a rich man to enter into that kingdom of God which lies within us than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, but He immediately adds — and this is the characteristic and decisive part — “the things which are impossible with men are possible with God.“ This is again one of those passages which cannot be invention, for nowhere in the whole world do we find anything like it. There had been enough and to spare of diatribes against wealth before (one need only read the Jewish Prophets), they were repeated later (read, for instance, the *Epistle of James*, chap. ii.); according to Christ, however, wealth is a mere accessory, the possession of which may or may not be a hindrance, for the one thing which concerns Him is the inner and spiritual conversion. And this it was that, in dealing with this very case, by far the greatest of the Apostles amplified so beautifully; for while Christ had advised the rich young man, “Sell all that thou hast and give it to the poor,“ Paul completes the saying by the remark, “and though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor and have not charity it profiteth me nothing.“ The Buddhist who is steering for death may be satisfied with poverty, chastity, and obedience; he who chooses life has other things to think of.

And here it is necessary to call attention to one more point, in which the living essence of Christ's personality and example manifests itself freshly and convincingly; I refer to His combativeness. The sayings of Christ on humility and patience, His exhortation that we should love our enemies and bless those that curse us, find almost

193 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

exact parallels in the sayings of Buddha; but they spring from quite a

different motive. For Buddha every injustice endured is an extinction, for Christ it is a means of advancing the new view of life: "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of God" (that kingdom which lies hidden like a treasure in the field of life). But if we pass to the inner being, if that one fundamental question of the direction of will is brought up, then we hear words of quite a different kind: "Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay, but rather division! For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, two against three, and three against two.... For I am come to stir up the son against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against the mother-in-law; and the man's enemies shall be they of his own household." Not peace but the sword: that is a voice to which we cannot shut our ears, if we wish to understand the revelation of Christ. The life of Jesus Christ is an open declaration of war, not against the forms of civilisation, culture and religion, which He found around Him — He observes the Jewish law of religion and teaches us to give to Caesar what is Caesar's — but certainly against the inner spirit of mankind, against the motives which underlie their actions, against the goal which they set for themselves in the future life and in the present. The coming of Christ signifies, from the point of view of the world's history, the coming of a new human species. Linnaeus distinguished as many human species as there are colours of skin; but a new colouring of the will goes really deeper into the organism than a difference in the pigment of the epidermis! And the Lord of this new human species, the "new Adam," as the Scripture so well describes Him, will have no compromise; He puts the choice: God or mammon. Whoever chooses

194 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

conversion, whoever obeys the warning of Christ, "Follow me!" must also when necessary leave father and mother, wife and child; but he does not leave them, like the disciples of Buddha, to find death, but to find life. Here is no room for pity: whom we have lost we have lost, and with the ancient hardness of the heroic spirit not a tear is shed over those who are gone: "Let the dead bury their dead." Not every one is capable of understanding the word of Christ, He in fact tells us, "Many are called but few are chosen," and here again Paul has given drastic expression to this fact: "The preaching of the Cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God." So far as outward forms go Christ has no preferences, but where the direction of the will is concerned, whether it is directed to the Eternal or the Temporal, whether it advances or hinders the unfolding of that immeasurable power of life in the heart of man, whether it aims at the quickening of that "Kingdom of

God within us“ or, on the other hand, scatters for ever the one treasure of “them that are chosen“ — there is with Him no question of tolerance and never can be. In this very connection much has been done since the eighteenth century to rob the sublime countenance of the Son of Man of all its mighty features. We have had represented to us as Christianity a strange delusive picture of boundless tolerance, of universally gentle passivity, a kind of milk-and-water religion; in the last few years we have actually witnessed “interconfessional religious congresses,“ where all the priests of the world shake hands as brothers, and many Christians welcome this as particularly “Christlike.“ It may be ecclesiastical, it may be right and good, but Christ would never have sent an apostle to such a congress. Either the word of the Cross is “foolishness“ or it is “a divine power“; between the two Christ himself has torn open the yawning

195 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

gulf of “division,“ and, to prevent any possibility of its being bridged, has drawn the flaming “sword.“ Whoever understands the revelation of Christ cannot be surprised. The tolerance of Christ is that of a spirit which soars high as Heaven above all forms that divide the world; a combination of these forms could not have the slightest importance for Him — that would mean only the rise of a new form; He, on the other hand, considers only the “spirit and the truth.“ And when Christ teaches, “Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek turn to him the other also, and if any man will take away thy coat let him have thy cloak also“ — a doctrine to which His example on the Cross gave everlasting significance — who does not understand that this is closely related to what follows, “Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you,“ and that here that inner “conversion“ is expressed, not passively, but in the highest possible form of living action? If I offer the impudent striker my left cheek, I do not do so for his sake; if I love my enemy and show him kindness, it is not for his sake; after the conversion of the will it is simply inevitable and therefore I do it. The old law, an eye for an eye, hatred for hatred, is just as natural a reflex action as that which causes the legs of a dead frog to kick when the nerves are stimulated. In sooth it must be a “new Adam“ who has gained such complete mastery over his “old Adam“ that he does not obey this impulse. However, it is not merely self-control — for if Buddha forms the one opposite pole to Christ, the Stoic forms the other; but that conversion of the will, that entry into the hidden kingdom of God, that being born again, which makes up the sum of Christ's example, demands a complete conversion of the feelings. This, in fact, is the new thing. Till Christ blood-vengeance was the sacred law of all men of the most different races; but from the Cross there

came the cry, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!" Whoever takes the divine voice of pity for weak humanitarianism has not understood a single feature of the advent of Christ. The voice which here speaks comes from that Kingdom of God which is within us; pain and death have lost their power over it; they affect him who is born again just as little as the stroke on the cheek or the theft of the coat; everything that drives, constrains and compels the human half-ape — selfishness, superstition, prejudice, envy, hatred — breaks on such a will as this like sea-foam on a granite cliff; in face of death Christ scarcely notices His own pain and tribulation, He sees only that men are crucifying what is divine in them, and they are treading under foot the seed of the Kingdom of God and scattering the "treasure in the field," and thus it is that, full of pity, He calls out, "They know not what they do!" Search the history of the world and you will not find a word to equal this for sublime pride. Here speaks a discernment that has penetrated farther than the Indian mind, here speaks at the same time the strongest will, the surest consciousness of self.

Just as we children of a modern age have discovered in the whole world a power which before only from time to time flashed forth in fleeting clouds as the lightning, a power hidden, invisible, perceived by no sense, to be explained by no hypothesis, but all-present and almighty, and in the same way as we are driven to trace the complete transformation of our outward conditions of life to this power — so Christ pointed to a hidden power in the unfathomed and unfathomable depths of the human heart, a power capable of completely transforming man, capable of making a sorrow-trodden wretch mighty and blessed. The lightning had hitherto been only a destroyer; the power which it taught us to discover is

now the servant of peaceful work and comfort; in like manner the human will, from the beginning of time the seed of all the misfortune and misery that descended upon the human race, was henceforth to minister to the new birth of this race, to the rise of a new human species. Hence, as I have pointed out in the [introduction](#) to this book, the incomparable significance of the life of Christ for the world's history. No political revolution can compare with it.

From the point of view of universal history we have every reason to put the achievement of Christ on a parallel with the achievements of the

Hellenes. In the first chapter I have described in how far Homer, Democritus, Plato, &c. &c. are to be considered as real “creators,” and I added, “then and then only is a new creature born, then only does the macrocosm contain a microcosm. The only thing that deserves to be called culture is the daughter of such creative freedom.” * What Greece did for the intellect, Christ did for the moral life: man had not a moral culture till He gave it. I should rather say, the possibility of a moral culture; for the motive power of culture is that inner, creative process, the voluntary masterful conversion of the will, and this very motive power was with rare exceptions quite overlooked; Christianity became an essentially historical religion, and at the altars of its churches all the superstitions of antiquity and of Judaism found a consecrated place of refuge. Yet we have in the revelation of Christ the one foundation of all moral culture, and the moral culture of our nations is greater or smaller in proportion to the extent to which his personality is able more or less clearly to prevail.

It is in this connection that we can with truth assert that the appearance of Christ upon earth has divided

* See p. [25](#).

198 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

mankind into two classes. It created for the first time true nobility, and indeed true nobility of birth, for only he who is chosen can be a Christian. But at the same time it sowed in the hearts of the chosen the seed of new and bitter suffering: it separated them from father and mother, it made them lonely wanderers among men who did not understand them, it stamped them as martyrs. And who after all is really master? Who has entirely conquered his slavish instincts? Discord from now onward rent the individual soul. And now that the individual, who hitherto in the tumultuous struggle of life had scarcely attained to a consciousness of his “Ego,” was awakened to an unexpectedly high conception of his dignity, inner significance and power, how often was his heart bound to fail him in the consciousness of his weakness and unworthiness? Now and now only did life become truly tragical. This was brought about by man's own free act in rising against his animal nature. “From a perfect pupil of nature man became an imperfect moral being, from a good instrument a bad artist,” says Schiller. But man will no longer be an instrument; and as Homer had created gods such as he wished them, so now man rebelled against the moral tyranny of nature and created a sublime morality such as he desired; he would no longer obey blind impulses, beautifully constrained and restricted as they might be by legal paragraphs; his own law of morals would henceforth be his

only standard. In Christ man awakens to consciousness of his moral calling, but thereby at the same time to the necessity of an inner struggle that is reckoned in tens of centuries. Under the heading [Philosophy in the ninth chapter](#) (vol. ii.), I shall show that after an anti-Christian reaction lasting for many centuries we have with Kant returned again to exactly the same path. The humanitarian Deists of the eighteenth century who turned

199 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

away from Christ thought the proper course was a “return to nature“: on the contrary, it is emancipation from nature, without which we can achieve nothing, but which we are determined to make subject to ourselves. In Art and Philosophy man becomes conscious of himself, in contrast to nature, as an intellectual being; in marriage and law he becomes conscious of himself as a social being, in Christ as a moral being. He throws down the gauntlet for a fight in which there is no place for humility; whoever will follow Christ requires above all courage, courage in its purest form, that inner courage, which is steeled and hardened anew every day, which proves itself not merely in the intoxicating clash of battle, but in bearing and enduring, and in the silent, soundless struggle of every hour in the individual breast. The example is given. For in the advent of Christ we find the grandest example of heroism. Moral heroism is in Him so sublime that the much-extolled physical courage of heroes seems as nothing; certain it is that only heroic souls — only “masters“ — can in the true sense of the word be Christians. And when Christ says, “I am meek,“ we well understand that this is the meekness of the hero sure of victory; and when He says, “I am lowly of heart,“ we know that this is not the humility of the slave, but the humility of the master, who from the fulness of his power bows down to the weak.

On one occasion when Jesus was addressed not simply as Lord or Master, but as “good master,“ He rejected the appellation: “Why callest thou Me good: there is none good.“ This should make us think, and should convince us that it is a mistaken view of Christ which forces His heavenly goodness, His humility and long-suffering, into the foreground of His character; they do not form its basis, but are like fragrant flowers on a strong stem. What was the basis of the world-power of

200 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

Buddha? Not his doctrine, but his example, his heroic achievement; it

was the revelation of an almost supernatural will-power which held and still holds millions in its spell. But in Christ a still higher will revealed itself; He did not need to flee from the world; He did not avoid the beautiful, He praised the use of the costly — which His disciples called “prodigality”; He did not retire to the wilderness, from the wilderness He came and entered into life, a victor, who had a message of good news to proclaim — not death, but redemption! I said that Buddha represented the senile decay of a culture which had strayed into wrong paths: Christ, on the other hand, represents the morning of a new day; He won from the old human nature a new youth, and thus became the God of the young, vigorous Indo-Europeans, and under the sign of His cross there slowly arose upon the ruins of the old world a new culture — a culture at which we have still to toil long and laboriously until some day in the distant future it may deserve the appellation “Christ-like.”

THE GALILEANS

Were I to follow my own inclination, I should close this chapter here. But it is necessary in the interest of many points to be discussed later to consider the personality of Christ not only in its pure isolated individuality but also in its relation to its surroundings. Otherwise there are many important phenomena in the past and the present which remain incomprehensible. It is by no means a matter of indifference whether by close analysis we have formed exact ideas as to what in this figure is Jewish and what is not. On this point there has been from the beginning of the Christian era to the present day and from the lowest depths of the intellectual world to its greatest heights, enormous confusion. Not

201 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

merely was so sublime a figure not easy for any one to comprehend and to contemplate in its organic relations to the contemporary world, but everything concurred to dim and falsify its true features: Jewish religious idiosyncrasy, Syrian mysticism, Egyptian asceticism, Hellenic metaphysics, soon too Roman traditions of State and Pontifex, as also the superstitions of the barbarians; every form of misunderstanding and stupidity had a share in the work. In the nineteenth century many have devoted themselves to the unravelling of this tangle, but, so far as I know, no one has succeeded in separating from the mass of facts the few essential points and putting them clearly before the eyes of all. In fact even honest learning does not protect us against prejudice and partiality. We shall here try, unfortunately indeed without the specialist's

knowledge, but also without prejudice, to find out how far Christ belonged to His surroundings and employed their forms for viewing things, how far He differed from them and rose high as the heavens above them; only in this way can we free His personality from all accidental circumstances and show its full autonomous dignity.

Let us therefore first ask ourselves, was Christ a Jew by race?

The question seems at the first glance somewhat childish. In the presence of such a personality peculiarities of race shrink into nothingness. An Isaiah, however much he may tower above his contemporaries, remains a thorough Jew; not a word did he utter that did not spring from the history and spirit of his people; even where he mercilessly exposes and condemns what is characteristically Jewish, he proves himself — especially in this — the Jew; in the case of Christ there is not a trace of this. Take again Homer! He awakens the Hellenic people for the first time to consciousness of itself; to be able to do that, he had to harbour in his

202 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

own bosom the quintessence of all Hellenism. But where is the people, which, awakened by Christ to life, has gained for itself the precious right — of calling Christ its own? Certainly not in Judea! — To the believer Jesus is the Son of God, not of a human being; for the unbeliever it will be difficult to find a formula to characterise so briefly and yet so expressively the undeniable fact of this incomparable and inexplicable personality. After all there are phenomena which cannot be placed in the complex of our intellectual conceptions without a symbol. So much in regard to the question of principle, and in order to remove from myself all suspicion of being taken in tow by that superficial “historical“ school, which undertakes to explain the inexplicable. It is another matter to seek to gain all possible information regarding the historical surroundings of a personality for the simple purpose of obtaining a clearer and better view of it. If we do attempt this, the answer to the question, Was Christ a Jew? is by no means a simple one. In religion and education He was so undoubtedly; in race — in the narrower and real sense of the word “Jew“ — most probably not.

The name Galilee (from *Gelil haggoyim*) means “district of the heathen.“ It seems that this part of the country, so far removed from the intellectual centre, had never kept itself altogether pure, even in the earliest times when Israel was still strong and united, and it had served as home for the tribes Naphtali and Zebulon. Of the tribe Naphtali we are told that it was from the first “of very mixed origin,“ and while the non-Israelitic aborigines continued to dwell in the whole of Palestine as

before, this was the case “nowhere in so great a degree as in the northern districts.” * There was, however,

* Wellhausen: *Israelitische und jüdische Geschichte*, 3rd ed., 1897, pp. 16 and 74. Cf. too, *Judges*, i. 30 and 33, and further on in this book, [chap. v.](#)

203 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

another additional circumstance. While the rest of Palestine remained, owing to its geographical position, isolated as it were from the world, there was, even at the time when the Israelites took possession of the land, a road leading from the lake of Gennesareth to Damascus, and from that point Tyre and Sidon were more accessible than Jerusalem. Thus we find that Solomon ceded a considerable part of this district of the heathen (as it was already called, 1 *Kings*, ix. 11), with twenty cities to the King of Tyre in payment of his deliveries of cedar- and pine-trees, as well as for the one hundred and twenty hundredweights of gold which the latter had contributed towards the building of the temple; so little interest had the King of Judea in this land, half inhabited as it was by heathens. The Tyrian King Hiram must in fact have found it sparsely populated, as he profited by the opportunity to settle various foreign tribes in Galilee. * Then came, as every one knows, the division into two kingdoms, and since that time, that is, since about a thousand years before Christ (!) only now and again, and then but for a short time, had there been any comparatively close political connection between Galilee and Judea, and it is only this, not community of religious faith, that furthers a fusion of races. In Christ's time, too, Galilee was politically quite separate from Judea, so that it stood to the latter in the relation “of a foreign country” † In the meantime, however, something had happened, which must have destroyed almost completely

* Graetz: *Volkstümliche Geschichte der Juden*, i. 88.

† *Ibid.* i. 567. Galilee and Perea had together a tetrarch who ruled independently, while Judea, Samaria and Idumea were under a Roman procurator. Graetz adds at this point, “Owing to the enmity of the Samaritans whose land lay like a wedge between Judea and Galilee and round [sic] both, there was all the less intercourse between the two separated districts.” I have here for simplicity refrained from mentioning the further fact that we have no right to identify the genuine “Israelites” of the North with the real “Jews” of the South; but cf. [chap. v.](#)

204 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

for all time the Israelitish character of this northern district: seven

hundred and twenty years before Christ (that is about one hundred and fifty years before the Babylonian captivity of the Jews) the northern kingdom of Israel was laid waste by the Assyrians, and its population — it is said to a man, at all events to a large extent — deported into different and distant parts of the Empire, where it soon fused with the rest of the inhabitants and in consequence completely disappeared. * At the same time strange races from remote districts were transported to Palestine to settle there. The authorities indeed suppose (without being able to vouch for it) that a considerable portion of the former mixed Israelitish population had remained in the land; at any rate this remnant did not keep apart from the strangers, but became merged in the medley of races. † The fate of these districts was consequently quite different from that of Judea. For when the Judeans at a later time were also led into captivity, their land remained so to speak empty, inhabited only by a few peasants who moreover belonged to the country, so that when they returned from the Babylonian captivity, during which they had kept their race pure, they were able without difficulty to maintain that purity. Galilee, on the other hand, and

* So completely disappeared that many theologians, who had leisure, puzzled their brains even in the nineteenth century to discover what had become of the Israelites, as they could not believe that five-sixths of the people to whom Jehovah had promised the whole world should have simply vanished off the face of the earth. An ingenious brain actually arrived at the conclusion that the ten tribes believed to be lost were the English of to-day! He was not at a loss for the moral of this discovery either: in this way the British possess by right five-sixths of the whole earth; the remaining sixth the Jews. Cf. H. L.: *Lost Israel, where are they to be found?* (Edinburgh, 6th ed., 1877). In this pamphlet another work is named, Wilson, *Our Israelitish Origin*. There are, according to these authorities, honest Anglo-Saxons who have traced their genealogy back to Moses!

† Robertson Smith: *The Prophets of Israel* (1895), p. 153, informs us to what an extent “the distinguishing character of the Israelitish nation was lost.”

205 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

the neighbouring districts had, as already mentioned, been systematically colonised by the Assyrians, and, as it appears from the Biblical account, from very different parts of that gigantic empire, among others from the northerly mountainous Syria. Then in the centuries before the birth of Christ many Phoenicians and Greeks had also migrated thither. * This last fact would lead one to assume that purely Aryan blood also was transplanted thither; at any rate it is certain that a promiscuous mixture of the most different races took place, and that the foreigners in all probability settled in largest numbers in the more accessible and at the same time more fertile Galilee. The Old Testament itself tells with artless simplicity how these strangers originally came to be acquainted with the worship of Jehovah (*2 Kings*, xvii. 24 ff.): in the

depopulated land beasts of prey multiplied; this plague was held to be the vengeance of the neglected “God of the Land” (verse 26); but there was no one who knew how the latter should be worshipped; and so the colonists sent to the King of Assyria and begged for an Israelitish priest from the captivity, and he came and “taught them the manner of the God of the land.” In this way the inhabitants of Northern Palestine, from Samaria downward, became Jews in faith, even those of them who had not a drop of Israelitish blood in their veins. In later times many genuine Jews may certainly have settled there; but probably only as strangers in the larger cities, for one of the most admirable characteristics of the Jews — particularly since their return from captivity where the clearly circumscribed term “Jew” first appears as the designation of a religion (see *Zechariah*, viii. 23) — was their care to keep the race pure; marriage between Jew and Galilean was unthinkable. However,

* Albert Réville: *Jésus de Nazareth*, i. 416. One should remember also that Alexander the Great had peopled neighbouring Samaria with Macedonians after the revolt of the year 311.

206 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

even these Jewish elements in the midst of the strange population were completely removed from Galilee not very long before the birth of Christ! It was Simon Tharsi, one of the Maccabeans, who, after a successful campaign in Galilee against the Syrians, “gathered together the Jews who lived there and bade them emigrate and settle bag and baggage in Judea.”

* Moreover the prejudice against Galilee remained so strong among the Jews that, when Herod Antipas during Christ's youth had built the city of Tiberias and tried to get Jews to settle there, neither promises nor threats were of any avail. † There is, accordingly, as we see, not the slightest foundation for the supposition that Christ's parents were of Jewish descent.

In the further course of historical development an event took place which has many parallels in history: among the inhabitants of the more southerly Samaria (which directly bordered on Judea) — a people which beyond doubt was much more closely related to the real Jews by blood and intercourse than the Galileans were — the North-Israelitish tradition of hatred and jealousy of the Jews was kept up; the Samaritans did not recognise the ecclesiastical supremacy of Jerusalem and were therefore, as being “heterodox,” so hated by the Jews that no kind of intercourse with them was permitted: not even a piece of bread could the faithful take from their hand; that was considered as great a sin as eating pork. ‡ The Galileans, on the other hand, who were to the Jews simply

“foreigners,” and as such of course despised and excluded from many religious observances, were yet strictly orthodox and frequently fanatical

* Graetz, as above, i. 400. *See also 1 Maccabees*, v. 23.

† Graetz, as above, i. 568. Compare *Josephus*, Book XVIII., chap. iii.

‡ Quoted by Renan from the Mishna: s. *Vie de Jésus*, 23rd edition, p. 242.

207 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

“Jews.” To see in that a proof of descent is absurd. It is just the same as if one were to identify the genuinely Slav population of Bosnia or the purest Indo-Aryans of Afghanistan ethnologically with the “Turks,” because they are strict Mohammedans, much more pious and fanatical than the genuine Osmons. The term Jew is applicable to a definite, remarkably pure race, and only in a secondary and very inexact sense to the members of a religious community. It is moreover far from correct to identify the term “Jew” with the term “Semite,” as has so frequently been done of late years; the national character of the Arabs, for instance, is quite different from that of the Jews. I return to this point in the [fifth chapter](#); in the meantime, I must point out that the national character of the Galileans was essentially different from that of the Jews. Open any history of the Jews that you will, that of Ewald or Graetz or Renan, everywhere you will find that in character the Galileans present a direct contrast to the rest of the inhabitants of Palestine; they are described as hot-heads, energetic idealists, men of action. In the long struggles with Rome, before and after the time of Christ, the Galileans are mostly the ringleaders — an element which death alone could overcome. While the great colonies of genuine Jews in Rome and Alexandria lived on excellent terms with the heathen Empire, where they enjoyed great prosperity as interpreters of dreams, * dealers in second-hand goods, pedlars, money-lenders, actors, law-agents, merchants, teachers, &c., in distant Galilee Hezekiah ventured, even in the lifetime of Caesar, to raise the standard of religious revolt. He was followed by the famous Judas the Galilean with the motto, “God alone is master, death does not matter, freedom is all

* Juvenal says:

*Aere minuto
Qualiacunque voles Judaei somnia vendunt...*

208 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

in all!“ * In Galilee was formed the Sicarian party (*i.e.*, men of the knife), not unlike the Indian Thugs of to-day; their most influential leader, the Galilean Menaham, in Nero's time destroyed the Roman garrison of Jerusalem, and as a reward the Jews themselves executed him, under the pretext that he wished to proclaim himself the Messiah; the sons of Judas also were crucified as politically dangerous revolutionaries (and that too by a Jewish procurator); John of Giscala, a city on the extreme northern boundary of Galilee, headed the desperate defence of Jerusalem against Titus — and the series of Galilean heroes was completed by Eleazar, who years after the destruction of Jerusalem maintained with a small troop a fortified position in the mountains, where he and his followers, when the last hope was lost, killed first their wives and children and then themselves. † In these things, as every one will probably admit, a peculiar, distinct national character reveals itself. There are many reports too of the special beauty of the women of Galilee; moreover, the Christians of the first centuries speak of their great kindness, and contrast their friendliness to those of a different faith with the haughty contemptuous treatment they met with at the hands of genuine Jewesses. Their peculiar national character unmistakably betrayed itself in another way, *viz.*, their language. In Judea and the neighbouring lands Aramaic was spoken at the time of Christ; Hebrew was already a dead language, preserved only in the sacred writings. We are now informed that the Galileans spoke so peculiar and strange a dialect of Aramaic that one recognised them from the first word; “thy language betrayeth thee“ the servants of the High Priest cry to

* Mommsen, *Römische Geschichte*, v. 515.

† Later, too, the inhabitants of Galilee were a peculiar race distinguished for strength and courage, as is proved by their taking part in the campaign under the Persian Scharbarza and in the taking of Jerusalem in the year 614.

209 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

Peter. * The acquisition of Hebrew is said to have been utterly impossible to them, the gutturals especially presenting insuperable difficulties, so that they could not be allowed, for example, to pray before the people, as their “wretched accent made every one laugh.“ † This fact points to a physical difference in the form of the larynx and would alone lead us to suppose that a strong admixture of non-Semitic blood had taken place; for the profusion of gutturals and facility in using them are features common to all Semites. ‡

I have thought it necessary to enter with some fulness into this question — was Christ a Jew in race? — because in not a single work

have I found the facts that pertain to it clearly put together. Even in an objectively scientific work like that of Albert Réville, § which is influenced by no theological motives — Réville is the well-known Professor of Comparative Religions at the Collège de France — the word Jew is sometimes used to signify the Jewish race, sometimes the Jewish religion.

* As a matter of fact sufficient evidence of the difference between the Galileans and the real Jews could be gathered from the gospels. In *John* especially “the Jews” are always spoken of as something alien, and the Jews on their part exclaim, “Out of Galilee ariseth no prophet” (7, 52).

† Cf., for example, Graetz, as above, i. 575. With regard to the peculiarity of the speech of the Galileans and their incapacity to pronounce the Semitic gutturals properly, see Renan: *Langues sémitiques*, 5th ed., p. 230.

‡ See, for example, the comparative table in Max Müller: *Science of Language*, 9th ed., p. 169, and in each separate volume of the *Sacred Books of the East*. The Sanscrit language has only six genuine “gutturals,” the Hebrew ten; most striking, however, is the difference in the guttural aspirate h, for which the Indo-Teutonic languages from time immemorial have known only one sound, the Semitic, on the other hand, five different sounds. Again, we find in Sanscrit seven different lingual consonants, in Hebrew only two. How exceedingly difficult it is for such inherited linguistic marks of race to disappear altogether is well known to us all through the example of the Jews living among us; a perfect mastery of the lingual sounds is just as impossible for them as the mastery of the gutturals for us.

§ *Jésus de Nazareth, études critiques sur les antécédents de l'histoire évangélique et la vie de Jésus*, vol. ii. 1897.

210 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

We read, for example (i. 416), “Galilee was chiefly inhabited by Jews, but Syrian, Phoenician and Greek heathens also made their home there.” Here accordingly Jew means one who worships the God of the land of Judea, no matter of what race he may claim to be. On the very next page, however, he speaks of an “Aryan race,” in opposition to a “Jewish nation”; here consequently Jew denotes a definite, limited race which has kept itself pure for centuries. And now follows the profound remark: “The question whether Christ is of Aryan descent is idle. A man belongs to the nation in whose midst he has grown up.” This is what people called “science” in the year of grace 1896! To think that at the close of the nineteenth century a professor could still be ignorant that the form of the head and the structure of the brain exercise quite decisive influence upon the form and structure of the thoughts, so that the influence of the surroundings, however great it may be estimated to be, is yet by this initial fact of the physical tendencies confined to definite capacities and possibilities, in other words, has definite paths marked out for it to follow! To think that he could fail to know that the shape of the skull in particular is one of those characteristics which are inherited with

ineradicable persistency, so that races are distinguished by craniological measurements, and, in the case of mixed races, the original elements which occur by atavism become still manifest to the investigator! He could believe that the so-called soul has its abode outside the body, and leads the latter like a puppet by the nose. O Middle Ages! when will your night leave us? When will men understand that form is not an unimportant accident, a mere chance, but an expression of the innermost being? that in this very point the two worlds, the inner and the outer, the visible and the invisible, touch? I have spoken of the human personality as the *mysterium magnum* of existence; now this inscrutable wonder shows itself in its visible form to the eye and

211 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

the investigating understanding. And exactly as the possible forms of a building are determined and limited in essential points by the nature of the building material, so the possible form of a human being, his inner and his outer, are defined in decisively essential points by the inherited material of which this new personality is composed. It certainly may happen that too much importance is attached to the idea of race: we detract thereby from the autonomy of personality and run the risk of undervaluing the great power of ideas; besides, this whole question of race is infinitely more complicated than the layman imagines; it belongs wholly to the sphere of anthropological anatomy and cannot be solved by any dicta of the authorities on language and history. Yet it will not do simply to put race aside as a negligible quantity; still less will it do to proclaim anything directly false about race and to let such an historical lie crystallise into an indisputable dogma. Whoever makes the assertion that Christ was a Jew is either ignorant or insincere: ignorant when he confuses religion and race, insincere when he knows the history of Galilee and partly conceals, partly distorts the very entangled facts in favour of his religious prejudices or, it may be, to curry favour with the Jews. * The probability that Christ was no Jew, that He had not a drop of genuinely Jewish

* How is one, for example, to explain the fact that Renan, who in his *Vie de Jésus*, published in 1863, says it is impossible even to make suppositions about the race to which Christ by blood belonged (see chap. ii.), in the fifth volume of his *Histoire du Peuple d'Israël*, finished in 1891, makes the categorical assertion, "Jésus était un Juif," and attacks with unwonted bitterness those who dare doubt the fact? Is it to be supposed that the *Alliance Israélite*, with which Renan was so closely connected in the last years of his life, had not had something to do with this? In the nineteenth century we have heard so much fine talk about the freedom of speech, the freedom of science, &c.; in reality, however, we have been worse enslaved than in the eighteenth century; for in addition to the tyrants who have really never been disarmed, new and worse ones

have arisen. The former tyranny could, with all its bitter injustice, strengthen the character: the new, which is a tyranny proceeding from and aiming at money, degrades to the lowest depth of bondage.

212 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

blood in his veins, is so great that it is almost equivalent to a certainty. To what race did He belong? This is a question that cannot be answered at all. Since the land lay between Phoenicia and Syria, which in its south-western portion was strongly imbued with Semitic blood, and in addition had never been quite cleared of its former mixed-Israelitish (but at no time Jewish) population, the probability of a descent principally Semitic is very great. But whoever has even casually glanced at the race-babel of the Assyrian empire * and then learns that colonists from all parts of this empire settled in that former home of Israel, will be baffled by the question. It is indeed possible that in some of these groups of colonists there prevailed a tradition of marrying among themselves, whereby a tribe would have kept itself pure; that this, however, should have been kept up more than five hundred years is almost unthinkable; the very conversion to the Jewish faith had gradually obliterated those tribal differences which at first had been maintained by religious customs brought from their old homes (*2 Kings*, xvii. 29). We hear that in later times Greeks too migrated thither; in any case they belonged to the poorest classes, and accepted immediately the “god of the country“! Only one assertion can therefore be made on a sound historical basis: in that whole region there was only one single pure race, a race which by painfully scrupulous measures protected itself from all mingling with other nations — the Jewish; that Jesus Christ did not belong to it can be regarded as certain. Every further statement is hypothetical.

This result, though essentially negative, is of great value; it means an important contribution to the right knowledge of the personality of Christ, and at the same time to the understanding of its effectiveness up to the present day as well as to the disentanglement of the

* Cf. Hugo Winckler: *Die Völker Vorderasiens*, 1900.

213 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

wildly confused clue of contradictory ideas and false conceptions, which has wound itself around the simple, transparent truth. It is time to go deeper. The outward connection is less important than the inner; now and now only do we come to the decisive question: how far does Christ as

a moral fact belong to Judaism and how far does He not? To fix this once for all, we shall have to make a series of important distinctions, for which I beg the fullest attention of the reader.

RELIGION

Christ is, quite generally — indeed, perhaps universally — represented as the perfecter of Judaism, that is to say, of the religious ideas of the Jews. * Even the orthodox Jews, though they cannot exactly honour Him as the perfecter, behold in Him an offshoot from their tree and proudly regard all Christianity as an appendix to Judaism. That, I am firmly convinced, is a mistake; it is an inherited delusion, one of those opinions that we drink in with our mother's milk and about which in consequence the free-thinker never comes to his senses any more than the strictly orthodox Churchman. Certainly Christ stood in direct relation to Judaism, and the influence of Judaism, in the first place upon the moulding of His personality and in a still higher degree upon the development and history of Christianity is so great, definite and essential, that every attempt to deny it must lead to nonsensical results; but this influence is only in the smallest degree a religious one. Therein lies the heart of the error.

We are accustomed to regard the Jewish people as the religious people above all others: as a matter of fact in

* The great legal authority Jhering is a praiseworthy exception. In his *Vorgeschichte der Indoeuropäer*, p. 300, he says: "The doctrine of Christ did not spring from his native soil, Christianity is rather an overcoming of Judaism; there is even in his origin something of the Aryan in Christ."

214 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

comparison with the Indo-European races it is quite stunted in its religious growth. In this respect what Darwin calls "arrest of development" has taken place in the case of the Jews, an arrest of the growth of the faculties, a dying in the bud. Moreover all the branches of the Semitic stem, though otherwise rich in talents, were extraordinarily poor in religious instinct; this is the "hard-heartedness" of which the more important men among them constantly complain. * How different the Aryan! Even the oldest documents (which go back far beyond the Jewish) present him to us as earnestly following a vague impulse which forces him to investigate in his own heart. He is joyous, full of animal spirits, ambitious, thoughtless, he drinks and gambles, he hunts and robs; but suddenly he begins to think: the great riddle of existence holds

him absolutely spellbound, not, however, as a purely rationalistic problem — whence is this world? whence came I? questions to which a purely logical and therefore unsatisfactory answer would require to be given — but as a direct compelling need of life. Not to understand, but to be, that is the point to which he is impelled. Not the past with its litany of cause and effect, but the present, the everlasting present holds his astonished mind spellbound. And he feels that it is only when he has bridged the gulf between himself and all that surrounds him, when he recognises himself — the one thing that he directly knows — in every phenomenon and finds again every phenomenon in himself, when he has, so to speak, put the world and himself in harmony, that he can hope to listen with his own ear to the weaving of the everlasting work and bear in his own heart the mysterious music of existence. And in order that he may find this harmony, he utters

* “The Semites have much superstition, but little religion,” says Robertson Smith, one of the greatest authorities. (See *The Prophets of Israel*, p. 33.)

215 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

his own song, tries it in all tones, practises all melodies; then he listens with reverence. And not unanswered is his call: he hears mysterious voices; all nature becomes alive, everything in her that is related to man begins to stir. He sinks in reverence upon his knees, does not fancy that he is wise, does not believe that he knows the origin and finality of the world, yet has faint forebodings of a loftier vocation, discovers in himself the germ of immeasurable destinies, “the seed of immortality.” This is, however, no mere dream, but a living conviction, a faith, and like everything living, it in its turn begets life. The heroes of his race and his holy men he sees as “supermen” (as Goethe says) **[**]** hovering high above the earth; he wills to be like them, for he too is impelled onward and upward, and now he knows from what a deep inner well they drew the strength to be great. — Now this glance into the unfathomable depths of his own soul, this longing to soar upwards, this is religion. Religion has primarily nothing to do either with superstition or with morals; it is a state of mind. And because the religious man is in direct contact with a world beyond reason, he is thinker and poet: he appears consciously as a creator; he toils unremittingly at the noble Sisyphus work of giving visible shape to the Invisible, of making the Unthinkable capable of being thought; * we never find with him a hard and fast chronological cosmogony and theogony, he has inherited too lively a feeling of the Infinite for that; his conceptions remain in flux and never grow rigid; old ones are replaced by new; gods, honoured in one century, are in another

scarcely known by name. Yet the great facts of knowledge, once firmly acquired, are

* Herder says well, “Man alone is in opposition to himself and the earth; for the most fully developed creature among all her organisations is at the same time the least developed in his own new capacity... He represents therefore two worlds at once and this causes the apparent duplicity of his being.” — *Ideen zur Geschichte der Menschheit*, Teil 1., Buch V., Abschnitt 6.

[** German: *Übermensch*. See Goethe's *Faust*.]

216 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

never again lost, and more than all that fundamental truth which the Rigveda centuries and centuries before Christ tried thus to express, “The root of existence, the wise found in the heart“ — a conviction which in the nineteenth century has been almost identically expressed by Goethe:

Ist nicht der Kern der Natur
Menschen im Herzen? *

That is religion! — Now this very tendency, this state of mind, this instinct, “to seek the core of nature in the heart,“ the Jews lack to a startling degree. They are born rationalists. Reason is strong in them, the will enormously developed, their imaginative and creative powers, on the other hand, peculiarly limited. Their scanty mythically religious conceptions, indeed even their commandments, customs and ordinances of worship, they borrowed without exception from abroad, they reduced everything to a minimum † which they kept rigidly unaltered; the creative element, the real inner life is almost totally wanting in them; at the best it bears, in relation to the infinitely rich religious life of the Aryans, which includes all the highest thought and poetical invention of these peoples, like the lingual sounds referred to above, a ratio of 2 to 7. Consider what a luxuriant growth of magnificent religious conceptions and ideas, and in addition, what art and philosophy, thanks to the Greeks and Teutonic races, sprang up upon the soil of Christianity and then ask with what images and thoughts the so-called religious nation of the Jews has in the same space of time enriched mankind! Spinoza's *Geometric Ethics* (a false, still-born adaptation of a brilliant and pregnant thought of Descartes) seems to me in reality the most cruel mockery of the Talmud

* Is not the core of nature / In the heart of man?

† For details, see [chap. v.](#)

217 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

morality and has in any case still less to do with religion than the Ten Commandments of Moses, which were probably derived from Egypt. * No, the power of Judaism which commands respect lies in quite another sphere; I shall speak of it immediately.

But how then was it possible to let our judgment be so befogged as to consider the Jews a religious people?

In the first place it was the Jews themselves, who from time immemorial assured us with the greatest vehemence and volubility, that they were "God's people"; even a free-thinking Jew like the philosopher Philo makes the bold assertion that the Israelites alone were "men in the true sense"; † the good stupid Indo-Teutonic peoples believed them. But how difficult it became for them to do so is proved by the course of history and the statements of all their most important men. This credulity was only rendered possible by the Christian interpreters of the Script making the whole history of Judah a Theodicy, in which the crucifixion of Christ forms the culminating point. Even Schiller (*Die Sendung Moses*) seems to think that Providence broke up the Jewish nation, as soon as it had accomplished the work given it to do! Here the authorities overlooked the telling fact that Judaism paid not the slightest attention to the existence of Christ, that the oldest Jewish historians do not once mention His name; and to this has now to be added the fact that this peculiar people after two thousand years still lives and manifests great prosperity; never, not even in Alexandria, has the lot of the Jews been so bright as it is to-day. Finally a third prejudice, derived fundamentally from the philosophic workshops of Greece, had some influence; according to it monotheism, *i.e.*, the idea of a single inseparable God, was supposed to be the symptom

* See chap. cxxv. of the *Book of the Dead*.

† Quoted by Graetz, as above, i. 634, without indication of the passage.

218 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

of a higher religion; that is altogether a rationalistic conclusion; arithmetic has nothing to do with religion; monotheism can signify an impoverishment as well as an ennobling of religious life. Besides, two objections may be urged against this fatal prejudice, which has contributed perhaps more than anything else to the delusion of a religious superiority of the Jews; in the first place, the fact that the Jews, as long as they formed a nation and their religion still possessed a spark of fresh life, were not monotheists but polytheists, for whom every little land and every little tribe had its own God; secondly, that the Indo-Europeans by purely religious ways had attained to conceptions of an

individual Divinity that were infinitely more sublime than the painfully stunted idea which the Jews had formed of the Creator of the world. *

* I do not require to adduce evidence of the polytheism of the Jews; one finds it in every scientific work and besides on every other page of the Old Testament; see [chap. v.](#) Even in the *Psalms* “all the Gods“ are called upon to worship Jehovah; Jehovah is only in so far the “one God“ for later Jews, as the Jews (as Philo just told us) are “the only men in the real sense.“ Robertson Smith, whose *History of the Semites* is regarded as a scientific and fundamental book, testifies that monotheism did not proceed from an original religious tendency of the Semitic spirit, but is essentially a political result!! (See p. 74 of the work quoted.) — With regard to the monotheism of the Indo-Europeans I make the following brief remarks. The Brahman of the Indian philosophers is beyond doubt the greatest religious thought ever conceived; with regard to the pure monotheism of the Persians we can obtain information in Darmesteter (*The Zend-Avesta*, I. lxxxii. ff.); the Greek had however been on the same path, as Ernst Curtius testifies, “I have learned much that is new, particularly what a stronghold of the monotheistic view of God Olympia was and what a moral world-power the Zeus of Phidias has been“ (Letter to Gelzer of Jan. 1, 1896, published in the *Deutsche Revue*, 1897, p. 241). Besides we can refer here to the best of all witnesses. The Apostle Paul says (*Romans*, i. 21): “The Romans knew that there is one God“; and the churchfather Augustine shows, in the eleventh chapter of the 4th book of his *De civitate Dei*, that according to the views of the educated Romans of his time, the *magni doctores paganorum*, Jupiter was the one and only God, while the other divinities only demonstrated some of his “virtutes.“ Augustine employed the view which was already prevalent, to make it clear to the heathens that it would be no trouble for them to adopt the belief in a single God and to give up the others. *Haec si ita sint, quid perderent si unum Deum colerent prudentiore compendio?* (the

219 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

I shall have repeated occasion to return to these questions, particularly in the sections dealing with the entry of the Jews into western history and with the origin of the Christian Church. In the meantime I hope I have succeeded in removing to some extent the preconceived opinion of the special religiousness of Judaism. I think the reader of the orthodox Christian Neander will henceforth shake his head sceptically when he finds the assertion that the advent of Christ forms the “central point“ of the religious life of the Jews, that

recommendation to believe in a single God “because it simplifies matters“ is a touching feature of the golden childhood of the Christian Church!). And what Augustine demonstrates in the case of the educated heathen, Tertullian asserts of the uneducated people in general. “Everybody,“ he says, “believes only in a single God, and one never hears the Gods invoked in the plural, but only as 'Great God!' 'Good God!' 'As God will!' 'God be with you!' 'God bless you!'“ This Tertullian regards as the evidence of a fundamentally monotheistic soul: “*O testimonium animae naturaliter Christianae!*“ (*Apologeticus*, xvii). [Giordano Bruno in his *Spaccio de la bestia trionfante*, ed. Lagarde, p. 532, has some beautiful remarks on the monotheism of the ancients.] — In order that in a matter of such significance nothing may remain obscure, I must add that

Curtius, Paul, Augustine and Tertullian are all four labouring under a thorough delusion, when they see in these things a proof of monotheism in the sense of Semitic materialism; their judgment is here dimmed by the influence of Christian ideas. The conception “the Divine“ which we see in the Sanscrit neuter Brahman and in the Greek neuter *θεῖον*, as well as in the German neuter Gott, which only at a later time in consequence of Christian influence was regarded as a masculine (see Kluge's *Etymologisches Wörterbuch*), cannot be identified at all with the personal world-creator of the Jews. In this case one can say of all the Aryans who are not influenced by the Semitic spirit what Professor Erwin Rohde proves for the Hellenes: “The view that the Greeks had a tendency to monotheism (in the Jewish sense) is based on a wrong interpretation.... It is not a unity of the divine person, but a uniformity of divine entity, a divinity living uniformly in many Gods, something universally divine in the presence of which the Greek stands when he enters into religious contact with the Gods“ (*Die Religion der Griechen* in the *Bayreuther Blätter*, 1895, p. 213). Very characteristic are the words of Luther in this connection, “In creation and in works (to reckon from without to the creature) we Christians are at one with the Turks; for we say too that there is not more than one single God. But we say, this is not enough, that we only believe that there is one single God.“

220 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

“in the whole organism of this religion and people's history it was of inner necessity determined,“ &c. &c. * As for the oratorical flourishes of the free-thinker Renan: *Le Christianisme est le chef-d'oeuvre du judaïsme, sa gloire, le résumé de son évolution.... Jésus est tout entier dans Isaïe*, &c., † he will smile over them with just a shade of indignation; and I fear he will burst into Homeric laughter when the orthodox Jew Graetz assures him that the teaching of Christ is the “old Jewish doctrine in a new dress,“ that “the time had now come when the fundamental truths of Judaism ... the wealth of lofty thoughts concerning God and a holy life for the individual and the community should flow in upon the emptiness of the rest of the world, filling it with a rich endowment.“ ‡

* *Allgemeine Geschichte der christlichen Religion*, 4th ed. i. 46.

† *Histoire du Peuple d'Israël*, v. 415, ii. 539, &c. The enormity of the assertion in regard to Isaiah becomes clear from the fact that Renan himself describes and praises this prophet as a “littérateur“ and a “journaliste,“ and that he proves in detail what a purely political rôle this important man played. “Not a line from his pen, which was not in the service of a question of the day or an interest of the moment“ (ii. 481). And we are to believe that in this very man the whole personality of Jesus Christ is inherent? It is quite as unjustifiable (unfortunately in others as well as in Renan) to quote single verses from *Isaiah*, to make it appear as if Judaism had aimed at a universal religion. Thus xlix. 6, is quoted, where Jehovah says to Israel, “I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth,“ and nothing is said of the fact that in the course of the chapter the explanation is given that the Gentiles shall become the slaves of the Jews and their Kings and Princesses shall “bow down to them with their face toward the earth“ and “lick up the dust of their feet.“ And this we are to regard as a sublime universal religion! Exactly the same is the case with the constantly quoted chapter lx. where we find first the words, “The Gentiles shall

come to thy light," but afterwards with an honesty for which one is thankful, "The nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish, yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted"! Moreover the Gentiles are told in this passage to bring all their gold and treasures to Jerusalem, for the Jews shall "inherit the land for ever." To think of any one venturing to put such political pamphleteering on a parallel with the teaching of Christ!

‡ As above, i. 570. It has often been asserted that the Jews have little sense of humour: that seems to be true, at least of individuals;

221 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

CHRIST NOT A JEW

Whoever wishes to see the revelation of Christ must passionately tear this darkest of veils from his eyes. His advent is not the perfecting of the Jewish religion but its negation. It was in the very place where feelings played the least part in religious conceptions that a new religious ideal appeared, which — unlike the other great attempts further to explain the inner life, by thoughts or by images — laid the whole burthen of this "life in spirit and in truth" upon the feelings. The relation to the Jewish religion could at most be regarded as a reaction; the feelings are, as we have said, the fountain head of all genuine religion; this spring which the Jews had well-nigh choked with their formalism and hard-hearted rationalism Christ opened up. Few things let us see so deeply into the divine heart of Christ as His attitude towards the Jewish religious ordinances. He observed them, but without zeal and without laying any stress upon them; at best they are but a vessel, which, holding nothing, would remain empty; and as soon as an ordinance bars His road, He breaks it without the least scruple, but at the same time calmly and without anger: for what has all this to do with religion? "Man * is Lord

just imagine the "wealth" of these crassly ignorant unimaginative scribes and the "emptiness" of the Hellenes! Graetz has not much regard for the personality of Christ; the highest appreciation to which he deigns to rise is as follows: "Jesus may also have possessed a sympathetic nature that won hearts, whereby His words could make an impression" (i. 576). The learned Professor of Breslau regards the crucifixion as the result of a "misunderstanding." With regard to the Jews who afterwards went over to Christianity Graetz is of opinion that it was done for their material advantages and because the belief in the Crucified One "was taken into the bargain as something unessential" (ii. 30). Is that still true? We knew from the Old Testament that the covenant with Jehovah was a contract with obligations on both sides, but what can be "bargained" in regard to Christ I cannot understand.

* The following information about the expression "son of man" is important: "The Messianic interpretation of the expression 'son

222 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

also of the Sabbath“: for the Jew Jehovah alone had been Lord — man his slave. With regard to the Jewish laws in relation to food (so important a point in their religion that the quarrel with regard to its obligatoriness continued on into the early Christian times) Christ says: “Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man. For those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart: and they defile the man.” * In this connection consider too how Christ uses Holy Scripture. He speaks of it with reverence but without fanaticism. It is indeed very remarkable how He makes Scripture serve His purpose; over it too He feels Himself “Lord“ and transforms it, when necessary, into its opposite. His doctrine is that the “whole law and the prophets“ may be summed up in the one command: Love God and thy neighbour. That sounds almost like sublime irony, especially when we consider that Christ on this occasion never once mentions “the fear of God,“ which (and not the love of God) forms the basis of the whole Jewish religion. “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,“ sings the Psalmist. “Hide thee in the dust for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of His majesty,“ Isaiah calls to the Israelites, and even Jeremiah seemed to have forgotten that there is a law according to which man “shall love God with all his heart, with all his soul, with all his strength, and with all his mind,“ †

of man' originated from the Greek translators of the Gospel. As Jesus spoke Aramaic, He said not *ο υιός του ανθρώπου* but barnascha. But that means man and nothing more; the Arameans had no other expression for the idea“ (Wellhausen: [Israelitische und jüdische Geschichte](#), 3rd ed. p. 381).

* “If man is impure, he is so because he speaks what is untrue,“ said the sacrificial ordinances of the Aryan Indians, one thousand years before Christ (*Satapatha-Brāhmana*, 1st verse of the 1st division of the 1st book.)

† In the fifth book of Moses (*Deuteronomy* vi. 5) are to be found words similar to these quoted from Christ's sayings (from *Matthew* xxii. 37), but — we must look at the context! Before the command-

223 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

and had represented Jehovah as saying to His people, “I will put my fear in their hearts that they shall not depart from me; they shall fear me for ever“; it is only when the Jews fear Him that He “will not turn away from them to do them good,“ &c. We find that Christ also frequently changes the meaning of the words of Scripture in a similar manner. Now if we see on the one hand a God of mercy and on the other a hard-hearted Jehovah, * on the one hand the doctrine which teaches us to love our

“heavenly Father“ with all our heart and on the other “servants,“ who are enjoined “to fear the lord“ as their

ment to love (to our mind a peculiar conception — to love by command) stands as the first and most important commandment (verse 2), “Thou shalt fear the Lord, thy God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments“; the commandment to love is only one among other commandments which the Jew shall observe and immediately after it comes the reward for this love (verse 10 ff.). “I shall give thee great and goodly cities, which thou buildedst not, and houses full of all good things which thou filledst not, and wells digged which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive-trees, which thou plantedst not, &c“ That kind of love may be compared to the love which underlies so many marriages at the present day! In any case the “love of one's neighbour“ would appear in a peculiar light, if one did not know that according to the Jewish law only the Jew is a “neighbour“ of the Jew; as is expressed in the same place, chap. vii. 16, “Thou shalt consume all the peoples which the Lord thy God shall deliver thee!“ This commentary to the commandment to “love one's neighbour“ makes every further remark superfluous. But in order that no one may be in doubt as to what the Jews later meant by the command to love God with the whole heart, I shall quote the commentary of the *Talmud* (*Jomah*, Div. 8) to that part of the law, *Deuteronomy*, vi. 5: “The teaching of this is: thy behaviour shall be such that the name of God shall be loved through you; man shall in fact occupy himself with the study of Holy Scripture and of the Mishna and have intercourse with learned and wise men; his language shall be gentle, his other conduct proper, and in commerce and business with his fellow men he shall strive after honesty and uprightness. What will people then say? Hail to this man who has devoted himself to the study of the sacred doctrine!“ In the book *Sota* of the Jerusalem Talmud (v. 5) one finds a somewhat more reasonable but no less prosaic commentary. — This is the orthodox Jewish interpretation of the commandment, “Thou shalt love the Lord with all thy heart“! Is it not the most unworthy playing with words to assert that Christ taught the same doctrine as the *Thora*?

* The orthodox Jew Montefiore, *Religion of the Ancient Hebrews* (1893), p. 442, admits that the thought, “God is love,“ does not occur in any purely Hebrew work of any time.

224 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

first duty, * we may well ask what meaning can there be in characterising the one personal philosophy as the work, as the perfection of the other? This is sophistry, not truth. Christ himself has said in plain words, “Whoever is not with me is against me“; no fact in the world is so completely against Him as the Jewish religion, indeed the whole Jewish conception of religion — from earliest times to the present day.

And yet the Jewish religion has in this connection formed a fine soil, better than any other, for the growth of a new religious ideal, that is, for a new conception of God.

What meant poverty for others became in fact for Christ a source of the richest gifts. For example, the fearful, to us almost inconceivable, dreariness of Jewish life — without art, without philosophy, without science — from which the more gifted Jews fled in crowds to foreign

parts, was an absolutely indispensable element for his simple, holy life. The Jewish life offered almost nothing — nothing but the family life — to the feelings of the individual. And thus the richest mind that ever lived could sink into itself, and find nourishment only in its own inmost depths. “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.” Perhaps it was only in these dreary surroundings that it was possible to discover that conversion of will as the first step towards a new ideal of mankind; only here where the “Lord of hosts“ ruled without pity, that the heavenly presentiment God is love could be elevated to a certainty.

The following is, however, the most important point in this discussion. The peculiar mental characteristic of the Jews, their

* Montefiore and others dispute the statement that the relation of Israel to Jehovah was that of servants to their master, but Scripture says so clearly in many places, *e.g.*, *Leviticus xxv. 55*: “The children of Israel are servants, they are my servants whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt,“ and the literal translation of the Hebrew text would be slave! (*Cf.* the literal translation by Louis Segond.)

225 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

lack of imagination, brought about by the tyrannical predominance of the will, had led them to a strange abstract materialism. Being materialists, the Jews were most prone, like all Semites, to crass idolatry; we see them ever and anon setting up images and bowing down before them; the moral struggle which their great men for centuries waged against it is an heroic page in the history of the human power of will. But the will which was not balanced by imagination shot as usual far beyond the mark; every image, in fact frequently everything that is at all the “work of hands,“ contains for the Jew of the Old Testament the danger of becoming a worshipped idol. Not even the coins may bear a human head or an allegorical figure, not even the flags an emblem. And so all non-Jews are to the Jews “worshippers of idols.“ And from this fact again arose, by the way, a Christian misconception which was not dissipated till the last years of the nineteenth century, and then only for the specialist, not for the mass of the educated. As a matter of fact, the Semites are probably the only people in the whole earth who ever were and could be genuine idolators. In no branch of the Indo-European family has there ever been idolatry. The unmixed Aryan Indians, as also the Eranians, had never either image or temple; they would have been incapable even of understanding the crassly materialistic sediment of Semitic idolatry in the Jewish ark of the covenant with its Egyptian sphinxes; neither the Teutons nor the Celts nor the Slavs worshipped images. And where did the Hellenic Zeus live? Where Athene? In poetry,

in the imagination, up in cloud-capped Olympus, but never in this or that temple. In honour of the god Phidias created his immortal work, in honour of the gods the numerous little images were made which adorned every house and filled it with the living conception of higher beings. To the Jew, however, that seemed

226 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

idolatry! The will being with them predominant, they regarded each thing only from the point of view of its utility; it was incomprehensible to them that a man should put anything beautiful before his eyes, to elevate and console himself therewith, to provide food for his mind, to awaken his religious sense. Similarly, too, the Christians have at a later time looked upon images of Buddha as idols: but the Buddhists recognise no God, much less an idol; these statues served as a stimulus to contemplation and alienation from the world. Indeed ethnologists have lately been beginning to question the possibility of there ever being a people so primitive as to worship so-called fetishes as idols. Formerly this was simply taken for granted; now it is being found in more and more cases that these children of nature attach the most complicated symbolical conceptions to their fetishes. It seems as if the Semites were the only human race that had succeeded in making golden calves, iron serpents, &c., and then worshipping them. * And as the Israelites even at that time were much more highly developed than the Australasian negroes of to-day, we conclude that such aberrations on their part must be put down not to immaturity of judgment, but to some onesidedness of their intellect: this onesidedness was the enormous predominance of will. The will as such lacks not merely all imagination, but all reflection; to it only one thing is natural, to precipitate itself upon, and to grasp the present. And so for no people was it so difficult as it was for the people of Israel, to rise to a high conception of the Divine, and for none was it so hard to keep this conception pure. But strength is steeled in the fray: the most unreligious people in the world created in its need the foundation of a new and most sublime conception

* It is scarcely necessary to call the reader's attention to the fact that the Egyptian and Syrian forms of worship from which the Jews took the idea of the ox and the serpent were purely symbolical.

227 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

of God, which has become the common property of all civilised mankind.

For on this foundation Christ built; He could do so, thanks to that “abstract materialism“ which He found around Him. Elsewhere religions were choked by the richness of their mythologies; here there was no mythology at all. Elsewhere every god possessed so distinct a physiognomy, had been made by poetry and the plastic arts so thoroughly individual, that no one could have changed him over night; or, on the other hand (as is the case with Brahman in India) the conception of him had been gradually so sublimated that nothing remained from which to create a new living form. Neither of these two things had happened with the Jews: Jehovah was in truth a remarkably concrete, indeed an altogether historical conception, and in so far a much more tangible figure than the imaginative Aryan had ever possessed; at the same time it was forbidden to represent Him either by image or word. * Hence the religious genius of mankind found here a *tabula rasa*. Christ required to destroy the historical Jehovah just as little as the Jewish “law“; neither the one nor the other has an immediate relation to real religion; but just as He in point of fact by that inner “conversion“ transformed the so-called law into a fundamentally new law, so He used the concrete abstraction of the Jewish God in order to give the world a quite new conception of God. We speak of anthropomorphism! Can then man act and think otherwise than as an anthropos? This new conception of the Godhead differed, however, from other sublime intuitions in this, that the image was created not with the brilliant colours of symbolism nor with the etching-needle of thought, but was caught as it were on a mirror

* When at a very late period the Jews could not quite resist the impulse to presentation, they sought to conceal the want of imaginative power by Oriental verbiage. We can see an example of it in chap. i. of *Ezekiel*.

228 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

in the innermost mind, and became henceforth a direct individual experience to every one that had eyes to see. — Certain it is that this new ideal could not have been set up in any other place than where the conception of God had been fanatically clung to, and yet left totally undeveloped.

Hitherto we have directed our attention to what separates or at least distinguishes Christ from Judaism; it would be one-sided to leave it at that alone. His fate and the main tendency of His thought are both closely connected with genuine Jewish life and character. He towers above His surroundings, but yet He belongs to them. Here we have to consider especially two fundamental features of the Jewish national character: the historical view of religion and the predominance of the

will. These two features are, as we shall immediately see, genetically related. The former has strongly influenced Christ's life and His memory after death; in the latter is rooted His doctrine of morals. A study of these two points will throw light on many of the deepest and most difficult questions in the history of Christianity, as well as on many of the inexplicable inner contradictions of our religious tendencies up to the present day.

HISTORIC RELIGION

Of the many Semitic peoples one only, and that one politically one of the smallest and weakest, has maintained itself as a national unity; this small nation has defied all storms and stands to-day a unique fact among men — without fatherland, without a supreme head, scattered all over the world, enrolled among the most different nationalities, and yet united and conscious of unity. This miracle is the work of a book, the *Thora*, with all that has been added to it by way of supplement up to the present day. But this book must be regarded as evidence of a peculiar national soul, which at a critical

229 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

moment was guided in this direction by individual eminent and far-seeing men. In the next chapter but one I shall have to enter more fully into the origin and importance of these canonical writings. In the meantime, I shall merely call attention to the fact that the Old Testament is a purely historical work. If we leave out of account a few late and altogether unessential additions (like the so-called *Proverbs of Solomon*), every sentence of these books is historical; the whole legislation too which they contain is based on history, or has at least a chronological connection with the events described: "The Lord spake unto Moses," Aaron's burnt-offering is accepted by the Lord, Aaron's sons are killed during the proclamation of the law, &c. &c.; and if it is a question of inventing something, the narrator either links it on to a fictitious story, as in the book of *Job*, or to a daring falsification of history, as in the book of *Esther*. By this predominance of the chronological element the Bible differs from all other known sacred books. The religion it contains is an element in the historical narrative and not *vice versa*; its moral commandments do not grow with inherent necessity out of the depths of the human heart, they are "laws," which were promulgated under definite conditions on fixed days, and which can be repealed at any time. Compare for a moment the Aryan Indians; they often stumbled upon questions concerning the origin of the world, the whence and the

whither, but these were not essential to the uplifting of their souls to God; this question concerning causes has nothing to do with their religion: indeed, far from attaching importance to it, the hymnists exclaim almost ironically:

Who hath perceived from whence creation comes?
He who in Heaven's light upon it looks,
He who has made or has not made it all,
He knows it! Or does he too know it not? *

Goethe, who is often called the “great Heathen,” but

* *Rigveda*, x. 129, 7.

230 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

who might with greater justice be termed the “great Aryan,” gave expression to exactly the same view when he said, “Animated inquiry into cause does great harm.” Similarly the German natural scientist of to-day says, “In the Infinite no new end and no beginning can be sought. However far back we set the origin, the question still remains open as to the first of the first, the beginning of the beginning.” * The Jew felt quite differently. He knew as accurately about the creation of the world as do the wild Indians of South America or the Australian blacks to-day. That, however, was not due — as is the case with these — to want of enlightenment, but to the fact that the Aryan shepherd's profound, melancholy mark of interrogation was never allowed a place in Jewish literature; his tyrannous will forbade it, and it was the same will that immediately silenced by fanatical dogmatism the scepticism that could not fail to assert itself among so gifted a people (*see the Koheleth, or Book of the Preacher*). Whoever would completely possess the “to-day” must also grasp the “yesterday” out of which it grew. Materialism suffers shipwreck as soon as it is not consistent; the Jew was taught that by his unerring instinct; and just as accurately as our materialists know to-day how thinking arises out of the motion of atoms, did he know how God had created the world and made man from a clod of earth. Creation, however, is the least thing of all; the Jew took the myths with which he became acquainted on his journeys, stripped them as far as possible of everything mythological and pruned them down to concrete historical events. † But then, and not till then, came his masterpiece: from the scanty material common to all Semites ‡

* Adolf Bastian, the eminent ethnologist, in his work: *Das Beständige in den Menschenrassen* (1868), p. 28.

† “*Les mythologies étrangères se transforment entre les mains des Sémites en récits platement historiques*” (Renan, *Israël*, i. 49).

‡ Cf. the history of creation by the Phoenician Sanchuniathon.

231 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

the Jew constructed a whole history of the world of which he made himself the centre; and from this moment, that is, the moment when Jehovah makes the covenant with Abraham, the fate of Israel forms the history of the world, indeed, the history of the whole cosmos, the one thing about which the Creator of the world troubles himself. It is as if the circles always became narrower; at last only the central point remains — the “Ego,” the will has prevailed. That indeed was not the work of a day; it came about gradually; genuine Judaism, that is, the Old Testament in its present form, shaped and established itself only after the return of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity. * And now what formerly had been effected with unconscious genius was applied and perfected consciously: the union of the past and the future with the present in such a way that each individual moment formed a centre on the perfectly straight path, which the Jewish people had to follow and from which it henceforth could not deviate either to right or to left. In the past divine miracles in favour of the Jews and in the future expectation of the Messiah and world-empire: these were the two mutually complementary elements of this view of history. The passing moment received a peculiarly living importance from the fact that it was seen growing out of the past, as reward or punishment, and that it was believed to have been exactly foretold in prophecies. By this the future itself acquired unexampled reality: it seemed to be something tangible. Even should countless promises and prophecies not come true, † that could always be easily explained. Will looks not too close, but what it holds it does not let go,

* See [chap. v.](#) In order to give a fixed point and to reveal drastically the differences of mental tendencies, I may mention that this was about three hundred years after Homer, scarcely a century before Herodotus.

† For example, the promise to Abraham in reference to Canaan, “To thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever.”

232 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

even if it be but a phantom; the less the past had given the richer appeared the future; and so much was possessed in black and white (particularly in the legend of the *Exodus*), that doubt could not arise. The so-called Jewish “literal adherence to creed” is surely quite a different thing from the dogmatic faith of the Christians: it is not a faith in abstract inconceivable mysteries and in all kinds of mythological conceptions, but something quite concrete and historical. The relation of

the Jews to their God is from the first political. * Jehovah promises them the empire of the world — under certain conditions; and their historical work is such a marvel of ingenious structure that the Jews see their past in the most glowing colours, and everywhere perceive the protecting hand of God extended over His chosen people, “over the only men in the true sense of the word“; and this in spite of the fact that theirs has been the most wretched and pitiful fate as a people that the annals of the world can show; for only once under David and Solomon did they enjoy half a century of relative prosperity and settled conditions: thus they possess on all hands proofs of the truth of their faith, and from this they draw the assurance that what was promised to Abraham many centuries before will one day take place in all its fulness. But the divine promise was, as I have said, dependent upon conditions. Men could not move about in the house, could not eat and drink or walk in the fields, without thinking of hundreds of commandments, upon the fulfilment of which the fate of the nation depended. As the Psalmist sings of the Jew (*Psalm* i. 2):

He placeth his delight
Upon God's law, and meditates
On his law day and night. †

* See Rob. Smith: *The Prophets of Israel*, pp. 70 and 133.

† In the *Sippurim*, a collection of Jewish popular sagas and stories, it is frequently mentioned that the ordinary uneducated Jew has 613 commandments to learn by heart. But the *Talmud* teaches 13,600

233 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

Every few years each of us throws a voting-paper into the box; otherwise we do not know or hardly know that our life is of national importance; but the Jew could never forget that. His God had promised him, “No people shall withstand thee, till thou destroyest it,“ but immediately added, “All the commandments which I command thee, thou shalt keep!“ God was thus always present to consciousness. Practically everything but material possession was forbidden to the Jew; his mind therefore was directed to property alone; and it was to God that he had to look for the possession of that property. — The man who has never brought home to himself the conditions here hastily sketched will have difficulty in realising what unanticipated vividness the conception of God acquired under these conditions. The Jew could not indeed represent Jehovah by images; but His working, His daily intervention in the destiny of the world was, so to speak, a matter of experience; the whole nation indeed lived upon it; to meditate upon it was their one intellectual occupation (if not in the Diaspora, at least in Palestine).

It was in these surroundings that Christ grew up; beyond them He

never stepped. Thanks to this peculiar historical sense of the Jews He awoke to consciousness as far as possible from the all-embracing Aryan cult of nature and its confession *tat-tvam-asi* (that thou art also), in the focus of real anthropomorphism, where all creation was but for man, and all men but for this one chosen people, that is, He awoke in the direct presence of God and Divine Providence. He found here what He would have found nowhere else in the world: a complete scaffolding ready for Him, within which His entirely new conception of God and of religion could be built up. After Jesus had lived, nothing remained of the genuinely Jewish

laws, obedience to which is divine command! (See Dr. Emanuel Schreiber: *Der Talmud vom Standpunkte des modernen Judentums.*)

234 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

idea; now that the temple was built the scaffolding could be removed. But it had served its purpose, and the building would have been unthinkable without it. The God to whom we pray to give us our daily bread could only be thought of where a God had promised to man the things of this world; men could only pray for forgiveness of sins to Him who had issued definite commandments. — I almost fear, however, that if I here enter into details I may be misunderstood; it is enough if I have succeeded in giving a general conception of the very peculiar atmosphere of Judea, for that will enable us to discern that this most ideal religion would not possess the same life-power if it had not been built upon the most real, the most materialistic — yes, assuredly the most materialistic — religion in the world. It is this and not its supposed higher religiosity that has made Judaism a religious power of world-wide importance.

The matter becomes still clearer whenever we consider the influence of this historical faith upon the fate of Christ.

The most powerful personality can be influential only when it is understood. This understanding may be very incomplete, it may indeed frequently be direct misunderstanding, but some community of feeling and thought must form the link of connection between the lonely genius and the masses. The thousands that listened to the Sermon on the Mount certainly did not understand Christ; how could that have been possible? They were a poor people, downtrodden and oppressed by continual war and discord, systematically stupefied by their priests; but the power of his word awakened in the heart of the more gifted among them an echo which it would have been impossible to awaken in any other part of the world: was this to be the Messiah, the promised redeemer from their misery and wretchedness? What immeasurable power lay in the possibility of such

235 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

a conception! At once the homely, fleeting present was linked to the remotest past and the most indubitable future, and thereby the present received everlasting importance. It does not matter that the Messiah, whom the Jews expected, had not the character which we Indo-Europeans attach to this conception; * the idea

* Even so orthodox an investigator as Stanton admits that the Jewish idea of the Messiah was altogether political (see *The Jewish and the Christian Messiah*, 1886, pp. 122 f., 128, &c.). It is well known that theology has occupied itself much of late years with the history of the conceptions of the Messiah. The principal result of the investigation for us laymen is the proof that the Christians, misled by what were specifically Galilean and Samaritan heterodoxies, supplanted the Jewish conception of the coming of the Messiah by a view which the Jews never really held. The Jews who were learned in Scripture were always indignant at the strained interpretations of the Old Prophets; now even the Christians admit that the Prophets before the exile (and these are the greatest) knew nothing of the expectation of a Messiah (see, for example, the latest summary account, that of Paul Volz: *Die vorexilische Jahveprophetie und der Messias*, 1897); the Old Testament does not even know the word, and one of the most important theologians of our time, [Paul de Lagarde](#) (*Deutsche Schriften*, p. 53), calls attention to the fact that the expression *māschīach* is not of Hebrew origin at all, but was borrowed at a late time from Assyria or Babylon. It is particularly noteworthy also that this expectation of the Messiah wherever it existed was constantly taking different forms; in one case a second King David was to come, in another the idea was one only of Jewish world-empire in general, then again it is God himself with his heavenly judgment “who will put an end at once to those who have hitherto held sway and give the people of Israel power for ever, an all-embracing empire, in which the just of former times who rise again shall take part, while the rebellious are condemned to everlasting shame“ (cf. Karl Müller: *Kirchengeschichte*, i. 55); other Jews again dispute whether the Messiah will be a Ben-David or a Ben-Joseph; many believe there would be two of them, others are of the opinion that he would be born in the Roman Diaspora; but nowhere and at no time do we find the idea of a suffering Messiah, who by his death redeems us (see Stanton, pp. 122-124). The best, the most cultured and pious Jews have never entertained such apocalyptic delusions. In the Talmud (*Sabbath*, Part 6) we read, “Between the present time and the Messianic there is no difference except that the pressure, under which Israel pines till then, will cease.“ (Contrast with this the frightful confusion and complete puerility of the Messianic conceptions in the *Sanhedrin* of the Babylonian Talmud.) I think that with these remarks I have touched the root of the matter: in the case of an absolutely historical religion, like the Jewish, the sure possession of the future is just as imperative a necessity as the sure possession of the

236 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

was there, the belief founded on history that at any moment a saviour could and must appear from Heaven. In no other part of the earth could a single man have this conception, full of misunderstandings as it was, of

the world-wide importance of Christ. The Saviour would have remained a man among men. And in so far I think that the thousands who soon afterwards cried, "Crucify him, crucify him," showed just as much understanding as those who had piously listened to the Sermon on the Mount. Pilate, at other times a hard, cruel judge, could find no fault in Christ; * in Hellas and in Rome He would have been honoured as a holy man. But the Jew lived only in history, to him the "heathen" idea of morality and sanctity was strange, since he knew only a "law," and moreover obeyed this law for quite practical reasons, namely, to stay the wrath of God and to make sure of his future, and so he judged a phenomenon like the revelation of Christ from a purely historical standpoint, and became justly filled with fury, when the promised kingdom, to win which he had suffered and endured for centuries — for the sake of possessing which he had separated himself from all people upon the earth, and had become hated and despised of all — when this kingdom, in which he hoped to see all nations in fetters and all princes upon their knees "licking the dust," was all at once transformed from an earthly kingdom into one "not of this world." Jehovah had often promised his people that he would "not betray" them; but to the Jews this was bound to appear be-

past; from the earliest times we see this thought of the future inspiring the Jews and it still inspires them; this unimaginative people gave its expectations various forms, according to the varying influences of surroundings, essential only is the firm ineradicable conviction that the Jews should one day rule the world. This is in fact an element of their character, the visible bodying-forth of their innermost nature. It is their substitute for mythology.

* Tertullian makes the charmingly simple remark: "Pilate was already at heart a Christian" (*Apologeticus* xxi.).

237 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

trayal. They executed not one only but many, because they were held to be, or gave themselves out to be, the promised Messiah. And rightly too, for the belief in the future was just as much a pillar of the popular idea as the belief in the past. And now, to crown all, this Galilean heterodoxy! To plant the flag of idealism on this ancient consecrated seat of the most obstinate materialism! To transform, as if by magic, the God of vengeance and of war into a God of love and peace! To teach the stormy will, that stretched out both hands for all the gold of the world, that it should throw away what it possessed and seek the hidden treasure in its own heart!... The Jewish Sanhedrim had seen farther than Pilate (and than many thousands of Christian theologians). Not, indeed, with full consciousness, but with that unerring instinct, which pure race gives, it seized Him who undermined the historical basis of Jewish life, by

teaching, "Take no heed for the morrow," who in each one of His words and deeds transformed Judaism into its antithesis, and did not release Him till He had breathed His last. And thus only, by death, was destiny fulfilled and the example given. No new faith could be established by doctrines; there was at that time no lack of noble and wise teachers of ethics, but none has had any power over men; a life had to be lived and this life had immediately to receive its place in the great enduring history of the world as a fact of universal moment. Only Jewish surroundings suited these conditions. And just as the life of Christ could only be lived by the help of Judaism, although it was its negation, so too the young Christian Church developed a series of ancient Aryan conceptions — of sin, redemption, rebirth, grace, &c. (things till then and afterwards quite unknown to the Jews) — and gave them a clear and visible form, by introducing them into the Jewish historical scheme. * No one will ever succeed

* The myth of the fall of man stands indeed at the beginning of the first book of *Moses*, but is clearly borrowed, since the Jews never

238 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

in quite freeing the revelation of Christ from this Jewish groundwork; it was tried in the first centuries of the Christian era, but without success, since the thousand features in which the personality had revealed its individuality became thereby blurred, and nothing but an abstraction remained behind. *

WILL IN THE SEMITIC RACE

Still profounder is the influence of the second trait of character.

We have seen that what I call the historical instinct of the Jews rests above all upon the possession of an abnormally developed will. The will in the case of the Jew attains such superiority that it enthralled and tyrannises over all other faculties. And so it is that we find on the one hand extraordinary achievements, which would be almost impossible for other men, and on the other, peculiar limitations. However that may be, it is certain that we see this very predominance of will in Christ at all times: frequently un-Jewish in His individual utterances, quite Jewish, in so far as the will is almost solely emphasised. This feature is like a branching of veins that goes deep and spreads far: we find it in every word, in every

understood it and did not employ it in their system. He who does not transgress the law is, in their eyes, free from sin. Just as little has their expectation of a Messiah to do with our conception of redemption. See, further, [chap. v.](#) and vol ii [chap. vii.](#)

* That is the tendency of gnosticism as a whole; this movement finds its most carefully pondered and noblest expression, as far as I can venture to express an opinion, in Marcion (middle of the second century), who was more filled with the absolutely new in the Christian ideal than perhaps any religious teacher since his time; but in just such a case one sees how fatal it is to ignore historical data. (See any Church History. On the other hand I must warn the student that the three lines which Professor Ranke devotes to this really great man (*Weltgeschichte*, ii. 171) contain not a single word of what should have been said on this point.) [For a knowledge of Marcion and gnosticism as a whole Mead's *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten* may be recommended.]

239 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

single conception. By a comparison I hope to make my meaning clear and comprehensible.

Consider the Hellenic conception of the Divine and the Human and of their relation to one another. Some Gods fight for Troy, others for the Achaeans; while I propitiate one part of the Divine I estrange the other; life is a battle, a game, the noblest may fall, the most miserable gain the victory; morality is in a way a personal affair, man is lord of his own heart but not of his destiny; there is no Providence that protects, punishes and rewards. The Gods themselves are in fact not free; Zeus himself must yield to fate. Herodotus says "Even a God cannot escape what is destined for him." A nation which produces the *Iliad* will in a later age produce great investigators of nature and great thinkers. For he who looks at nature with open eyes which are not blinded by selfishness will discover everywhere in it the rule of law; the presence of law in the moral sphere is fate for the artist — predestination for the philosopher. For the faithful observer of nature the idea of arbitrariness is, to begin with, simply impossible; do what he will, he cannot make up his mind to impute it even to a God. This philosophical view has been beautifully expressed by Here in Goethe's fragment, *Achilleis*:

Willkür bleibet ewig verhasst den Göttern und Menschen,
Wenn sie in Thaten sich zeigt, auch nur in Worten sich kundgiebt.
Denn so hoch wir auch stehen, so ist der ewigen Götter
Ewigste Themis * allein, und diese muss dauern und walten. †

* Themis has degenerated in modern times to an allegory of impartial jurisdiction, that is, of an altogether arbitrary agreement, and she is appropriately represented with veiled eyes; while mythology lived, she represented the rule of law in all nature, and the old artists gave her particularly large, wide-open eyes.

† Arbitrariness remains ever hateful to gods and men, when it reveals itself in deeds or even in words only. For however high we may stand, the eternal Themis of the eternal Gods alone is, and she must lastingly hold sway.

On the other hand, the Jewish Jehovah can be described as the incarnation of arbitrariness. Certainly this divine conception appears to us in the *Psalms* and in *Isaiah* in altogether sublime form; it is also — for the chosen people — a source of high and serious morality. But what Jehovah is, He is, because He wills to be so; He stands above all nature, above every law, the absolute, unlimited autocrat. If it pleases Him to choose out from mankind a small people and to show His favour to it alone, He does so; if He wishes to vex it, He sends it into slavery; if he, on the other hand, wishes to give it houses which it has not built and vineyards which it has not planted, He does so and destroys the innocent possessors; there is no Themis. So too the divine legislation. Beside moral commands which breathe to some extent high morality and humanity, there stand commands which are directly immoral and inhuman; * others again determine most trivial points: what one may eat and may not eat, how one shall wash, &c., in short, everywhere absolute arbitrariness. He who sees deeper will not fail to note in this the relationship between the old Semitic idolatry and the belief in Jehovah. Considered from the Indo-European standpoint, Jehovah would in reality be called rather an idealised idol, or, if we prefer it, an anti-idol, than a god. And yet this conception of God contains something which could not, any more than arbitrariness, be derived from observation of nature, namely, the idea of a Providence. According to Renan, “the exaggerated belief in a special Providence is the basis of the whole Jewish religion.” † Moreover, with

* Besides the countless raids involving wholesale slaughter divinely commanded, in which “the heads of the children” are to be “dashed against the stones,” note the cases where command is given to attack with felonious intent “the brother, companion, and neighbour” (*Exodus xxxii. 27*), and the disgusting commands such as in *Ezekiel v. 12-15*.

† *Histoire du peuple d'Israël*, ii. p. 3.

this freedom of God another freedom is closely connected, that of the human will. The *liberum arbitrium* is decidedly a Semitic conception and in its full development a specifically Jewish one; it is inseparably bound up with the particular idea of God. * Freedom of will implies nothing less than “ever repeated acts of creation”; carefully considered it will be clear that this supposition (as soon as it has to do with the world of phenomena) contradicts not merely all physical science, but also all

metaphysics, and means a negation of every transcendent religion. Here cognition and will stand in strict opposition. Now wherever we find limitations of this idea of freedom — in Augustine, Luther, Voltaire, Kant, Goethe — we can be sure that an Indo-European reaction against the Semitic spirit is taking place. So, for example, when Calderon in the *Great Zenobia* lets the wild autocratic Aurelian mock him who called the will free.

For — though one must certainly be on one's guard against misusing such formulary simplifications — one can still make the assertion that the idea of necessity is in all Indo-European races particularly strongly marked, and is met with again and again in the most different spheres; it points to high power of cognition free from passion; on the other hand, the idea of arbitrariness, that is, of an

* We can trace in every history of Judaism with what very logical fanaticism the Rabbis still champion the unconditioned and not merely metaphysically meant freedom of will. Diderot says: "*Les Juifs sont si jaloux de cette liberté d'indifférence, qu'ils s'imaginent qu'il est impossible de penser sur cette matière autrement qu'eux.*" And how closely this idea is connected with the freedom of God and with Providence becomes clear from the commotion which arose when Maimonides wished to limit divine Providence to mankind and maintained that every leaf was not moved by it nor every worm created by its will. — Of the so-called "fundamental doctrines" of the famous Talmudist Rabbi Akiba the two first are as follow: (1) Everything is supervised by the Providence of God; (2) Freedom of will is stipulated (Hirsch Graetz: *Gnosticismus und Judentum*, 1846, p. 91).

242 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

unlimited sway of will, is specifically characteristic of the Jew; he reveals an intelligence which in comparison with his will-power is very limited. It is not a question here of abstract generalisations, but of actual characteristics, which we can still daily observe; in the one case intellect is predominant, in the other the will.

Let me give a tangible example from the present. I knew a Jewish scholar, who, as the competition in his branch prevented him from earning much money, became a manufacturer of soap, and that, too, with great success; but when at a later time foreign competition once more took the ground from beneath his feet, all at once, though ripe in years, he became dramatic poet and Man of Letters and made a fortune at it. There was no question of universal genius in his case; he was of moderate intellectual abilities and devoid of all originality; but with this intellect the will achieved whatever it wished.

The abnormally developed will of the Semites can lead to two extremes: either to rigidity, as in the case of Mohammed, where the idea of the unlimited divine caprice is predominant; or, as is the case with the

Jews, to phenomenal elasticity, which is produced by the conception of their own human arbitrariness. To the Indo-European both paths are closed. In nature he observes everywhere the rule of law, and of himself he knows that he can only achieve his highest when he obeys inner need. Of course his will, too, can achieve the heroic, but only when his cognition has grasped some idea — religious, artistic, philosophic, or one which aims at conquest, command, enrichment, perhaps crime; at any rate, in his case the will obeys, it does not command. Therefore it is that a moderately gifted Indo-European is so peculiarly characterless in comparison with the most poorly gifted Jew. Of ourselves, we should certainly

243 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

never have arrived at the conception of a free almighty God and of what may be called an “arbitrary Providence,” a Providence, that is, which can decree something in one way, and then in answer to prayers or from other motives decide in a contrary direction. * We do not find that, outside of Judaism, man ever came to the conception of a quite intimate and continual personal relation between God and mankind — to the conception of a God who would almost seem to be there only for the sake of man. In truth the old Indo-Aryan Gods are benevolent, friendly, we might almost say genial powers; man is their child, not their slave; he approaches them without fear; when sacrificing he “grasps the right hand of God”; † the want of humility in presence of God has indeed filled many a one with horror: yet as we have seen nowhere do we find the conception of capricious autocracy. And with this goes hand in hand remarkable infidelity; now this, now that God is worshipped, or, if the Divine is viewed as a unified principle, then the one school has this idea of it, the other that (I remind the reader of the six great philosophically religious systems of India, all six of which passed as orthodox); the brain in fact works irresistibly on, producing new images and new shapes, the Infinite is its home, freedom its element and creative power its joy. Just consider the beginning of the following hymn from the *Rigveda* (6, 9):

My ear is opened and my eye alert,
The light awakes within my heart!
My spirit flies to search in distant realms:
What shall I say? of what shall my verse sing?

* In the case of the Indo-Europeans the Gods are never “creators of the world”; where the Divine is viewed as creator, as in the case of the Brahman of the Indians, that refers to a freely metaphysical cognition, not to an historical and mechanical process, as in *Genesis* i.; in other cases the Gods are viewed as originating “on this side of creation,” their birth and death are spoken of.

† Oldenberg: *Die Religion des Veda*, p. 310.

and compare it with the first verses of any Psalm, for instance, the 76th:

In Judah is God known: His name is great in Israel.

In Salem also is His tabernacle, and His dwelling-place in Sion.

We see what an important element of faith the will is. While the Aryan, rich in cognition, “flies to search in distant realms,” the strong-willed Jew makes God pitch His tent once for all in his own midst. The power of his will to live has not only forged for the Jew an anchor of faith, which holds him fast to the ground of historical tradition, but it has also inspired him with unshakable confidence in a personal, directly present God, who is almighty to give and to destroy; and it has brought him, the man, into a moral relation to this God, in that God in His all-powerfulness issued commands, which man is free to follow or neglect. *

THE PROPHET

There is another matter which must not be omitted in this connection: the one-sided predominance of the will makes the chronicles of the Jewish people in general

* If this were the place for it, I should gladly prove in greater detail that this Jewish conception of the almighty God who rules as free Providence inevitably determines the historical view of this God and that every genuine Aryan mind revolts again and again against this. This has caused, for instance, the whole tragic mental life of Peter Abelard: in spite of the most intense longing for orthodoxy, he cannot adapt his spirit to the religious materialism of the Jews. Ever and anon, for example, he comes to the conclusion that God does what he does of necessity (and here he could refer for support to the earlier writings of Augustine, especially his *De libero arbitrio*); this is intellectual anti-Semitism in the highest degree! He denies also every action, every motion in the case of God; the working of God is for him the coming to pass of an everlasting determination of will: “with God there is no sequence of time.” (See A. Hausrath: *Peter Abelard*, p. 201 f.) With this Providence disappears. — However, what is the use of seeking for learned proofs? The noble Don

dreary and ugly; and yet in this atmosphere there grew up a series of important men, whose peculiar greatness makes it impossible to compare them with other intellectual heroes. In the introduction to this division I have already spoken of those “disavowers“ of the Jewish character, who themselves remained the while such out and out Jews, from the crown of their heads to the soles of their feet, that they

contributed more than anything else to the growth of the most rigid Hebraism; in [chap. v.](#) I shall return to them; only so much must here be said: these men, in grasping religious materialism by its most abstract side, raised it morally to a very great height; their work has paved the way historically in essential points for Christ's view of the relation between God and man. Moreover, an important feature, which is essentially rooted in Judaism, shows itself most clearly in them: the historical religion of this people lays emphasis not upon the individual, but upon the whole nation; the individual can benefit or injure the whole community, but otherwise he is of little moment; from this resulted of necessity a markedly socialistic feature which the Prophets often powerfully express. The individual who attains to prosperity and wealth, while his brothers starve, falls under the ban of God. While Christ in one way represents exactly the opposite principle, namely, that of extreme individualism, the redeeming of the individual by regeneration, His life and His teaching, on the other hand, point unmistakably to a condition of things which can only be realised by having all things common. The communism of "one flock and one shepherd" is certainly different from the entirely politically coloured, theocratic communism of the Prophets;

Quixote explains with pathetic simplicity to his faithful Sancho, "for God there is no past and no future, all is present" (Book IX. chap. viii.): hereby the immortal Cervantes expresses briefly and correctly the unhistorical standpoint of all non-Semites.

246 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

but here again the basis is solely and characteristically Jewish.

CHRIST A JEW

Whatever one may be inclined to think of these various Jewish conceptions, no one will deny their greatness, or their capacity to exercise an almost inestimable influence upon the moulding of the life of mankind. Nor will any one deny that the belief in divine almightiness, in divine Providence and in the freedom of the human will, * as well as the almost exclusive emphasising of the moral nature of men and their equality before God ("the last shall be first") are essential elements of the personality of Christ. Far more than the fact that He starts from the Prophets, far more than His respect for Jewish legal enactments, do these fundamental views show us that Christ belonged morally to the Jews. Indeed, when we penetrate farther to that central point in Christ's teaching, to that "conversion of the will," then we must recognise — as I have already hinted at the beginning of this chapter in the comparison

with Buddha — that here is something Jewish in contrast to the Aryan negation of the will. The latter is a fruit of perception, of too great perception; Christ, on the other hand, addresses Himself to men, in whom the will — not the thought, is supreme; what He sees around Him is the insatiable, ever-covetous Jewish will that is always stretching out both hands; He recognises the might of this will and commands it — not to be silent, but to take a new direction. Here we must say, Christ is a Jew, and He can only be understood when we have learned to grasp critically these peculiarly Jewish views which He found and made His own.

* The latter, however, as it appears, with important limitations, since the Aryan idea of grace more than once clearly appears in Christ's words.

247 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

I said just now that Christ belonged “morally“ to the Jews. This somewhat ambiguous word “moral“ must here be taken in a narrow sense. For it is just in the moral application of these conceptions of God's almightiness and providence, of the direct relations between man and God following therefrom, and of the employment of the free human will, that the Saviour departed *in toto* from the doctrines of Judaism; that is clear to every one, and I have, moreover, sought to emphasise it in what has gone before; but the conceptions themselves, the frame into which the moral personality fitted itself, and out of which it cannot be moved, the unquestioning acceptance of these premisses regarding God and man, which by no means belong to the human mind as a matter of course but are, on the contrary, the absolutely individual achievement of a definite people in the course of an historical development which lasted for centuries: this is the Jewish element in Christ. In the chapters on [Hellenic Art](#) and [Roman Law](#) I have already called attention to the power of ideas; here again we have a brilliant example of it. Whoever lived in the Jewish intellectual world was bound to come under the influence of Jewish ideas. And though He brought to the world an entirely new message, though His life was like the dawn of a new morn, though His personality was so divinely great that it revealed to us a power in the human breast, capable — if it ever should be fully realised — of completely changing humanity: yet the personality, the life and the message were none the less chained to the fundamental ideas of Judaism; only in these could they reveal, exercise and proclaim themselves.

248 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

I hope I have attained my purpose. Proceeding from the consideration of the personality in its individual, autonomous import, I have gradually widened the circle, to reveal the threads of life which connect it with its surroundings. In this a certain amplification was unavoidable; the sole subject of this book, the foundations of the nineteenth century, I have nevertheless not lost sight of for a single moment. For how could I, an individual, venture to approach that age either as chronicler or encyclopaedist? May the Muses keep me from such madness! On the other hand, I shall attempt to trace as far as possible the leading ideas, the moulding thoughts of our age; but these ideas do not fall from Heaven, they link on to the past; new wine is very often indeed poured into old bottles, and very old, sour wine, which nobody would taste, if he knew its origin, into quite new ones; and as a matter of fact the curse of confusion weighs heavily upon a culture born so late as ours, especially in an age of breathless haste, where men have to learn too much to be able to think much. If we wish to become clear about ourselves, we must, above all, be quite clear about the fundamental thoughts and conceptions which we have inherited from our ancestors. I hope I have brought it home to the reader how very complex is the Hellenic legacy, how peculiarly contradictory the Roman, but at the same time how profoundly they affect our life and thought to-day. Now we have seen that even the advent of Christ, on the threshold between the old and the new age, does not present itself to our distant eye in so simple a form that we can easily free it from the labyrinth of prejudices, falsehoods and errors. And yet nothing is more necessary than to see this revelation of Christ clearly in the light of truth. For —

249 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

however unworthy we may show ourselves of this — our whole culture, thank God, still stands under the sign of the Cross upon Golgotha. We do see this Cross; but who sees the Crucified One? Yet He, and He alone is the living well of all Christianity, of the intolerantly dogmatic as well as of that which gives itself out to be quite unbelieving. In later ages it will be an eloquent testimony to the childishness of our judgment that we have ever doubted it, and that the nineteenth century has reared itself on books, which demonstrated that Christianity originated by chance, at haphazard, as a “mythological paroxysm,” as a “dialectical antithesis,” as a necessary result of Judaism, and I know not what else. The importance of genius cannot be reckoned high enough: who ventures to estimate the

influence of Homer upon the mind of man? But Christ was still greater. And like the everlasting "hearth-fire" of the Aryans, so the torch of truth which He kindled for us can never be extinguished; though at times a shadow of night may wrap manhood far and wide in the folds of darkness, yet all that is wanted is one single glowing heart, in order that thousands and millions may once more blaze under the bright light of day.... Here, however, we can and must ask with Christ, "But if the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness?" Even the origin of the Christian Church leads us into the profoundest gloom, and its further history gives us rather the impression of a groping about in darkness than of clear seeing in the sunlight. How then shall we be able to distinguish what in so-called Christianity is spirit of Christ's spirit, and what, on the other hand, is imported from Hellenic, Jewish, Roman and Egyptian sources, if we have never come to see this revelation of Christ in its sublime simplicity? How shall we speak about what is Christian in our present confessions, in our literatures and arts, in our philosophy

250 THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

and politics, in our social institutions and ideals, how shall we separate what is Christian from what is anti-Christian, and be able with certainty to decide, what in the movements of the nineteenth century can be traced back to Christ and what not, or in how far it is Christian, whether merely in the form or also in the content, or perhaps in content, *i.e.*, in its general tendency, but not with regard to the characteristically Jewish form — how shall we, above all, be able to sift and separate from the "bread of life" this specifically Jewish element which is so threateningly perilous to our spirit, if the revelation of Christ does not stand conspicuously before our eyes in its general outlines, and if we are not able clearly to distinguish in this image the purely personal from its historical conditions. This is certainly a most important and indispensable foundation for the formation of our judgments and appreciations.

To pave, to some modest degree, the way for that result has been the purpose of this chapter.

251

DIVISION II

THE HEIRS

Der hohe Sinn, das Rühmliche
Von dem Gerühmten rein zu unterscheiden
GOETHE.

INTRODUCTORY

WHO were the heirs of antiquity? This question is at least as important as that concerning the legacy itself and, if possible, more difficult to answer. For it introduces us to the study of race problems, which science during the last quarter of a century, so far from solving, has rather revealed in all their intricacy. And yet all true comprehension of the nineteenth century depends on the clear answering of this question. Here, then, we must be at once daring and cautious if we are to remember the warning of the preface, and steer safely between the Scylla of a science almost unattainable, and so far most problematic in its results, and the Charybdis of unstable and baseless generalisations. Necessity compels us to make the bold attempt.

THE CHAOS

Rome had transferred the centre of gravity of civilisation to the West. This proved to be one of those unconsciously

252 THE HEIRS

accomplished acts of world-wide importance which no power can undo. The West of Europe, remote from Asia, was to be the focus of all further civilisation and culture. But that happened only gradually. At first it was politics alone which turned ever more and more towards the West and North; intellectually Rome itself long remained very dependent upon the former centre of culture in the East. In the first centuries of our era, with the exception of Rome itself, only what lies South and East of it is intellectually of any importance; Alexandria, Ephesus, Antioch, in fact all Syria, then Greece with Byzantium, as well as Carthage and the other towns of ancient Africa, are the districts where the legacy was taken up and long administered, and the inhabitants of these places then handed it on to later times and other races. And these very countries were at that time, like Rome itself, no longer inhabited by a definite people, but by an

inextricable confusion of the most different races and peoples. It was a chaos. And this chaos did not by any means disappear at a later time. In many places this chaotic element was pressed back by the advance of pure races, in others it fell out of the list of those that count through its own weakness and want of character, yet for all that it has beyond doubt maintained itself in the South and East; moreover fresh influx of blood has frequently given it new strength. That is a first point of far-reaching importance. Consider, for example, that all the foundations for the structure of historical Christianity were laid and built up by this mongrel population! With the exception of some Greeks, all of whom, however, with Origenes at their head, disseminated highly unorthodox, directly anti-Jewish doctrines which had no success, * one can scarcely even conjecture to what nationality any of the Church

* Origenes, for example, was confessedly a pessimist (in the metaphysical sense of the word), by which in itself he proved his Indo-European descent; he saw suffering everywhere in the world and con-

253 THE HEIRS

fathers actually belonged. The same may be said of the *corpus juris*; here, too, it was the Chaos (according to Hellenic ideas the mother of Erebus and Nox, of darkness and night), to which the task fell of perfecting and transforming the living work of a living people to an international dogma. Under the same influence, art ever more and more lost its personal, freely creative power and became transformed into an hieratically formulary exercise, while the lofty, philosophical speculation of the Hellenes was displaced by its caricature, the cabalistic phantoms of demiurges, angels and daemons — conceptions which could not be designated by a higher name than “airy materialism.” * We must therefore, to begin with, turn our attention to this Chaos of Peoples.

THE JEWS

Out of the midst of the chaos towers, like a sharply defined rock amid the formless ocean, one single people, a numerically insignificant people — the Jews. This one race has established as its guiding principle the purity of the blood; it alone possesses, therefore, physiognomy and character. If we contemplate the southern and eastern centres of culture in the world-empire in its down-

cluded from that that its chief end was not the enjoyment of a god-given happiness but the prevention of an evil (compare Christ's chief doctrine, that of the “conversion of will,” cf. [p. 188](#)). Augustine, the African mestizo, found it easy to refute him; he

appealed to the first chapter of the first book of the Jewish *Thora*, to prove beyond dispute that everything is good and that “the world exists for no other reason than because it has been pleasing to a good God to create the absolutely good.” (See the very instructive discussion in the *De civitate Dei*, xi. 23.) Augustine triumphantly introduces another argument in this place: if Origenes were right, then the most sinful creatures would have the heaviest bodies and devils would be visible, but devils have airy, invisible shapes, and so, &c. Thus thoughts that arose in the Chaos prevailed over metaphysical religion. (The same arguments are to be found, word for word, in the *Führer der Irrenden* of the Jew Maimuni.)

* Bürger calls it *Luftiges Gesindel* (airy rabble) in his *Lenore*.

254 THE HEIRS

fall, and let no sympathies or antipathies pervert our judgment, we must confess that the Jews were at that time the only people deserving respect. We may well apply to them the words of Goethe, “the faith broad, narrow the thought.” In comparison with Rome and still more so with Hellas their intellectual horizon appears so narrow, their mental capacities so limited, that we seem to have before us an entirely new type of being but the narrowness and want of originality in thought are fully counterbalanced by the power of faith, a faith which might be very simply defined as “faith in self.” And since this faith in self included faith in a higher being, it did not lack ethical significance. However poor the Jewish “law” may appear, when compared with the religious creations of the various Indo-European peoples, it possessed a unique advantage in the fallen Roman Empire of that time: it was, in fact, a law; a law which men humbly obeyed, and this very obedience was bound to be of great ethical import in a world of such lawlessness. Here, as everywhere, we shall find that the influence of the Jews — for good and for evil — lies in their character, not in their intellectual achievements. * Certain historians of the nineteenth century, even men so intellectually pre-eminent as Count Gobineau, have supported the view that Judaism has always had merely a disintegrating influence upon all peoples. I cannot share this conviction. In truth, where the Jews become very numerous in a strange land, they may make it their object to fulfil the promises of their Prophets and with the best will and conscience to “consume the strange peoples”; did they not say of themselves, even in the lifetime of Moses, that they were “like locusts”? However, we must distinguish between Judaism and the Jews and admit that Judaism as an idea is one of the most conservative ideas in the world. The idea of physical race-unity and race-purity, which is the very

* See [p. 238](#) f.

255 THE HEIRS

essence of Judaism, signifies the recognition of a fundamental physiological fact of life; wherever we observe life, from the hyphomycetes to the noble horse, we see the importance of "race"; Judaism made this law of nature sacred. And this is the reason why it triumphantly prevailed at that critical moment in the history of the world, when a rich legacy was waiting in vain for worthy heirs. It did not further, but rather put a stop to, universal disintegration. The Jewish dogma was like a sharp acid which is poured into a liquid which is being decomposed in order to clear it and keep it from further decomposition. Though this acid may not be to the taste of every one, yet it has played so decisive a part in the history of the epoch of culture to which we belong that we ought to be grateful to the giver: instead of being indignant about it, we shall do better to inform ourselves thoroughly concerning the significance of this "entrance of the Jews into the history of the West," an event which in any case exercised inestimable influence upon our whole culture, and which has not yet reached its full growth.

Another word of explanation. I am speaking of Jews, not of Semites in general; not because I fail to recognise the part played by the latter in the history of the world, but because my task is limited both in respect of time and space. Indeed for many centuries other branches of the Semitic race had founded powerful kingdoms on the South and East coasts of the Mediterranean and had established commercial depots as far as the coasts of the Atlantic Ocean; doubtless they had also been stimulative in other ways, and had spread knowledge and accomplished merits of many kinds; but nowhere had there been a close intellectual connection between them and the other inhabitants of future Europe. The Jews first brought this about, not by the millions of Jews who lived in the Diaspora, but first and foremost by the Christian idea. It was only when the Jews crucified Christ that they

256 THE HEIRS

unconsciously broke the spell which had hitherto isolated them in the pride of ignorance. — At a later time, indeed, a Semitic flood swept once more across the European, Asiatic and African world, a flood such as, but for the destruction of Carthage by Rome, would have swept over Europe a thousand years before, with results which would have been decisive and permanent. * But here, too, the Semitic idea — "faith wide, narrow the thought" — proved itself more powerful than its bearers; the Arabs were gradually thrown back and, in contrast to the Jews, not one of them remained on European soil; but where their abstract idolatry † had obtained a foothold all possibility of a culture disappeared; the

Semitic dogma of materialism, which in this case and in contrast to Christianity had kept itself free of all Aryan admixtures, deprived noble human races of all soul, and excluded them for ever from the “race that strives to reach the light.” — Of the Semites only the Jews, as we see, have positively furthered our culture and also shared, as far as their extremely assimilative nature permitted them, in the legacy of antiquity.

THE TEUTONIC RACES

The entrance of the Teutonic races into the history of the world forms the counterpart to the spread of this diminutive and yet so influential people. There, too, we see what pure race signifies, at the same time, however, what variety of races is — that great natural principle of many-sidedness, and of dissimilarity of mental gifts, which shallow, venal, ignorant babblers of the present day would fain deny, slavish souls sprung from the chaos of peoples, who feel at ease only in a confused atmosphere of characterlessness and absence of individuality. To this day these two powers — Jews and Teutonic

* See [p. 115](#)

† See [p. 240.](#)

257 THE HEIRS

racess — stand, wherever the recent spread of the Chaos has not blurred their features, now as friendly, now as hostile, but always as alien forces face to face.

In this book I understand by “Teutonic peoples“ the different North-European races, which appear in history as Celts, Teutons (Germanen) and Slavs, and from whom — mostly by indeterminable mingling — the peoples of modern Europe are descended. It is certain that they belonged originally to a single family, as I shall prove in the [sixth chapter](#); but the Teuton in the narrower Tacitean sense of the word has proved himself so intellectually, morally and physically pre-eminent among his kinsmen, that we are entitled to make his name summarily represent the whole family. The Teuton is the soul of our culture. Europe of to-day, with its many branches over the whole world, represents the chequered result of an infinitely manifold mingling of races: what binds us all together and makes an organic unity of us is “Teutonic“ blood. If we look around, we see that the importance of each nation as a living power to-day is dependent upon the proportion of genuinely Teutonic blood in its population. Only Teutons sit on the thrones of Europe. — What preceded in the history of the world we may regard as Prolegomena; true history,

the history which still controls the rhythm of our hearts and circulates in our veins, inspiring us to new hope and new creation, begins at the moment when the Teuton with his masterful hand lays his grip upon the legacy of antiquity.

258

FOURTH CHAPTER

THE CHAOS

So viel ist wohl mit Wahrscheinlichkeit zu urteilen: dass die Vermischung der Stämme, welche nach und nach die Charaktere auslöscht, dem Menschengeschlecht, alles vorgeblichen Philanthropismus ungeachtet, nicht zuträglich sei.

IMMANUEL KANT.

SCIENTIFIC CONFUSION

THE remarks which I made in the [introduction to the second division](#) will suffice as a general preface to this chapter on the chaos of peoples in the dying Roman Empire; they explain to what time and what countries I refer in speaking of the “chaos of peoples.” Here, as elsewhere, I presuppose historical knowledge, at least in general outline, and as I should not like to write a single line in this whole book which did not originate from the need of comprehending and of judging the nineteenth century better, I think I should use the subject before us especially to discuss and answer the important question: Is nation, is race a mere word? Is it the case, as the ethnographer Ratzel asserts, that the fusion of all mankind should be kept before us as our “aim and duty, hope and wish”? Or do we not rather deduce from the example of Hellas and Rome, on the one hand, and of the pseudo-Roman empire on the other, as well as from many other examples in history, that man can only attain his zenith within those limits in which sharply defined, individualistic national types are produced? Is the present condition of things in

259 THE CHAOS

Europe with its many fully formed idioms, each with its own peculiar poetry and literature, each the expression of a definite, characteristic national soul — is this state of things really a retrograde step in

comparison with the time, when Latin and Greek, as a kind of twin Volapuk, formed a bond of union between all those Roman subjects who had no fatherland to call their own? Is community of blood nothing? Can community of memory and of faith be replaced by abstract ideals? Above all, is the question one to be settled by each as he pleases, is there no clearly distinguishable natural law, according to which we must fit our judgment? Do not the biological sciences teach us that in the whole animal and vegetable kingdoms pre-eminently noble races — that is, races endowed with exceptional strength and vitality — are produced only under definite conditions, which restrict the begetting of new individuals? Is it not possible, in view of all these human and non-human phenomena, to find a clear answer to the question, What is race? And shall we not be able, from the consciousness of what race is, to say at once what the absence of definite races must mean for history? When we look at those direct heirs of the great legacy, these questions force themselves upon us. Let us in the first place discuss races quite generally; then, and then only, shall we be able to discuss with advantage the conditions prevailing in this special case, their importance in the course of history, and consequently in the nineteenth century.

There is perhaps no question about which such absolute ignorance prevails among highly cultured, indeed learned, men, as the question of the essence and the significance of the idea of “race.” What are pure races? Whence do they come? Have they any historical importance? Is the idea, to be taken in a broad or a narrow sense? Do we know anything on the subject or not? What is the relation of the ideas of race and of nation to one another?

260 THE CHAOS

I confess that all I have ever read or heard on this subject has been disconnected and contradictory: some specialists among the natural investigators form an exception, but even they very rarely apply their clear and detailed knowledge to the human race. Not a year passes without our being assured at international congresses, by authoritative national economists, ministers, bishops, natural scientists, that there is no difference and no inequality between nations. Teutons, who emphasise the importance of race-relationship, Jews, who do not feel at ease among us and long to get back to their Asiatic home, are by none so slightly and scornfully spoken of as by men of science. Professor Virchow, for instance, says * that the stirrings of consciousness of race among us are only to be explained by the “loss of sound common sense”: moreover, that it is “all a riddle to us, and no one knows what it really means in this age of equal rights.” Nevertheless, this learned man closes his address with the expression of a desire for “beautiful self-dependent

personalities.“ As if all history were not there to show us how personality and race are most closely connected, how the nature of the personality is determined by the nature of its race, and the power of the personality dependent upon certain conditions of its blood! And as if the scientific rearing of animals and plants did not afford us an extremely rich and reliable material, whereby we may become acquainted not only with the conditions but with the importance of “race“! Are the so-called (and rightly so-called) “noble“ animal races, the draught-horses of Limousin, the American trotter, the Irish hunter, the absolutely reliable sporting

* *Der Übergang aus dem philosophischen in das naturwissenschaftliche Zeitalter*, Rektoratsrede, 1893, p. 30. I choose this example from hundreds, since Virchow, being one of the most ardent anthropologists and ethnographers of the nineteenth century, and in addition, a man of great learning and experience, ought to have been well informed on the subject.

261 THE CHAOS

dogs, produced by chance and promiscuity? Do we get them by giving the animals equality of rights, by throwing the same food to them and whipping them with the same whip? No, they are produced by artificial selection and strict maintenance of the purity of the race. Horses and especially dogs give us every chance of observing that the intellectual gifts go hand in hand with the physical; this is specially true of the moral qualities: a mongrel is frequently very clever, but never reliable; morally he is always a weed. Continual promiscuity between two pre-eminent animal races leads without exception to the destruction of the pre-eminent characteristics of both. * Why should the human race form an exception? A father of the Church might imagine that it does, but is it becoming in a renowned natural investigator to throw the weight of his great influence into the scale of mediaeval ignorance and superstition? Truly one could wish that these scientific authorities of ours, who are so utterly lacking in philosophy, had followed a course of logic under Thomas Aquinas; it could only be beneficial to them. In spite of the broad common foundation, the human races are, in reality, as different from one another in character, qualities, and above all, in the degree of their individual capacities, as greyhound, bulldog, poodle and Newfoundland dog. Inequality is a state towards which nature inclines in all spheres; nothing extraordinary is produced without “specialisation“; in the case of men, as of animals, it is this specialisation that produces noble races; history and ethnology reveal this secret to the dullest eye. Has not every genuine race its own glorious, incomparable physiognomy? How could Hellenic art have arisen without Hellenes?

* See especially Darwin's *Plants and Animals under Domestication*, chaps. [xv](#). [xix](#). "Free crossing obliterates characters." For the "superstitious care with which the Arabs keep their horses pure bred" see interesting details in Gibbon's *Roman Empire*, chap. 50. See also Burton's *Mecca*, chap. xxix.

262 THE CHAOS

How quickly has the jealous hostility between the different cities of the small country of Greece given each part its sharply defined individuality within its own family type! How quickly this was blurred again, when Macedonians and Romans with their levelling hand swept over the land! And how everything which had given an everlasting significance to the word "Hellenic" gradually disappeared when from North, East and West new bands of unrelated peoples kept flocking to the country and mingled with genuine Hellenes! The equality, before which Professor Virchow bows the knee, was now there, all walls were razed to the ground, all boundaries became meaningless; the philosophy, too, with which Virchow in the same lecture breaks so keen a lance, was destroyed, and its place taken by the very soundest "common sense"; but the beautiful Hellenic personality, but for which all of us would to-day be merely more or less civilised barbarians, had disappeared, disappeared for ever.

"Crossing obliterates characters."

If the men who should be the most competent to pronounce an opinion on the essence and significance of Race show such an incredible lack of judgment — if in dealing with a subject where wide experience is necessary for sure perception, they bring to bear upon it nothing but hollow political phrases — how can we wonder that the unlearned should talk nonsense even when their instinct points out the true path? For the subject has in these days aroused interest in widely various strata of society, and where the learned refuse to teach, the unlearned must shift for themselves. When in the fifties Count Gobineau published his brilliant work on the inequality of the races of mankind, it passed unnoticed: no one seemed to know what it all meant. Like poor Virchow men stood puzzled before a riddle. Now that the Century has come to an end things have changed: the more passionate, more impulsive element in the

263 THE CHAOS

nations pays great and direct attention to this question. But in what a maze of contradiction, errors and delusions public opinion moves! Notice how Gobineau bases his account — so astonishingly rich in intuitive

ideas which have later been verified and in historical knowledge — upon the dogmatic supposition that the world was peopled by Shem, Ham and Japhet. Such a gaping void in capacity of judgment in the author suffices, in spite of all his documentary support, to relegate his work to the hybrid class of scientific phantasmagorias. With this is connected Gobineau's further fantastic idea, that the originally "pure" noble races crossed with each other in the course of history, and with every crossing became irrevocably less pure and less noble. From this we must of necessity derive a hopelessly pessimistic view of the future of the human race. But this supposition rests upon total ignorance of the physiological importance of what we have to understand by "race." A noble race does not fall from Heaven, it becomes noble gradually, just like fruit-trees, and this gradual process can begin anew at any moment, as soon as accident of geography and history or a fixed plan (as in the case of the Jews) creates the conditions. We meet similar absurdities at every step. We have, for example, a powerful Anti-Semitic movement: are we to consider the Jews as identical with the rest of the Semites? Have not the Jews by their very development made themselves a peculiar, pure race profoundly different from the others? Is it certain that an important crossing did not precede the birth of this people? And what is an Aryan? We hear so many and so definite pronouncements on this head. We contrast the Aryan with the "Semite," by whom we ordinarily understand "the Jew" and nothing more, and that is at least a thoroughly concrete conception based upon experience. But what kind of man is the Aryan? What concrete conception does he correspond to? Only

264 THE CHAOS

he who knows nothing of ethnography can give a definite answer to this question. As soon as we do not limit this expression to the Indo-Eranians who are doubtless interrelated, we get into the sphere of uncertain hypotheses. * The peoples whom we have learned to classify together as "Aryans" differ physically very much from each other; they reveal the most different structure of skull, also different colour of skin, eyes and hair; and even granted that there was once a common ancestral Indo-European race, what evidence can we offer against the daily increasing sum of facts which make it probable that other absolutely unrelated types have also been from time immemorial richly represented in our so-called Aryan nations of to-day, so that we can never apply the term "Aryan" to a whole people, but, at most, to single individuals? Relationship of language is no conclusive proof of community of blood; the theory of the immigration of the so-called Indo-Europeans from Asia, which rests upon very slight grounds, encounters the grave difficulty that investigators are finding more and more reason to believe that the

population which we are accustomed to call Indo-European was settled in Europe from time immemorial; † for the opposite hypothesis

* Even with this very qualified statement, derived from the best books I know, I seem to have presupposed more than science can with certainty assert; for I read in a specialised treatise, *Les Aryens au nord et au sud de l'Hindou-Kousch*, by Charles de Ujfalvi (Paris, 1896, p. 15), "Le terme d'aryen est de pure convention; les peuples éraniens au nord et les tribus hindoues au sud du Caucase indien, diffèrent absolument comme type et descendent, sans aucun doute, de deux races différentes."

† G. Schrader (*Sprachvergleichung und Urgeschichte*), who has studied the question more from the linguistic standpoint, comes to the conclusion, "It is proved that the Indo-Teutonic peoples were settled in Europe at a very ancient period"; Johannes Ranke (*Der Mensch*) is of opinion that it is now an established fact that at least a great part of the population of Europe were Aryans as early as the stone age; and Virchow, whose authority is all the greater in the sphere of anthropology because he shows unconditional respect for facts and,

265 THE CHAOS

of a colonisation of India from Europe there are not the slightest grounds... in short, this question is what miners call "swimming land"; he who knows the danger sets foot on it as little as possible. The more we study the specialists, the less certain we become. It was originally the philologists who established the collective idea "Aryans." Then came the anatomical anthropologists; the inadmissibility of conclusions drawn from mere philology was demonstrated, and now skull-measuring began; craniometry became a profession, and it did provide a mass of extremely interesting material; lately, however, the same fate is overtaking this so-called "somatic anthropology" that formerly overtook philology: ethnographers have begun to travel and to make scientifically systematic observations from living man, and in this way have been able to prove that the measuring of bones by no means deserves the importance that was wont to be attached to it; one of the greatest of Virchow's pupils has become convinced that the idea of solving problems of ethnology by the measurement of skulls is fruitless. * All these advances have been made in the second half of the nineteenth century; who knows what will be taught about "Aryans" † in the year 1950? At present, at any rate, the layman can say nothing on the subject. If he turns up one of the well-known authorities, he will be told that the Aryans "are an invention of the study and not a

unlike Huxley and many others, builds no Darwinian castles in the air, says that from anatomical discoveries one may assert that "the oldest troglodytes of Europe were of Aryan descent!" (quoted from Ranke, *Der Mensch*, ii. 578).

* Ehrenreich: *Anthropologische Studien über die Urbewohner Brasiliens*, 1897.

† When I use the word Aryan in this book, I take it in the sense of the original Sanscrit "ârya," which means "belonging to the friends," without binding myself to any

hypothesis. The relationship in thought and feeling signifies in any case an homogeneity. Cf. the note on p. 93.

266 THE CHAOS

primeval people,“ * if he seeks information from another, he receives the answer that the common characteristics of the Indo-Europeans, from the Atlantic Ocean to India, suffice to put the actual blood-relationship beyond all doubt. †

I hope I have clearly illustrated in these two paragraphs the great confusion which is prevalent among us to-day in regard to the idea “race.” This confusion is not necessary, that is, with practical, active men who belong to life as we do. And it is unnecessary for this reason, that we, in order to interpret the lessons of history and to comprehend our present age in connection therewith, do not in any way need to seek for hidden origins and causes. In the former division I have already quoted the words

* R. Hartmann: *Die Negritier* (1876), p. 185. Similarly Luschan and many investigators. Salomon Reinach, for instance, writes in *L'Origine des Aryens*, 1892, p. 90: “Parler d'une race aryenne d'il y a trois mille ans, c'est émettre une hypothèse gratuite: en parler comme si elle existait encore aujourd'hui, c'est dire tout simplement une absurdité.”

† Friedrich Ratzel, Johannes Ranke, Paul Ehrenreich, &c., in fact the more modern, widely travelled ethnographers. But they hold the view with many variations, since the relationship does not necessarily rest upon common origin, but might have been produced by crossing. Ratzel, for instance, who in one place positively asserts the uniformity of the whole Indo-European race (*Litterarisches Centralblatt*, 1897, p. 1295), says in another (*Völkerkunde*, 1895, ii. 751), “the supposition that all these peoples have a uniform origin is not necessary or probable.” — It is worth remarking that even those who deny the fact of an Aryan race still constantly speak of it; they cannot do without it as a “working hypothesis.” Even Reinach, after proving that there never was an Aryan race, speaks in an unguarded moment (*loc. cit.* p. 98) of the “common origin of the Semites and the Aryans.” Ujfalvi, quoted above, has after profound study arrived at the opposite conclusion and believes in a “grande famille aryenne.” In fact anthropologists, ethnographers and even historians, theologians, philologists and legal authorities find the idea “Aryan” more and more indispensable every year. And yet if one of us makes even the most cautious and strictly limited use of the conception, he is scorned and slandered by academic scribes and nameless newspaper reviewers. May the reader of this book trust science more than the official simplifiers and levellers and the professional anti-Aryan confusion-makers. Though it were proved that there never was an Aryan race in the past, yet we desire that in the future there may be one. That is the decisive standpoint for men for action.

267 THE CHAOS

of Goethe, “Animated inquiry into cause does great harm.“ What is clear to every eye suffices, if not for science, at least for life. Science must, of course, ever wander on its thorny but fascinating path; it is like a mountain climber, who every moment imagines that he will reach the highest peak, but soon discovers behind it a higher one still. But life is only indirectly interested in these changing hypotheses. One of the most fatal errors of our time is that which impels us to give too great weight in our judgments to the so-called “results“ of science. Knowledge can certainly have an illuminating effect; but it is not always so, and especially for this reason, that knowledge always stands upon tottering feet. For how can intelligent men doubt but that much which we think we know to-day will be laughed at as crass ignorance, one hundred, two hundred, five hundred years hence? Many facts may, indeed, be looked upon to-day as finally established; but new knowledge places these same facts in quite a new light, unites them to figures never thought of before, or changes their perspective; to regulate our judgments by the contemporary state of science may be compared to an artist's viewing the world through a transparent, ever-changing kaleidoscope, instead of with the naked eye. Pure science (in contrast to industrial science) is a noble plaything; its great intellectual and moral worth rests in no small degree upon the fact that it is not “useful“; in this respect it is quite analogous to art, it signifies the application of thought to the outward world; and since nature is inexhaustibly rich, she thereby ever brings new material to the mind, enriches its inventory of conceptions and gives the imagination a new dream-world to replace the gradually fading old one. *

Life,

* The physical scientist Lichtenberg makes a similar remark: “The teaching of nature is, for me at least, a kind of sinking fund for religion, when overbold reason falls into debt“ (*Fragmentarische Bemerkungen über physikalische Gegenstände*, 15).

268 THE CHAOS

on the other hand, purely as such, is something different from systematic knowledge, something much more stable, more firmly founded, more comprehensive; it is in fact the essence of all reality, whereas even the most precise science represents the thinned, generalised, no longer direct reality. Here I understand by “life“ what is otherwise also called “nature,“ as when, for instance, modern medicine teaches us that nature encourages by means of fever the change of matter and defends man against the illness which has seized him. Nature is in fact what we call “automatic,“ its roots go very much deeper than knowledge will ever be able to follow. And so it is my conviction that

we — who as thinking, well-informed, boldly dreaming and investigating beings are certainly just such integral parts of nature as all other beings and things, and as our own bodies — may entrust ourselves to this nature — to this “life“ — with great confidence. Though science leaves us in the lurch at many points, though she, fickle as a modern parliamentarian, laughs to-day at what she yesterday taught as everlasting truth, let this not lead us astray; what we require for life, we shall certainly learn. On the whole science is a splendid but somewhat dangerous friend; she is a great juggler and easily leads the mind astray into wild sentimentality; science and art are like the steeds attached to Plato's car of the soul; “sound common sense“ (whose loss Professor Virchow lamented) proves its worth not least of all in pulling the reins tight and not permitting these noble animals to bolt with its natural, sound judgment. The very fact that we are living beings gives us an infinitely rich and unfailing capacity of hitting upon the right thing, even without learning, wherever it is necessary. Whoever simply and with open mind questions nature — the “mother“ as the old myths called her — can be sure of being answered, as a mother answers her son, not

269 THE CHAOS

always in blameless logic, but correctly in the main, intelligibly and with a sure instinct for the best interests of the son. So is it, too, in regard to the question of the significance of race: one of the most vital, perhaps the most vital, questions that can confront man.

IMPORTANCE OF RACE

Nothing is so convincing as the consciousness of the possession of Race. The man who belongs to a distinct, pure race, never loses the sense of it. The guardian angel of his lineage is ever at his side, supporting him where he loses his foothold, warning him like the Socratic Daemon where he is in danger of going astray, compelling obedience, and forcing him to undertakings which, deeming them impossible, he would never have dared to attempt. Weak and erring like all that is human, a man of this stamp recognises himself, as others recognise him, by the sureness of his character, and by the fact that his actions are marked by a certain simple and peculiar greatness, which finds its explanation in his distinctly typical and super-personal qualities. Race lifts a man above himself: it endows him with extraordinary — I might almost say supernatural — powers, so entirely does it distinguish him from the individual who springs from the chaotic jumble of peoples drawn from all parts of the world: and should this man

of pure origin be perchance gifted above his fellows, then the fact of Race strengthens and elevates him on every hand, and he becomes a genius towering over the rest of mankind, not because he has been thrown upon the earth like a flaming meteor by a freak of nature, but because he soars heavenward like some strong and stately tree, nourished by thousands and thousands of roots — no solitary individual, but the living sum of untold souls striving for the same goal. He who has eyes to see at once detects Race in

270 THE CHAOS

animals. It shows itself in the whole habit of the beast, and proclaims itself in a hundred peculiarities which defy analysis: nay more, it proves itself by achievements, for its possession invariably leads to something excessive and out of the common — even to that which is exaggerated and not free from bias. Goethe's dictum, “only that which is extravagant (*überschwänglich*) makes greatness,” is well known. * That is the very quality which a thoroughbred race reared from superior materials bestows upon its individual descendants — something “extravagant” — and, indeed, what we learn from every racehorse, every thoroughbred fox-terrier, every Cochin China fowl, is the very lesson which the history of mankind so eloquently teaches us! Is not the Greek in the fulness of his glory an unparalleled example of this “extravagance”? And do we not see this “extravagance” first make its appearance when immigration from the North has ceased, and the various strong breeds of men, isolated on the peninsula once for all, begin to fuse into a new race, brighter and more brilliant, where, as in Athens, the racial blood flows from many sources — simpler and more resisting where, as in Lacedaemon, even this mixture of blood had been barred out. Is the race not as it were extinguished, as soon as fate wrests the land from its proud exclusiveness and incorporates it in a greater whole? † Does not Rome teach us the same

* *Materialien zur Geschichte der Farbenlehre*, the part dealing with Newton's personality.

† It is well known that it was but gradually extinguished, and that in spite of a political situation, which must assuredly have brought speedy destruction on everything Hellenic, had not race qualities here had a decisive influence. Till late in the Christian era Athens remained the centre of intellectual life for mankind; Alexandria was more talked of, the strong Semitic contingent saw to that; but any one who wished to study in earnest travelled to Athens, till Christian narrow-mindedness for ever closed the schools there in the year 529, and we learn that as late as this even the man of the people was distinguished in Athens “by the liveliness of his intellect, the correctness of his language and the sureness of his taste” (Gibbon,

lesson? Has not in this case also a special mixture of blood produced an absolutely new race, * similar in qualities and capacities to no later one, endowed with exuberant power? And does not victory in this case effect what disaster did in that, but only much more quickly? Like a cataract the stream of strange blood overflowed the almost depopulated Rome and at once the Romans ceased to be. Would one small tribe from among all the Semites have become a world-embracing power had it not made “purity of race“ its inflexible fundamental law? In days when so much nonsense is talked concerning this question, let Disraeli teach us that the whole significance of judaism lies in its purity of race, that this alone gives it power and duration, and just as it has outlived the people of antiquity, so, thanks to its knowledge of this law of nature, will it outlive the constantly mingling races of to-day. †

What is the use of detailed scientific investigations as to whether there are distinguishable races? whether race has a worth? how this is possible? and so on. We turn the tables and say: it is evident that there are such races: it is a fact of direct experience that the quality of the race is of vital importance; your province is only to find out the how and the wherefore, not to deny the facts themselves in order to indulge your ignorance. One of the greatest ethnologists of the present day,

chap. xl.). There is in George Finlay's book, *Medieval Greece*, chap. i., a complete and very interesting and clear account of the gradual destruction of the Hellenic race by foreign immigration. One after the other colonies of Roman soldiers from all parts of the Empire, then Celts, Teutonic peoples, Slavonians, Bulgarians, Wallachians, Albanians, &c., had moved into the country and mixed with the original population. The Zaconians, who were numerous even in the fifteenth century, but have now almost died out, are said to be the only pure Hellenes.

* Cf. [p. 109, note.](#)

† See the novels *Tancred* and *Coningsby*. In the latter Sidonia says: “Race is everything; there is no other truth. And every race must fall which carelessly suffers its blood to become mixed.“

Adolf Bastian, testifies that, “what we see in history is not a transformation, a passing of one race into another, but entirely new and perfect creations, which the ever-youthful productivity of nature sends forth from the invisible realm of Hades.“ * Whoever travels the short distance between Calais and Dover, feels almost as if he had reached a different planet, so great is the difference between the English and

French, despite their many points of relationship. The observer can also see from this instance the value of purer “inbreeding.” England is practically cut off by its insular position: the last (not very extensive) invasion took place 800 years ago; since then only a few thousands from the Netherlands, and later a few thousand Huguenots have crossed over (all of the same origin), and thus has been reared that race which at the present moment is unquestionably the strongest in Europe. †

Direct experience, however, offers us a series of quite different observations on race, all of which may gradually contribute to the extension of our knowledge as well as to its definiteness. In contrast to the new, growing, Anglo-Saxon race, look, for instance, at the Sephardim, the so-called “Spanish Jews”; here we find how a genuine race can by purity keep itself noble for centuries and tens of centuries, but at the same time how very necessary it is to distinguish between the nobly reared portions of a nation and the rest. In England, Holland and Italy there are still genuine Sephardim but very few, since

* *Das Beständige in den Menschenrassen und die Spielweite ihrer Veränderlichkeit*, 1868, p. 26.

† Mention should also be made of Japan, where likewise a felicitous crossing and afterwards insular isolation have contributed to the production of a very remarkable race, much stronger and (within the Mongoloid sphere of possibility) much more profoundly endowed than most Europeans imagine. Perhaps the only books in which one gets to know the Japanese soul are those of Lafcadio Hearn: *Kokoro*, *Hints and Echoes of Japanese Inner Life*; *Gleanings in Buddha Fields*, and others.

273 THE CHAOS

they can scarcely any longer avoid crossing with the Ashkenazim (the so-called “German Jews”). Thus, for example, the Montefiores of the present generation have all without exception married German Jewesses. But every one who has travelled in the East of Europe, where the genuine Sephardim still as far as possible avoid all intercourse with German Jews, for whom they have an almost comical repugnance, will agree with me when I say that it is only when one sees these men and has intercourse with them that one begins to comprehend the significance of Judaism in the history of the world. This is nobility in the fullest sense of the word, genuine nobility of race! Beautiful figures, noble heads, dignity in speech and bearing. The type is Semitic in the same sense as that of certain noble Syrians and Arabs. That out of the midst of such people Prophets and Psalmists could arise — that I understood at the first glance, which I honestly confess that I had never succeeded in doing when I gazed, however carefully, on the many hundred young Jews — “Bochers” — of the Friedrichstrasse in Berlin. When we study the Sacred Books of the Jews we see further that the conversion of this

monopolytheistic people to the ever sublime (though according to our ideas mechanical and materialistic) conception of a true cosmic monotheism was not the work of the community, but of a mere fraction of the people; indeed this minority had to wage a continuous warfare against the majority, and was compelled to enforce the acceptance of its more exalted view of life by means of the highest Power to which man is heir, the might of personality. As for the rest of the people, unless the Prophets were guilty of gross exaggeration, they convey the impression of a singularly vulgar crowd, devoid of every higher aim, the rich hard and unbelieving, the poor fickle and ever possessed by the longing to throw themselves into the arms of the wretchedest and filthiest idolatry. The

274 THE CHAOS

course of Jewish history has provided for a peculiar artificial selection of the morally higher section: by banishments, by continual withdrawals to the Diaspora — a result of the poverty and oppressed condition of the land — only the most faithful (of the better classes) remained behind, and these abhorred every marriage contract — even with Jews! — in which both parties could not show an absolutely pure descent from one of the tribes of Israel and prove their strict orthodoxy beyond all doubt. * There remained then no great choice; for the nearest neighbours, the Samaritans, were heterodox, and in the remoter parts of the land, except in the case of the Levites who kept apart, the population was to a large extent much mixed. In this way race was here produced. And when at last the final dispersion of the Jews came, all or almost all of these sole genuine Jews were taken to Spain. The shrewd Romans in fact knew well how to draw distinctions, and so they removed these dangerous fanatics, these proud men, whose very glance made the masses obey, from their Eastern home to the farthest West, † while, on the other hand, they did not disturb the Jewish people outside of the narrower Judea more than the Jews of the Diaspora. ‡ — Here, again, we have a most interesting object-lesson on the origin and worth of “race“! For of all the men whom we are wont to characterise as Jews, relatively few are descended from these great genuine Hebrews, they are rather the descendants of the Jews of the Diaspora,

* Natural children are not at all taken into the community by orthodox Jews. Among the Sephardim of East Europe to-day, a girl who is known to have gone wrong is immediately taken by the plenipotentiaries of the community to a strange land and provided for there; neither she nor her child can venture ever to let anything be heard of them, they are regarded as dead. Thus they provide against blind love introducing strange blood into the tribe.

† See Graetz, as above, chap. ix., on *The Period of the Diaspora*.

‡ In Tiberias, for example, there was a Rabbi's school which for centuries set the fashion. (Regarding the ennobling of the Sephardim by Gothic blood, see below.)

275 THE CHAOS

Jews who did not take part in the last great struggles, who, indeed, to some extent did not even live through the Maccabean age; these and the poor country people who were left behind in Palestine, and who later in Christian ages were banished or fled, are the ancestors of "our Jews" of to-day. Now whoever wishes to see with his own eyes what noble race is, and what it is not, should send for the poorest of the Sephardim from Salonici or Sarajevo (great wealth is very rare among them, for they are men of stainless honour) and put him side by side with any Ashkenazim financier; then will he perceive the difference between the nobility which race bestows and that conferred by a monarch. *

THE FIVE CARDINAL LAWS

It would be easy to multiply examples. But I think that we now have all the material that is necessary for a systematic analysis of our knowledge regarding race, from which we may then derive the cardinal principles of a conscious and appropriate judgment. We are not reasoning from hypothetical conditions in the remote past to possible results, but arguing from sure facts back to their direct causes. The inequality of gifts even in what are manifestly related races is evident; it is, moreover, equally evident to every one who observes more closely that here and there, for a shorter or a longer time, one tribe does not only distinguish itself from the

* The Goths, who in a later age went over to Mohammedanism in great crowds, and became its noblest and most fanatical protagonists, are said to have at an earlier period adopted Judaism in great numbers, and a learned specialist of Vienna University assures me that the moral and intellectual as well as the physical superiority of the so-called "Spanish" and "Portuguese" Jews is to be explained rather by this rich influx of Teutonic blood than by that breeding which I have singled out to emphasise, and the importance of which he too would not incline to underestimate. Whether this view is justifiable or not may remain an open question.

276 THE CHAOS

others, but is easily pre-eminent among them because there is something beyond the common in its gifts and capabilities. That this is due to racial

breeding I have tried to illustrate graphically by the preceding examples. The results deducible from these examples (and they can be multiplied to any extent) enable us to affirm that the origin of such noble races is dependent upon five natural laws.

(1) The first and fundamental condition is undoubtedly the presence of excellent material. Where there is nothing, the king has no rights. But if I am asked, Whence comes this material? I must answer, I know not, I am as ignorant in this matter as if I were the greatest of all scholars and I refer the questioner to the words of the great world-seer of the nineteenth century, Goethe, "What no longer originates, we cannot conceive as originating. What has originated we do not comprehend." As far back as our glance can reach, we see human beings, we see that they differ essentially in their gifts and that some show more vigorous powers of growth than others. Only one thing can be asserted without leaving the basis of historical observation: a high state of excellence is only attained gradually and under particular circumstances, it is only forced activity that can bring it about; under other circumstances it may completely degenerate. The struggle which means destruction for the fundamentally weak race steels the strong; the same struggle, moreover, by eliminating the weaker elements, tends still further to strengthen the strong. Around the childhood of great races, as we observe, even in the case of the metaphysical Indians, the storm of war always rages.

(2) But the presence of excellent human material is not enough to give birth to the "extravagant"; such races as the Greeks, the Romans, the Franks, the Swabians, the Italians and Spaniards in the period of their splendour,

277 THE CHAOS

the Moors, the English, such abnormal phenomena as the Aryan Indians and the Jews only spring from continued inbreeding. They arise and they pass away before our eyes. Inbreeding means the producing of descendants exclusively in the circle of the related tribesmen, with the avoidance of all foreign mixture of blood. Of this I have already given striking examples.

(3) But inbreeding *pur et simple* does not suffice: along with it there must be selection, or, as the specialists say, "artificial selection." We understand this law best when we study the principles of artificial breeding in the animal and vegetable worlds; I should recommend every one to do so, for there are few things which so enrich our conceptions of the plastic possibilities of life. * When one has come to understand what miracles are performed by selection, how a racehorse or a Dachshund or a choice chrysanthemum is gradually produced by the careful elimination of everything that is of indifferent quality, one will recognise

that the same phenomenon is found in the human race, although of course it can never be seen with the same clearness and definiteness as in the other spheres. I have already advanced the example of the Jews; the exposure of weak infants is another point and was in any case one of the most beneficial laws of the Greeks, Romans and Teutonic peoples; hard times, which only the strong man and the hardy woman can survive, have a similar effect. †

(4) There is another fundamental law hitherto little heeded, which seems to me quite clear from history, just as it is a fact of experience in the breeding of animals:

* The literature is very great: for simplicity, comprehensibility and many-sidedness I recommend to every layman especially Darwin's [*Animals and Plants under Domestication*](#). In the *Origin of Species* the same subject is treated rather briefly and with too much bias.

† Jhering demonstrates with particular clearness that the epoch of the migrations, which lasted for many centuries, necessarily had upon the Teutonic peoples the effect of an ever more and more ennobling artificial selection (*Vorgeschichte*, p. 462 f.).

278 THE CHAOS

the origin of extraordinary races is, without exception, preceded by a mixture of blood. As that acute thinker, Emerson, says: "we are piqued with pure descent, but nature loves inoculation." Of the Aryan Indians of course we can say nothing as regards this, their previous history being hidden in the misty distance of time; on the other hand, with regard to the Jews, Hellenes and Romans the facts are perfectly clear, and they are no less so in regard to all the nations of Europe which have distinguished themselves by their national achievements and by the production of a great number of individuals of "extravagant" endowments. With regard to the Jews I refer the reader to the [following chapter](#), as regards the Hellenes, Romans and English I have often pointed to this fact; * nevertheless, I would urge the reader not to grudge the labour of carefully reading in Curtius and Mommsen those chapters at the beginning which, on account of the many names and the confusion of detail, are usually rather glanced through than studied. There has never been so thorough and successful a mixture as in Greece: with the old common stock as basis there have gradually sprung up in the valleys, separated by mountains or seas, characteristically different tribes, composed here of huntsmen, there of peaceful farmers, in other parts of seafarers, &c.; among these differentiated elements we find a mixing and crossing, so fine that a human brain selecting artificially could not have reasoned the matter out more perfectly. In the first place we have migrations from East to West, later from West to East over the Aegean Sea; in the meantime, however, the tribes of the extreme North (in the

first place the Dorians) advanced to the extreme South, forcing many of the noblest who would not submit to bondage from the South to that North from which they themselves had just come, or over the sea to

* See especially pp. [109](#), [272](#), [286](#) and [293](#).

279 THE CHAOS

the islands and the Hellenic coast of Asia. But every one of these shiftings meant mixture of blood. Thus, for example, the Dorians did not all move to the Peloponnese, portions of them remained at every stopping-place in their slow wanderings and there fused with the former population. Indeed, these same original Dorians, whose special unity is such an apparent characteristic, knew in the old times that they were composed of three different stems, one of which moreover was called "Pamphyle," that is, "the stem of people of various descent." The most exuberant talent showed itself where the crossing had been happiest — in New Ionia and in Attica. In New Ionia "Greeks came to Greeks, Ionians returned to their old home, but they came so transformed that from the new union of what was originally related, a thoroughly national development, much improved, rich, and in its results absolutely new, began in the old Ionian land." But most instructive is the history of the development of the Attic and particularly of the Athenian people. In Attica (just as in Arcadia, but nowhere else) the original Pelasgic population remained; it "was never driven out by the power of the stranger." But the coastland that belonged to the Archipelago invited immigration; and this came from every side; and while the alien Phoenicians only founded commercial stations on the neighbouring islands, the related Greeks pressed on into the interior from this side and that side of the sea, and gradually mingled with the former inhabitants. Now came the time of the already mentioned Dorian migrations and the great and lasting changes; Attica alone was spared; and thither fled many from all directions, from Boeotia, Achaëa, Messenia, Argos and Aegina, &c.; but these new immigrants did not represent whole populations; in the great majority of cases they were chosen men, men of illustrious, often of royal birth. By their influx the one

280 THE CHAOS

small land became exceptionally rich in genuine, pure nobility. Then and then only, that is, after a varied crossing, arose that Athens to which humanity owes a greater debt than could ever be reckoned up. * — The

least reflection will show that the same law holds good in the case of Germans, French, Italians and Spaniards. The individual Teutonic tribes, for example, are like purely brutal forces of nature, till they begin to mingle with one another; consider how Burgundy, which is rich in great men, owes its peculiar population to a thorough crossing of the Teutonic and the Romance elements, and develops its characteristic individuality by long-continued political isolation; † the Franks grow to their full strength and give the world a new type of humanity where they mingle with the Teutonic tribes who preceded them and with Gallo-Romans, or where they, as in Franconia, form the exact point of union of the most diverse German and Slavonic elements; Swabia, the home of Mozart and Schiller, is inhabited by a half-Celtic race; Saxony, which has given Germany so many of its greatest men, contains a population quickened almost throughout by a mixture of Slavonic blood; and has not Europe seen within the last three centuries how a nation of recent origin — Prussia — in which the

* See Curtius: *Griechische Geschichte*, i. 4, and ii. 1 and 2. Count Gobineau asserts that the extraordinary intellectual and above all artistic talent of the Greeks is to be explained by an infiltration of Semitic blood: this shows to what senseless views one is forced by fundamental hypotheses which are false, artificial and contrary to history and natural observation.

† This thorough crossing was caused by the fact that the Burgundians settled individually over the whole land and each of them became the “*hospes*“ of a former inhabitant, of whose cultivated land he received two-thirds, and of his buildings and garden a half, while woods and pastures remained common property. Now though there might not be much sympathy between the new-comer and the old possessor, yet they lived side by side and were solidly united in disputes about boundaries and such-like questions of property; thus crossing could not be long deferred. (*Cf. especially Savigny, Geschichte des römischen Rechts im Mittelalter*, chap. v. div. 1.)

281 THE CHAOS

mixture of blood was still more thorough, has raised itself by its pre-eminent power to become the leader of the whole German Empire? — It cannot of course be my task to give a detailed proof of what is here simply pointed out; but as I am advocating especially the great importance of purely-bred races, I desire particularly to emphasise the necessity, or at least the advantage, of mixture of blood and that not merely to meet the objection of one-sidedness and bias *a priori*, but because it is my conviction that the advocates of this theory have injured it very much by disregarding the important law of crossing. They get then to the mystical conception of a race pure in itself, which is an airy abstraction that retards instead of furthering. Neither history nor experimental biology has anything to say for such a view. The race of English thoroughbreds has been produced by the crossing of Arabian

stallions with ordinary, but of course specially chosen, English mares, followed by inbreeding, yet in such a way that later crossing between varieties not far removed, or even with Arabians, is advisable from time to time; one of the noblest creatures that nature possesses, the so-called “genuine“ Newfoundland dog, originated from the crossing of the Eskimo dog and a French hound; in consequence of the isolated position of Newfoundland, it became by constant inbreeding fixed and “pure,“ it was then brought to Europe by fanciers and raised to the highest perfection by artificial selection. — Many of my readers may be amused at my constant references to the breeding of animals. But it is certain that the laws of life are great simple laws, embracing and moulding everything that lives; we have no reason to look upon the human race as an exception; and as we are unfortunately not in a position to make experiments in this matter with human beings, we must seek counsel from the experiments made with plants and animals. — But I cannot

282 THE CHAOS

close my discussion of the fourth law without emphasising another side of this law of crossing; continued inbreeding within a narrow circle, what one might call “close breeding,“ leads in time to degeneration and particularly to sterility. Countless experiences in animal breeding prove that. Sometimes in such a case a single crossing, applied, for example, only to single members of a pack of hounds, will suffice to strengthen the weakened race and restore its productivity. In the case of men the attraction of Passion provides sufficiently for this quickening, so that it is only in the highest circles of the nobility and in some royal houses * that we observe increasing mental and physical degeneration in consequence of “close breeding.“ †

The slightest increase of remoteness in the degree of relationship of those marrying (even within the strict limits of the same type) suffices to give all the great advantages of inbreeding and to prevent its disadvantages. Surely it is manifest that here we have the revelation of a mysterious Law of Life, a Law of Life so urgent that in the vegetable kingdom — where fructification within one and the same blossom seems at the first glance the natural and unavoidable thing — there are in most cases the most complicated arrangements to hinder this and at the same time to see that the pollen, when not borne by the wind, is carried by insects from the one individual flower to the other. ‡ When we perceive

* See the facts in Haeckel: *Natürliche Schöpfungsgeschichte* (lect. 8). Still more detail in a book by P. Jacoby, which I have unfortunately not before me, his *Études sur la sélection dans ses rapports avec l'hérédité chez l'homme*.

† In this connection too we have the well-known evil results of marriage between near

relatives: the organs of sense (in fact the whole nervous system) and the sexual organs suffer most frequently from this. (See George H. Darwin's lectures, *Die Ehen zwischen Geschwisterkindern und ihre Folgen*, Leipzig, 1876.)

‡ I should recommend the large number of people who unfortunately still keep aloof from natural science, to read carefully Christian Konrad Sprengel's *Das entdeckte Geheimnis der Natur im Bau und in der Befrucht-*

283 THE CHAOS

what is so evidently a fundamental law of nature, we are led to suppose that it is not by mere chance that pre-eminent races have sprung from an original fusing of different stems, such as we have observed in history; the historical facts rather provide still further proof for the view that mixture of blood supplies particularly favourable physiological conditions for the origin of noble races. *

(5) A fifth law must also be mentioned, although it is restrictive and explanatory rather than contributive of any new element to the question of race. Only quite definite, limited mixtures of blood contribute towards the ennoblement of a race, or, it may be, the origin of a new one. Here again the clearest and least ambiguous examples are furnished by animal breeding. The mixture of blood must be strictly limited as regards time, and it must, in addition, be appropriate; not all and any crossings, but only definite ones can form the basis of ennoblement. By time-limitation I mean that the influx of new blood must take place as quickly as possible and then cease; continual crossing ruins the strongest race. To take an extreme example, the most famous

ung der Blumen, 1793. The whole German nation ought to be proud of this work: since 1893 there has been a facsimile reprint of it (Mayer and Müller, Berlin) and it can be read by any layman. Of more recent publications Hermann Müller's *Alpenblumen, ihre Befruchtung durch Insekten und ihre Anpassungen an dieselben* (Engelmann, 1881) is specially stimulating, clear by reason of the many illustrations, and complete. A summary account, which includes plants other than European, is found in the same author's *Blumen und Insekten* in Trewendt's *Encyklopädie der Naturwissenschaften*. There are certainly few speculations that introduce us so directly to the most mysterious wonders of nature as this revelation of the mutual relations of the plant and animal worlds. What are all our knowledge and hypotheses in comparison with such phenomena? They teach us to observe faithfully and to be satisfied with the circle of things attainable. (During the printing of this book Knuth's *Handbuch der Blütenbiologie*, published by Engelmann, began to appear.)

* For this question of the mixture of blood indispensable to the origin of pre-eminently gifted races Reibmayr's book, *Inzucht und Vermischung beim Menschen*, 1897, should be consulted.

284 THE CHAOS

pack of greyhounds in England was crossed once only with bulldogs, whereby it gained in courage and endurance, but further experiments prove that when such a crossing is continued, the characters of both races disappear and quite characterless mongrels remain behind. * *Crossing obliterates characters.* The limitation to definitely appropriate crossings means that only certain crossings, not all, ennoble. There are crossings which, far from having an ennobling influence, ruin both races, and moreover, it frequently happens that the definite, valuable characters of two different types cannot fuse at all; in the latter case some of the descendants take after the one parent, others after the other, but naturally with mingled characteristics, or again, genuine real mongrels may appear, creatures whose bodies give the impression of being screwed together from parts that do not fit, and whose intellectual qualities correspond exactly to the physical. † Here too it should be remarked that the union of mongrel with mongrel brings about with startling rapidity the total destruction of all and every pre-eminent quality of race. It is therefore an entirely mistaken idea that mixture of blood between different stems invariably ennoble the race, and adds new qualities to the old. It does so only with the strictest limitations and under rare and definite conditions; as a rule mixture of blood leads to degeneration. One thing is perfectly clear: that the crossing of two very different types contributes to the formation of a noble race only when it takes place very seldom and is followed by strict inbreeding (as in the case of the English thoroughbred and the Newfoundland dog); in all other cases crossing is a success only when it takes place between those closely related, *i.e.*, between those that belong to the same funda-

* Darwin, [*Animals and Plants*](#), chap. xv.

† For this too there are numerous examples in Darwin. As regards dogs in particular, examples will occur to every one.

285 THE CHAOS

mental type. — Here too no one who knows the detailed results of animal breeding can doubt that the history of mankind before us and around us obeys the same law. Naturally, it does not appear with the same clearness in the one case as in the other; we are not in a position to shut in a number of human beings and make experiments with them for several generations; moreover, while the horse excels in swiftness, the dog in remarkable and plastic flexibility of body, man excels in mind: here all his vigour is concentrated, here too, therefore, is concentrated all his variability, and it is just these differences in character and intelligence that are not visible to the eye. * But history has carried out

experiments on a large scale, and every one whose eye is not blinded by details, but has learned to survey great complexes, every one who studies the soul-life of nations, will discover any amount of proofs of the law here mentioned. While, for example, the “extravagantly“ gifted Attics and the uniquely shrewd and strong Roman race are produced by the fusion of several stems, they are nevertheless nearly related and noble, pure stems, and these elements are then, by the formation of States, isolated for centuries, so that they have time to amalgamate into a new solid unity; when, on the other hand, these States are thrown open to every stranger, the race is ruined, in Athens slowly, because owing to the political situation there was not much to get there, and the mixing in consequence only took place gradually

* We must, however, not overlook the fact that, if we could make experiments in breeding with men, very great differences in physique also could certainly be achieved in regard to size, hair, proportions, &c. Place a dwarf from the primeval forest of the Middle Congo, little more than 3 feet high, the whole body covered with hair, beside a Prussian Grenadier of the Guards: one will see what plastic possibilities slumber in the human body. — As far as the dog is concerned, we must remember also that the various breeds “certainly originate from more than one wild species“ (Claus, *Zoologie*, 4th edit. ii. 458); hence its almost alarming polymorphism.

286 THE CHAOS

and then for the most part with Indo-European peoples, * in Rome with frightful rapidity, after Marius and Sulla had, by murdering the flower of the genuine Roman youth, dammed the source of noble blood and at the same time, by the freeing of slaves, brought into the nation perfect floods of African and Asiatic blood, thus transforming Rome into the *cloaca gentium*, the trysting-place of all the mongrels of the world. † We observe the same on all sides. We see the English race arising out of a mutual fusion of separated but closely related Teutonic tribes; the Norman invasion provides in this case the last brilliant touch; on the other hand, geographical and historical conditions have so wrought that the somewhat more distantly related Celts remained by themselves, and even to-day only gradually mingle with the ruling race. How manifestly stimulating and refreshing, even to the present day, is the influence of the immigration of French Huguenots into Berlin! They were alien enough to enrich the life there with new elements and related enough to produce with their Prussian hosts not “mongrels that seem screwed together“ but men of strong character and rare gifts. To see the opposite, we need only look over to South America. Where is there a more pitiful sight than that of the mestizo States there? The so-called savages of Central Australia lead a much more harmonious, dignified and, let us say, more “holy“ life than these unhappy Peruvians, Paraguayans, &c.,

mongrels from two and often more than two incongruous races, from two cultures

* It is very instructive to observe, on the other hand, that the Hellenes in Ionia, who were subject to every kind of mongrel crossing, disappeared much more quickly.

† Long before me Gibbon had recognised the physical degeneration of the Roman race as the cause of the decline of the Roman Empire; now that is more fully demonstrated by O. Seeck in his *Geschichte der Unterganges der antiken Welt*. It was only the immigration of the vigorous Teutonic peoples that kept the chaotic empire artificially alive for a few centuries longer.

287 THE CHAOS

with nothing in common, from two stages of development, too different in age and form to be able to form a marriage union — children of an unnatural incest. Any one who earnestly desires to know what race signifies can learn much from the example of these States; let him but consult the statistics, he will find the most different relations between the pure European or pure Indian population and the half-caste, and he will see that relative degeneration goes exactly hand in hand with the mixture of blood. I take the two extreme examples, Chile and Peru. In Chile, the only one of these States * that can make a modest claim to true culture and that can also point to comparatively well-ordered political conditions, about 30 per cent. of the inhabitants are still of pure Spanish origin, and this third is sufficient to check moral disintegration. † On the other hand, in Peru, which, as is well known, gave the first example to the other republics of a total moral and material bankruptcy, there are almost no Europeans of pure race left; with the exception of the still uncivilised Indians in the interior the whole population consists of Cholos, Musties, Fusties, Tercerones, Quarterones, &c., crossings between Indians and Spaniards, between Indians and Negroes, Spaniards and Negroes, further between the different races and those mestizos or crosses of the mestizo species among each other; in recent years many thousands of Chinese have been added... here we see the promiscuity longed for by Ratzel and Virchow in progress, and we observe what the result is! Of course it is an extreme example, but all the more instructive. If the enormous force of surrounding civilisation did not artificially support such a State on all sides, if by any chance it were isolated and left to itself, it would in a short time fall a prey to total

* In Portugese Brazil the conditions are essentially different.

† According to Albrecht Wirth, *Volkstum und Weltmacht in der Geschichte*, 1901, p. 159, the Chilians also derive advantage from the fact that their Indians — the Araucani — are of particularly noble race.

barbarism — not human, but bestial barbarism. All these States are moving towards a similar fate. * — Here too I leave it to the reader to think over the matter and to collect evidence with regard to this fifth law, which shows us that every crossing is a dangerous matter and can only help to ennoble the race when definite conditions are observed, as also that many possible crossings are absolutely detrimental and destructive; once the eyes of the reader are opened, he will find everywhere both in the past and in the present proofs of this law as well as of the other four.
†

These then are the five principles which seem to me to be fundamental: the quality of the material, inbreeding, artificial selection, the necessity of crossings, the necessity of strictly limiting these crossings both in respect of choice and of time. From these principles we further deduce the conclusion that the origin of a very noble human race depends among other things upon definite historical and geographical conditions; it is these that unconsciously bring about the ennobling of the original material, the in-breeding and the artificial selection, it is these too — when a happy star shines over the birthplace of a new people — that produce happy tribal marriages and prevent the prostitution of the noble in the arms of the ignoble. The fact that there was a time in the nineteenth century when learned investigators, with Buckle at their head, could assert that geographical conditions produced the races, we may now appropriately

* As is well known, very similar conditions prevail in the Spanish colonies. The island of Porto Rico forms the sole exception: here the native Caribbees were exterminated, and the result is a pure Indo-European population, distinguished for industry, shrewdness and love of order: a striking example of the significance of race!

† In his book *Altersklassen und Männerbunde* (p. 23), Heinrich Schurtz comes to the conclusion that, “Successful crossings are possible and advantageous only within a certain sphere of relationship. If the relationship is too close, really near blood-relationship, sickly tendencies are not counterbalanced but increased; if it is too remote, no felicitous mixing of the qualities is possible.”

mention with the scant honour of a *paraleipsis*; for that doctrine is a blow in the face of all history and all observation. On the other hand, every single one of the laws enumerated, and in addition the examples of Rome, Greece, England, Judea and South America in particular, let us see so clearly in how far the historical and geographical conditions not

only contribute to the origin and the decline of a race but are actually decisive factors therein, that I can refrain from further discussion of the matter. *

OTHER INFLUENCES

Is the question of race now exhausted? Far from it! These biological problems are remarkably complex. They embrace, for example, the still so mysterious subject of heredity, in regard to the fundamental principles of which the most important specialists are more at variance every day. † Besides, many other circumstances which profounder study reveals would have to be taken into account. Nature is in fact inexhaustible; however deep we sink the plummet, we never reach the bottom. Whoever would make a study of these matters must not, for example, overlook the fact that small numbers of foreign elements are wont in a short time to be entirely absorbed by a strong race, but that there is, as the chemists say, a definite capacity, a definite power of absorption, beyond

* If, for example, the climate of Attica had been the decisive thing, as is often asserted, it would be impossible to understand why the genius of its inhabitants was produced only under certain racial conditions and disappeared for ever with the removal of these conditions; on the other hand, the importance of the geographical and historical conditions becomes quite clear, when we observe that they isolated Attica for centuries from the ceaseless changes brought about by the migrations, but at the same time contributed to the influx of a select, noble population from different but related tribes, which mingled to form a new race.

† The reader will find an interesting summary of the different opinions of modern times in Friedrich Rohde's *Entstehung und Vererbung individueller Eigenschaften*, 1895.

290 THE CHAOS

which a loss of the purity of the blood, revealed by the diminution of the characteristic qualities, is involved. We have an instance of this in Italy, where the proudly passionate and brilliant families of strong Teutons, who had kept their blood pure till the fourteenth century, later gradually mingled with absolutely mongrel Italians and Italiots and so entirely disappeared (*see* chaps. vi. and ix.): *crossing obliterates characters*. The careful observer will further notice that in crossings between human stems, which are not closely related, the relative generative power is a factor which can prevail after centuries and gradually bring about the decline of the nobler portion of a mixed people, because in fact this generative power often stands in inverse relation to the nobility of the race. * In Europe at the present day we

* Professor August Forel, the well-known psychiatrist, has made interesting studies in the United States and the West Indian islands, on the victory of intellectually inferior races over higher ones because of their greater virility. "Though the brain of the negro is weaker than that of the white, yet his generative power and the predominance of his qualities in the descendants are all greater than those of the whites. The white race isolates itself (therefore) from them more and more strictly, not only in sexual but in all relations, because it has at last recognised that crossing means its own destruction." Forel shows by numerous examples how impossible it is for the negro to assimilate our civilisation more than skin-deep, and how so soon as he is left to himself he everywhere degenerates into the "most absolute primitive African savagery." (For more detail on this subject, see the interesting book of Hesketh Pritchard, *Where Black rules White*, Hayti, 1900; any one who has been reared on phrases of the equality of mankind, &c., will shudder when he learns how matters really stand so soon as the blacks in a State get the upper hand.) And Forel, who as scientist is educated in the dogma of the one, everywhere equal, humanity, comes to the conclusion: "Even for their own good the blacks must be treated as what they are, an absolutely subordinate, inferior, lower type of men, incapable themselves of culture. That must once for all be clearly and openly stated." (See the account of his journey in Harden's *Zukunft*, February 17, 1900) — For this question of race-crossings and the constant victory of the inferior race over the superior, see also the work of Ferdinand Hueppe, which is equally rich in facts and perceptions, *Über die modernen Kolonisationsbestrebungen und die Anpassungsmöglichkeit der Europäer an die Tropen* (*Berliner klinische Wochenschrift*, 1901). In Australia, for example, a process of sifting is quietly but very quickly going on, whereby the tall

291 THE CHAOS

have an example of this: the short round skulls are constantly increasing in numbers and so gradually superseding the narrow "dolichocephali," of which, according to the unanimous testimony of excavated tombs, almost the whole of the genuine old Teutonic, Slavonic and Celtic races consisted; in this we see the growing predominance of an alien race which had been conquered by the Indo-Teutonic (to-day it is mostly called "Turanic"), and which by animal force gradually overpowers the mentally superior race. * In this connection too perhaps should be mentioned the peculiar fact that dark eyes are becoming so much more prevalent than grey and blue, because in marriages between people with differently coloured eyes the dark are almost without exception much more frequently represented in the descendants than the light. †

If I were minded to follow up this argument it would land us in one of the thorniest branches of modern science. This, however, is absolutely unnecessary for my purpose. Without troubling myself about any definition, I have given a picture of Race as it is exhibited in the individual character, in the mighty achievements of genius, in the most brilliant pages of the history of man: in the next

fair Teuton — so strongly represented in the English blood — is disappearing, while the added element of the *homo alpinus* is gaining the upper hand.

* There is a clear and simple summary in Johannes Ranke, *Der Mensch*, ii. 296 ff. The discussion of all these questions in Topinard's *L'Anthropologie*, Part II., is more thorough, but for that reason much more difficult to follow. It is remarkable that the latter only uses the word "race" to denote a hypothetical entity, the actual existence of which at any time cannot be proved. *Il n'y a plus de races pures*. Who seeks to prove that there ever were any in this *a priori* sense of anthropological presuppositions? Pure animal races are obtained only by breeding and on the fundamental basis of crossing; why should the opposite hold of men? — Besides, this whole "Turanic" hypothesis is, like all these things, still very much of an airy abstraction. See further details in chap. vi.

† Alphonse de Candolle: *Histoire des Sciences et des Savants depuis deux Siècles*, 2e éd., p. 576.

292 THE CHAOS

place I have called attention to the most important conditions which scientific observation has pointed out as laying the foundation for the origin of noble races. That the introduction of contrary conditions must be followed by degeneration, or at any rate by the retarding of the development of noble qualities, seems to be in the highest degree probable, and might be proved in many ways by reference both to the past and the present. I have purposely exercised caution and self-restraint. In such labyrinthine tangles the narrowest path is the safest. The only task which I have proposed to myself has been to call into being a really vivid representation of what Race is, of what it has meant for mankind in the past and still means in the present.

THE NATION

There is one point which I have not expressly formulated, but it is self-evident from all that I have said; the conception of Race has nothing in it unless we take it in the narrowest and not in the widest sense: if we follow the usual custom and use the word to denote far remote hypothetical races, it ends by becoming little more than a colourless synonym for "mankind" — possibly including the long-tailed and short-tailed apes: Race only has a meaning when it relates to the experiences of the past and the events of the present.

Here we begin to understand what nation signifies for race. It is almost always the nation, as a political structure, that creates the conditions for the formation of race or at least leads to the highest and most individual activities of race. Wherever, as in India, nations are not formed, the stock of strength that has been gathered by race decays. But the confusion which prevails with regard to the idea of race hinders even the most learned from understanding this great significance of

nations, whereby they are at the same time prevented from understanding the fundamental facts of history. For, in fact, what is it that our historians to-day teach us concerning the relation of race to nation?

I take up any book by chance — Renan's discourse, *What is a Nation?* In hundreds of others we find the same doctrines. The thesis is clearly formulated by Renan: "The fact of race," he writes, "originally of decisive importance, loses significance every day." * On what does he base this assertion? By pointing to the fact that the most capable nations of Europe are of mixed blood. What a mass of delusive conclusions this one sentence contains, what incapacity to be taught by what is evident to the eye! Nature and history do not furnish a single example of pre-eminently noble races with individual physiognomies, which were not produced by crossing: and now we are to believe that a nation of such distinct individuality as the English does not represent a race, because it originated from a mixture of Anglo-Saxon, Danish and Norman blood (stems moreover that were closely related)! I am to deny the clearest evidence which shows me that the Englishman is at least as markedly unique a being as the Greek and the Roman of the most brilliant epochs, and that in favour of an arbitrary, eternally indemonstrable abstraction, in favour of the presupposed, original "pure race." Two pages before, Renan himself had stated on the basis of anthropological discoveries that among the oldest Aryans, Semites, Turanians (*les groupes aryen primitif, sémitique primitif, touranien primitif*) one finds men of very different build of body, some with long, others with short skulls, so that they too had possessed no common "physiological unity." What delusions will not arise, as soon as man seeks for supposed "origins"! Again and again I must

* Renan: *Discours et Conférences*, 3e éd., p. 297, "Le fait de la race, capital à l'origine, va donc toujours perdant de son importance."

quote Goethe's great remark: "Animated inquiry into cause does infinite harm." Instead of taking the given fact, the discoverable as it is, and contenting ourselves with the knowledge of the nearest, demonstrable conditions, we ever and again fancy we must start from absolutely hypothetical causes and suppositions lying as far back as possible, and to these we sacrifice without hesitation that which is present and beyond

doubt. That is what our “empiricists“ are like. That they do not see further than their own noses, we gladly believe from their own confession, but unfortunately they do not see even so far, but run up against solid facts and complain then about the said facts, not about their own shortsightedness. What kind of thing is this originally “physiologically uniform race“ of which Renan speaks? Probably a near relation of Haeckel's human apes. And in favour of this hypothetical beast I am to deny that the English people, the Prussians, the Spaniards have a definite and absolutely individual character! Renan misses physiological unity: does he not comprehend that physiological unity is brought about by marriage? Who then tells him that the hypothetical aboriginal Aryans were not also the result of gradual development? We know nothing about it: but what we do know entitles us to suppose it from analogy. There were among them narrow heads and broad ones: who knows but this crossing was necessary to produce one very noble race? The common English horse and the Arabian horse (which doubtless was produced originally by some crossing) were also “physiologically“ very different, and yet from their union was produced in the course of time the most physiologically uniform and noblest race of animals in the world, the English thoroughbred. Now the great scholar Renan sees the English human thoroughbred, so to speak, arising before his eyes: the ages of history are before him. What does he deduce therefrom? He says: since the English-

295 THE CHAOS

man of to-day is neither the Celt of Caesar's time nor the Anglo-Saxon of Hengist, nor the Dane of Knut, nor the Norman of the Conqueror, but the outcome of a crossing of all four, one cannot speak of an English race at all. That is to say because the English race, like every other race of which we have any knowledge, has grown historically, because it is something peculiar and absolutely new, therefore it does not exist! In truth, nothing beats the logic of the scholar!

Was ihr nicht rechnet

Glaubt ihr, sei nicht wahr. *

Our opinion concerning the importance of nationality in the formation of race must be quite different. The Roman Empire in the imperial period was the materialisation of the anti-national principle; this principle led to racelessness and simultaneously to intellectual and moral chaos; mankind was only rescued from this chaos by the more and more decisive development of the opposite or national principle. † Political nationality has not always played the same *rôle* in the production of individual races as it has in our modern culture; I need only refer to India, Greece and the Israelites; but the problem was nowhere solved so

beautifully, successfully and as it appears so lastingly, as by the Teutonic peoples. As though conjured up out of the soil there arose in this small corner of Europe a number of absolutely new, differentiated national organisms. Renan is of opinion that race existed only in the old “polis,” because it was only there that the numerical limitation had permitted community of blood; this is absolutely false; one need only reckon back a few centuries, and every one has a hundred thousand ancestors; what, therefore, in the narrow circle of Athens took place in a com-

* What you do not reckon, / You fancy, is not true.

† This forms the subject of the [eighth chapter](#) (vol. ii.).

296 THE CHAOS

paratively short time, namely, the physiological union, took place in our case in the course of several centuries and is still continued. Race formation, far from decreasing in our nations, must daily increase. The longer a definite group of countries remains politically united, the closer does the “physiological unity“ which is demanded become, and the more quickly and thoroughly does it assimilate strange elements. Our anthropologists and historians simply presuppose that in their hypothetical primitive races the specific distinguishing characteristics were highly developed, but that they are now progressively decreasing; there is consequently, they aver, a movement from original complexity to increasing simplicity. This supposition is contrary to all experience, which rather teaches us that individualisation is a result of growing differentiation and separation. The whole science of biology contradicts the supposition that an organic creature first appears with clearly marked characteristics, which then gradually disappear; it actually forces us to the very opposite hypothesis that the early human race was a variable, comparatively colourless aggregate, from which the individual types have developed with increasing divergence and increasingly distinct individuality; a hypothesis which all history confirms. The sound and normal evolution of man is therefore not from race to racelessness but on the contrary from racelessness to ever clearer distinctness of race. The enrichment of life by new individualities seems everywhere to be one of the highest laws of inscrutable nature. Now here in the case of man the nation plays a most important part, because it almost always brings about crossing, followed by inbreeding. All Europe proves this. Renan shows how many Slavs have united with the Teutonic peoples, and asks somewhat sneeringly whether we have any right to call the Germans of to-day “Teutonic“: well, we need not

quarrel about names in such a case — what the Germans are to-day Renan has been able to learn in the year 1870; he has been taught it too by the German specialists, to whose industry he owes nine-tenths of his knowledge. That is the valuable result of the creation of race by nation-building. And since race is not a mere word, but an organic living thing, it follows as a matter of course that it never remains stationary; it is ennobled or it degenerates, it develops in this or that direction and lets this or that quality decay. This is a law of all individual life. But the firm national union is the surest protection against going astray: it signifies common memory, common hope, common intellectual nourishment; it fixes firmly the existing bond of blood and impels us to make it ever closer.

THE HERO

Just as important as the clear comprehension of the organic relation of race to nation is that of the organic relation of race to its quintessence, the hero or genius. We are apt to fancy we must choose between hero-worship and the opposite. But the one as well as the other testifies to poverty of insight. What I have said in the general introduction need not be repeated; but here, where the question of race is in the forefront, this problem takes a particularly clear form, and with some power of intuition we must surely perceive that the influence of intellectually pre-eminent units in a race, like the human, the individuality of which depends upon the development of its intellectual faculties, is immeasurable, for good and for evil; these units are the feet that carry and the hands that mould, they are the countenance on which we others gaze, they are the eye which beholds the rest of the world in a definite way and then communicates what it has seen to the rest of the organism.

But they are produced by the whole corporation; they can arise only from its vital action, only in it and from it do they gain importance. What is the use of the hand if it does not grow out of a strong arm as part and parcel of it? What is the use of the eye if the radiant forms which it has seen are not reflected in a dark, almost amorphous brain mass lying behind it? Phenomena only gain significance when they are united to other phenomena. The richer the blood that courses invisibly through the

veins, the more luxuriant will be the blossoms of life that spring forth. The assertion that Homer created Greece is indeed literally true, but remains onesided and misleading as long as we do not add: only an incomparable people, only a quite definite, ennobled race could produce this man, only a race in which the seeing and shaping eye had been “extravagantly“ developed. * Without Homer Greece would not have become Greece, without the Hellenes Homer would never have been born. It was the same race which gave birth to the great seer of forms that produced the inventive seer of figures, Euclid, the lynx-eyed arranger of ideas, Aristotle, the man who first perceived the system of the cosmos, Aristarchus, and so on *ad infinitum*. Nature is not so simple as scholastic wisdom fancies: if great personality is our “most precious gift,“ communal greatness is the only soil on which it can grow. It is the whole race, for instance, that creates the language, and therewith at the same time definite artistic, philosophical, religious, in fact even practical possibilities, but also insuperable limitations. No philosopher could ever arise on Hebrew soil, because the spirit of the Hebrew language makes the interpretation of metaphysical thoughts absolutely impossible; for the same reason no Semitic people could possess a mythology in the same sense

* Any one who wants to gain a vivid conception of the extraordinary strength of these races, capable of serving as basis for a Homer, should read the description of the strongholds of Tiryns and Mycenae from the Atridean time, as they still stand to-day after tens of centuries.

299 THE CHAOS

as the Indians and the Teutonic peoples. One sees what definite paths are marked out even for the greatest men by the common achievements of the whole race. * But it is not a question of language alone. Homer had to find the myths in existence in order to be able to mould them into shape; Shakespeare put upon the stage the history which the English people had made; Bach and Beethoven spring from races which had attracted the attention of the ancients by their singing. And Mohammed? Could he have made the Arabs a world-power, had they not as one of the purest bred races in the world possessed definite “extravagant“ qualities? But for the new Prussian race, could the Great Elector have begun, the Great Frederick have extended, and the Great William have completed the structure which is now United Germany?

THE RACELESS CHAOS

The first task set us in this chapter is now fulfilled; we have got a clear concrete idea of what race is and what it signifies for mankind; we have seen too, from some examples of the present time, how fatal the absence of race, that is, the chaos of unindividualised, speciesless human agglomerates, is. Any one who perceives this and ponders over it will gradually realise what it signifies for our Teutonic culture that the inherited culture of antiquity, which at important points still not only forms the foundations but also the walls of the structure, was not transmitted to us by a definite people but by a nationless mixture without physiognomy, in which mongrels held the whip-hand, namely, by the racial chaos of the decaying Roman Empire. Our whole intellectual development is still under the curse of this unfortunate intermediate

* According to Renan (*Israël*, i. 102) the Hebrew language is utterly incapable of expressing a philosophical thought, a mythological conception, the feeling of the Infinite, the emotions of the human soul or even pure observation of nature.

300 THE CHAOS

stage; it is this that supplied weapons to the anti-national, anti-racial powers even in the nineteenth century.

Even before Julius Caesar, the Chaos begins to appear; through Caracalla it is elevated to the official principle of the Roman Empire. * Throughout the whole extent of the Empire there was thorough mixing of blood, but in such a way that real bastardising, that is, the crossing of unrelated or of noble and ignoble races occurred almost wholly in the most southern and eastern parts, where the Semites met the Indo-Europeans — that is to say, in the capitals Rome and Constantinople, along the whole north coast of Africa (as well as on the coasts of Spain and Gaul), above all in Egypt, Syria and Asia Minor.

It is as easy as it is important to form an idea of the area of this complicated geographical condition. The Danube and the Rhine almost meet at their source. The two river-districts fit so closely into each other that there is, it is said, in the neighbourhood of the Albula Pass a small lake, which when there is high water flows on the one side into the Albula and the Rhine, on the other into the Inn and the Danube. Now if we follow the courses of these rivers, up the Rhine from the mouth of the old Rhine near Leyden and down the Danube till it falls into the Black Sea, we get an unbroken line crossing the Continent from north-west to south-east; this, roughly speaking, forms the northern boundary of the Roman Empire for a long period of time; except in parts of Dacia (the Roumania of to-day) the Romans never asserted themselves for long north and east of this line. †

* See [p. 124](#).

† The Roman fortified boundary did indeed include a considerable portion north of the Danube and east of the Rhine, because the *limes* branched off westwards above Regensburg, came near Stuttgart, then north again till it met the Maine west of Würzburg. But this tithe-land, as it was called, was not colonised by Italians, but, as Tacitus tells us, by “the most fickle of the Gauls“ (Cf. Wietersheim, *Völkerwanderung*, i. 161 ff.).

301 THE CHAOS

This line divides Europe (if we include the African and Asian possessions of Rome) into two almost equal parts. In the south the great transfusion of blood (as the doctors call the injecting of strange blood into an organism) took place. If Maspero in his history of the peoples of the Classical East entitles one volume “The First Chaos of Races,” then we may well speak here of a second chaos. In Britain, in Rhetia, in the extreme north of Gaul, &c., it seems indeed that in spite of the Roman sway there was no thorough fusion; in the rest of Gaul too, as well as in Spain, the newly imported elements from Rome had at least several centuries of comparative isolation to mingle with the former inhabitants before other elements came, a circumstance which rendered possible the formation of a new and very characteristic race, the Gallo-Roman. In the south-east, on the other hand, and especially in all centres of culture (which, as already pointed out, all lay in the south and the east), there was a medley all the more fundamentally pernicious in that those who came in streams from the Levant were themselves nothing but half-castes. For example, we must not imagine that the Syrians of that time were a definite nation, a people, a race: they were rather a motley agglomeration of pseudo-Hittite, pseudo-Semitic, pseudo-Hellenic, pseudo-Persian, pseudo-Scythian mongrels. What the French call *un charme troublant* — superficial cleverness combined with a peculiar sort of beauty — is often the characteristic of the half-caste; one can observe this daily at the present day in cities like Vienna, where people of all nations meet; but the peculiar unsteadiness, the small power of resistance, the want of character, in short, the moral degeneracy of these people is equally marked. I name the Syrian because I prefer examples to wordy enumerations; he was the very pattern of the bastard sundered from all national relationship, and for that very reason, up to the

302 THE CHAOS

time of the Teutonic invasion, and even later, he played a leading part. We find Syrians upon the imperial throne; Caracalla belongs to them,

and Heliogabalus, that monster robed in silk and gold, tricked out like a dancing girl, was imported direct from Syria; we find them in all administrative offices and prefectures; they, like their counterpart, the African mongrels, have great influence in the codification of the Law and an absolute casting-vote in the constitution of the universal Roman Church. Let us look more closely at one of these men; we shall in that way gain a lively picture of the civilised fraction of the Empire of that day with its pushing culture-mongers, and at the same time obtain an insight into the soul of the Chaos of Peoples.

LUCIAN

Every one, I fancy, knows the author Lucian, at least by name; his exceptional talents force him upon our notice. Born on the banks of the Euphrates, not far from the first spurs of the Tauric mountain range (in which energetic races of Indo-European descent still lived), in addition to the Syrian *patois*, the boy begins to learn to murder Greek. Having shown a talent for drawing and sculpture he is apprenticed to a sculptor, but only after a family council has been held to decide how the boy may as speedily as possible make a fortune. During his whole life, in spite of the amount of his subsequent wealth, this desire for money remains the guiding star — no, that is too fine an expression — the driving impulse of this gifted Syrian; in his *Nigrinus* he admits with enviable frankness that money and fame are the things dearest to him in the world, and even as an old man he writes expressly, that he accepts the high official position offered by the Gladiator-Emperor Commodus for the sake of the money. But in art he

303 THE CHAOS

makes no progress. In a famous book *The Dream*, * which, however, as far as I know, is not appreciated according to its true purport by any historian, Lucian tells us why he gave up art and preferred to become a jurist and belles-lettrist. In a dream two women had appeared to him: the one “looked like work,” had hard hands, her dress covered over and over with plaster; the other was elegantly dressed and stood calmly there; the one was Art, the other — he who does not know will never guess, the other was — Culture. † Poor Art tries to inspire her new disciple with zeal by the example of Phidias and Polycletus, of Myron and Praxiteles, but in vain; for Culture proves convincingly that Art is an “ignoble occupation”; that the artist remains the whole day bent over his work in a dirty smockfrock, like a slave; even Phidias was only “a common workman,” who “lived from the toil of his hands”; whoever, on the other hand,

chooses Culture instead of Art, has the prospect of riches and high offices, and when he goes for a walk in the street, the people will nudge each other and say, "See, there goes that famous man!" ‡ Quickly making up his mind Lucian sprang to his feet: "I left the ugly toilsome life and went over to Culture." To-day sculptor, to-morrow advocate; he who is born without a definite calling can choose any; § whoever seeks gold and fame does not need to look aloft and runs no risk of falling into the well, like the hero of the German fairy

* Not to be confused with the *Dream of the Shoemaker Micyllus*.

† Greek word *παιδεία* German *Bildung*; so the best translators. It is not a question of the education of children, and "Science" would imply too much. The possible objection that the first woman does not introduce herself as "Art" simply, but as the "Art of cutting Hermae" may be met by the rejoinder that later she is described as *Τέχνη* and that the appeal to Phidias and other artists admits no doubt about the intention.

‡ The faint echo we have heard in the nineteenth century: "When the best names are named, mine too will be mentioned" (Heine).

§ Cf. [p. 242](#).

304 THE CHAOS

tale. Do not imagine that *The Dream* is a satire; Lucian gave it as a lecture in his native town, when he visited it later, honoured and wealthy; he himself tells us that he set up his life as an example to the youth of Samosata. Such men, otherwise so clever, never understand what a bitter satire their fate is on the life of the really great; how otherwise could a Heine have placed himself on the same plane as a Goethe? Lucian had chosen Culture, and to acquire it he went to Antioch. Athens was indeed still the great high school of knowledge and taste, but was considered old-fashioned; Syrian Antioch and the so-called "Hellenic" Ephesus, which nevertheless was even in the second century thoroughly saturated with alien elements, offered much greater attractions to the cosmopolitan youth of the Roman Empire. There Lucian studied law and eloquence. But to him as an intelligent man the abuse of the Greek language by his teachers was painful; he guessed the value of a pure style and moved to Athens. It is characteristic that he ventured after a short spell of study to appear there as advocate and orator; in the meantime he had learned everything, except propriety; the Athenians taught him this, they laughed at the "barbarian" with his pedantic tags of strange culture and thereby gave him a valuable hint; he disappeared to a place where taste was not so indispensable, to Marseilles. This seaport of the Phoenician Diaspora had just received by the arrival of thousands of Jews from Palestine such a clearly marked character that it was simply called "the city of the Jews"; but Gauls, Romans; Spaniards, Ligurians, all conceivable races met there. Here, in

New Athens, as the inhabitants, with a delicate recognition of their own intellectual worth, called it, Lucian lived for many years and became a rich man; he gave up the profession of advocate, for which he would have needed to learn Latin thoroughly; besides, there was great competition, and even in Antioch he had not had great success

305 THE CHAOS

as a pleader; what these mushroom plutocrats chiefly wanted was Culture, modern Culture and rules of etiquette. Had not "Culture" been Lucian's ideal, his dream? Had he not studied in Antioch and "spoken openly" even in Athens? Accordingly he gave lectures; but the listeners did not laugh at him, as in Athens, but paid any entrance fee that he cared to ask. Besides, he travelled over all Gaul as professional orator, at that time a very profitable business: to-day commemorating the virtues of a dead person, whom he had never seen in life, to-morrow taking part in the celebration of a religious festival that was given in honour of some local Gallo-Roman divinity, whose name a Syrian could not even pronounce. Any one who wishes to get an idea of this oratory should look at the *Florida* of Apuleius, a contemporary but African mestizo; * this is a collection of shorter and longer oratorical passages written for effect, to be put into any speech whatever, in order that the audience might think it a sudden inspiration, and be startled and carried away by the great knowledge, wit and pathos of the orator; there it is all in stock: the profound, the pointed, the clever anecdote, the devoutly submissive, the proud claims of freedom, even the excuse for being unprepared and the thanks for the statues that might be offered to the orator as a surprise! Just such things are pictures of a man and not of a man only, but of a whole Culture or, to use Lucian's word, of a whole *παιδεία*. Any one who has seen Prince Bismarck in one of his great speeches struggling to express himself will understand what I mean. — When forty years of age Lucian turned his back on Gaul; to settle in a definite place, to link his life perpetually with that of any country never occurs to him; besides

* Apuleius boasts expressly of his mixed origin: He too studied in Syria and Egypt and travelled in Greece, hence had practically the same educational course as Lucian.

306 THE CHAOS

there were no nations; if Lucian returns for a short visit to his native place it is not from heartlonging but, as he himself honestly confesses, to show his rich garments to those who knew him when poor. * Then he

settles in Athens for a considerable period, but keeps silent this time and industriously studies philosophy and science in the honest endeavour to find at last what lies concealed behind this lauded Hellenic culture. That this man, who for twenty years had taught “Hellenic culture“ and gained riches and honour from it, suddenly notices that he never understood even the elements of this culture, is an almost pathetic trait and a proof of exceptional gifts. For that reason I have chosen him in particular. In his writings one finds, alongside of puns and many good jokes and in addition to fine narrative, many a sharp and sometimes pathetic remark. But what could be the result of this study? Little or nothing. We men are not pieces in a game of draughts; there was just as little possibility of becoming a different person by learned instruction in Athens as there is to-day of becoming a “beautiful personality“ in Berlin, as Professor Virchow hopes from the influence of the University there — if one is not already such at matriculation. With nothing is a man's knowledge so intimately bound up as with his Being, in other words, with his definite individuality, his definite organisation. Plato expressed the opinion that knowledge was remembrance; modern biology gives the word a slightly different interpretation but agrees with the philosopher. In a perfectly significant sense we can say that each man can only know, what he is. Lucian himself

* The *Fliegende Blätter* of 1896 has a picture which shows a Counsellor of Commerce and his wife just entering their carriage:

“*She*: Where shall we drive to to-day?“

“*He*: Of course through the town; to make the people envy us!“

That is exactly the same stage of culture.

307 THE CHAOS

felt that all that he had learned and taught hitherto was mere tinsel — matters of fact, not the soul from which these facts grow: the covering but without the body, the shell but without the kernel. And when at last he understood this and broke the shell, what did he find? Nothing. Of course nothing. Nature has first to produce the kernel, the shell is a later accrescence; the body must be born before it can be clothed; the hero's heart must beat before heroic deeds can be achieved. The only kernel Lucian could find was himself; as soon as he tore from his body the rags of Roman Law and Hellenic poetry, he revealed a clever Syrian mestizo, a bastard born of fifty unrecorded crossings, the man who, with the unerring instinct of youth, had despised Phidias as a workman, and had chosen the career that with the least possible trouble would earn for him most money and the applause of the vulgar herd. All the philologists in the world may assure me that Lucian's remarks about religion and

philosophy are profound, that he was a daring opponent of superstition, &c., I shall never believe it. Lucian was utterly incapable of knowing what religion and philosophy are. In many of his writings he enumerates all possible “systems“ one after another; for example, in *Icaromenippus*, in the *Selling of Philosophical Characters*, &c.; it is always only the most superficial element that he comprehends, the formal motive power, without which the utterance of a thought is not possible, but which in truth must not be confused with the thought itself. So, too, in regard to religion. Aristophanes had scoffed as Voltaire did in later days; but the satire of both these men had its origin in a positive, constructive thought, and everywhere one sees the flash of fanatical love for the people of the homeland, for the firm, definite, related community, which embraced and supported each one of them with its traditions, its faith and its great men; Lucian, on the

308 THE CHAOS

other hand, scoffs like Heine, * he has no noble aim, no profound conviction, no thorough understanding; he drifts about aimlessly like a wreck on the ocean, nowhere at home, not without noble impulses, but without any definite object to which he might devote himself, learned, but yet one of those monsters of learning who, Calderon says,

know everything and understand nothing.

But one thing he understood and therein lies for us his whole importance as a writer; he understood the spirit that he resembled, namely, the totally bastardised, depraved and degenerate world around him; he pictures it and scourges it, as only one who himself belonged to it could, one who knew its motives and methods from his own experience. Here the kernel was not lacking. Hence his delightful satires on the Homeric critics, on the learned professions which were rotten to the core, on religious swindlers, on puffed-up, rude and ignorant millionaires, on medical quacks, &c. Here his talent and his knowledge of the world together contributed to the accomplishment of great things. — And in order that my description may not be incomplete, I may add that the second stay in Athens, if it did not teach Lucian the meaning of mythology, or of metaphysics, or of the heroic character, yet became for him a new source of money-making. Here he turned his attention industriously to authorship, wrote his *Conversations of the Gods*, his *Conversations of the Dead*, in all probability most of his best things. He invented a light form of dialogue (for which he gave himself the title of “Prometheus the author“!); at bottom they are good feuilletons, of the kind which the philistine to this day likes to read in

* The one fault in this second comparison is that Heine did belong to a definite people and in consequence possessed a more definite physiognomy.

309 THE CHAOS

the morning with his coffee. They brought him in considerable sums of money, when he began to travel again and delivered them in public as lectures. But this fashion also passed, or perhaps with age he had tired of a vagabond life. He discarded the one legacy, Hellenic art and philosophy, and turned to the other — Roman Law; he became State Advocate (as some say) or President of the Court (as others say) in Egypt and died in this office.

I think that a single career such as this shows us, more clearly than many a learned exposition, what the mental chaos was, which at that time lay sheltered beneath the uniform mantle of the tyrannical Roman Empire. We cannot say of a man like Lucian that he was immoral; no, what we learn from such an example is that morality and arbitrariness are two contradictory ideas. Men who do not inherit definite ideals with their blood are neither moral nor immoral, they are simply “without morals.” If I may be allowed to use a current phrase to explain my meaning, I should say they are neither good nor bad, equally they are neither beautiful nor ugly, deep nor shallow. The individual in fact cannot make for himself an ideal of life and a moral law; these very things can only exist as a gradual growth. For this reason it was very wise of Lucian, in spite of his talent, to give up in time his idea of emulating Phidias. He could become an orator for the Massillians, and a President of Court for the Egyptians, even, if you will, a feuilletonist for all time, but an artist or a thinker never.

AUGUSTINE

We may be met by the objection that out of the old Chaos of Peoples there arose men of great importance, whose influence has made itself felt upon succeeding generations, until this day, in a far more penetrating

310 THE CHAOS

sense. This presents no difficulty for the irrefutable acceptance of the importance of race to humanity. In the midst of a chaos single individuals may still be of perfectly pure race, or they may at least belong principally to one definite race. Such a man, for example, as Ambrosius

must surely be of genuine, noble descent, of that strong race which had made Rome great; I cannot indeed prove it, for in the confusion of those times history is unable to furnish exact information as to the pedigree of any man of importance. At the same time no one can prove the contrary, so the personality of the individual must decide the question. Moreover, it must not be overlooked that, unless crossing without plan or method goes on with wild recklessness, the qualities of a dominant race will remain conspicuous for generations, though maybe in a much weakened condition, and that they are capable of flashing up again as atavism in single individuals. The breeding of animals furnishes numerous examples of this. Take a piece of paper and sketch a genealogical tree; we shall see that, as soon as we go back only four generations, an individual has already thirty ancestors, whose blood flows in his veins. If we now suppose two races A and B, such a table will clearly show how very different the hybridisation in the case of a crossing of peoples must be, from the full hybrid directly composed of A and B to the individual of whose sixteen ancestors only one was a hybrid. Besides, experience daily teaches us that exceptionally gifted and beautiful human beings are frequently produced by crossing; it is, however, as I have said, not a question of the individual only, but of his relation to other individuals, to a uniform complex; if this single mongrel enters into a definite race-centre, he may have a very quickening effect upon it; if he falls among a mere heap of beings, he is, like Lucian, only a stick among sticks, not a branch on a living tree. The immeasurable

311 THE CHAOS

power of ideas must also be reckoned with. They are indeed misconstrued, mishandled and abused by illegitimate successors — as we saw in the case of pseudo-Roman law and Platonic philosophy — but they continue to have a formative influence. What was it if not the death-agony of the old genuine imperial idea that held together this agglomeration of peoples till the strong Dietrich of Berne came to set them free? Whence did those men of the chaos derive their thoughts and their religion? Not from themselves, but only from Jews and Hellenes. And so all that held them together, all upon which their very existence depended, was drawn from the inheritance of noble races. Take any of the greatest men of the chaotic period, for example the venerable Augustine, distinguished alike by temperament and ability. To be unbiased, let us leave our own purely religious standpoint and ask ourselves whether there was not a hopeless chaos in the brain of this eminent man? In the world of his imagination we find the Jewish belief in Jehovah, the mythology of Greece, Alexandrine Neoplatonism, Romish priestcraft, the Pauline conception of God, and the contemplation of the

Crucified Lord, all jumbled together in heterogeneous confusion. Augustine has to reject, in deference to Hebraic materialism, many incomparably loftier religious thoughts — loftier because pure and genuinely racial thoughts — which Origenes held, but at the same time he introduces into theology as predestination the ancient Aryan conception of necessity, whereby the old dogma of all Judaism, the unconditional arbitrariness of will, goes to the wall. *

* Augustine is indeed extremely cautious; he says, for example, of the prescience of God and the contradictory view, the free will of man: “We embrace both convictions, we confess to both, truly and honestly; to the one that we may believe rightly, to the other that we may live rightly“ (*illud, ut bene credamus; hoc, ut bene vivamus*); cf. *De Civ. Dei*, v. 10. With this is closely connected that further question, whether God himself is free or stands under the law; the intellect inclines clearly in the case of Augustine to

312 THE CHAOS

He spends twelve years writing a book against the heathen gods, but himself believes in their existence in so tangible and fetichist a sense as no cultured Greek for a thousand years before him; he looks upon them in fact as daemons and therefore creations of God; but one must not, he thinks, regard them as creators (“*immundos spiritus esse et perniciose daemona, vel certe creaturas non Creatorem, veritas Christiana convincit*”). In his chief work, *De Civitate Dei*, Augustine disputes in chapter after chapter with his countryman Apuleius regarding the nature of the daemons and other good and bad spirits, endeavouring, if not to deny their existence, at least to reduce them to an unimportant and uninfluential element and thus to replace crass superstition by genuine religion; nevertheless, he inclines in all earnest to the belief that Apuleius himself was changed by the unguent of the Thessalian witch into an ass, and this is all the more comical to us, because Apuleius, although he wrote a great deal about daemons, never thought of representing this transformation as an actual occurrence when he wrote his novel, *The Metamorphoses or the Golden Ass*. * I cannot of course enter more fully into this matter here, that would take me too far; it would deserve a whole book to itself; and yet the detailed characterisation of the intellectual condition of the noble among these sons of the chaos would be the right complement to the sketch of the frivolous Lucian. † We should see

the latter view, his dogmatic creed to the former. Is an action bad because God has forbidden it, or had he to forbid it because it is bad? In his *Contra Mendacium*, chap. xv., Augustine takes the second alternative; in other writings the former.

* This story seems to have been in vogue at the time; for Lucian too has a *Lucius or the Enchanted Ass*, which looks indeed as if it were translated from fragments of the Apuleian one. Augustine says of the transformation “*aut finxit, aut indicavit*,” but he

clearly inclines to the latter view.

† The irreconcilable contradictions in the religious thought and feeling of Augustine are fully discussed in the [seventh chapter](#) (vol. ii.) and the gap here left is thus to some extent filled.

313 THE CHAOS

that everywhere the equilibrium is disturbed. In Lucian the unfettered intellect is uppermost and lack of moral strength ruins the finest qualities; in Augustine, character wrestles with intellect in a tussle of doubtful issue, and does not rest until intellect is thrown and put in fetters.

Such were the men who handed down to us the legacy of antiquity. "We are like shipwrecked sailors thrown on the shore by the wild breakers," Ambrosius exclaims in pain. Philosophy and law, ideas of State, freedom, human dignity passed through their hands; it was they who raised to the dignity of acknowledged dogmas the superstition (belief in daemons, witchcraft, &c.) which formerly was found only among the most ignorant scum of the population; it was they who forged a new religion out of the most incompatible elements, who gave to the world the gift of the Roman Church, a kind of changeling born of the Roman imperial idea; at the same time it was they who with the fanaticism of the weak destroyed everything beautiful belonging to the past on which they could lay their hands, every memory of great generations. Hatred and disdain of every great achievement of the pure races were taught; a Lucian scoffs at the great thinkers, an Augustine reviles the heroes of Rome's heroic age, a Tertullian calls Homer "a liar." As soon as the orthodox emperors — Constantius, Theodosius, and others — ascend the throne (without exceptions mongrels in race, the great Diocletian being the last Emperor of pure blood *) the systematic destruction of all the monuments of antiquity begins. At the same time is introduced the deliberate lie that is supposed to further truth: such eminent Church fathers as Hieronymus and Chrysostomus encourage the *pia fraus*, the pious deception; immediately upon this follows the foundation of the might and right of the Roman see, not by courage and conquest, but by the colossal forgery of documents.

* Cf. also what is said on [p. 129 f.](#)

314 THE CHAOS

Even so respectable an historian as Eusebius has the simplicity worthy

of a better cause to confess that he remodels history wherever he sees the opportunity of furthering “the good cause.” In very truth this chaos which arose out of race fusion and the universal craze for anti-nationalism is an appalling spectacle!

ASCETIC DELUSION

Perhaps the fact has never yet been pointed out — I at least know of no book where it is — that the epidemic of asceticism which broke out at that time was directly connected with the feeling of disgust for that frightful condition of the world; some would fain see in it an unexampled religious awakening, others a religious disease; but that is interpreting the facts allegorically, for religion and asceticism are not necessarily connected. Nothing in the example of Christ could encourage asceticism; the early Christians knew it not; two hundred years after Christ Tertullian still wrote: “We Christians are not like the Brahmans and Gymnosophists of India, we do not live in forests or in banishment from the society of men: we feel that we owe God the Lord and Creator thanks for everything and we forbid the enjoyment of none of his works; we only practise moderation in order that we may not enjoy these things more than is good for us or make a bad use of them“ (*Apologeticus*, chap. xlii.). Why now did un-Christian asceticism all at once enter into Christianity? I for my part believe that we have here to deal with physical reasons. Even before the birth of Christ asceticism had taken its rise in the altogether bastardised Syria and Egypt; wherever blood was most mixed, it had taken a firm hold. Pachomius, the founder of the first Christian cloister, the author of the first monkish rule, is a servant of Serapis from Upper Egypt, who transferred to Christianity

315 THECHAOS

what he had learned in the societies of the fasting and self-chastising ascetics of Serapis. * Any one who still possessed a spark of noble impulse in that world of the unnational chaos was bound in fact to be disgusted with himself. Nowhere, where sound conditions prevailed, has unconditional asceticism been preached; on the contrary, the ancient peoples — Aryans, Semites, Mongolians — led by a marvellous instinct, are at one in regarding the begetting of children as one of the most sacred duties; whoever died without a son was laden with a curse. In Ancient India, of course, there were ascetics; but they might not disappear into the solitude of the forest till the son of their son was born; here the intention and fundamental idea are almost diametrically opposed to the asceticism of the Syrian Christians. To-day we

understand this; for we see that only one thing contributes to the ennobling of man: the begetting of pure races, the founding of definite nations. To beget sons, sons of the right kind, is without question the most sacred duty of the individual towards society; whatever else he may achieve, nothing will have such a lasting and indelible influence as the contribution to the increasing ennoblement of the race. From the limited, false standpoint of Gobineau it certainly does not much matter, for we can only decline and fall sooner or later; still less correct are they who appear to contradict him, but adopt the same hypothetical acceptance of aboriginal pure nations; but any one who understands how noble races are in reality produced, knows that they can arise again at any moment; that depends on us; here nature has clearly pointed out to us a great duty. Those men of the chaos therefore, who considered begetting a sin, and complete abstinence therefrom the highest of all virtues, committed a crime against the most sacred law of nature; they tried to prevent all good, noble men

* Cf. Otto Zöckler *Askese und Mönchtum*, 1897, i. 193 ff.

316 THE CHAOS

and women from leaving descendants, thus promoting the increase of the evil only, which meant of course that they did their best to bring about the deterioration of the human race. A Schopenhauer may joyfully collect from the Church fathers their pronouncements against marriage and see therein a confirmation of his pessimism; for me the connection is quite different: this sudden horror of the most natural impulses of man, their transformation from the most sacred duty to the most disgraceful sin, has a deeper foundation in those incomprehensible sources of our existence, where the physical and the metaphysical are not yet separated. After wars and pestilences, statistics tell us, births increase to an abnormal degree — nature helps herself; in that chaos which threatened all culture with eternal destruction, the births had to be retarded as much as possible; with horror the noble turned away from that world of sin, buried themselves in the deserts or in the caves of the hills, perched themselves on high pillars, chastised themselves and did penance. Childless they passed away. * Even where human society is in a state of disintegration, we see in fact a great connection; what each man by himself thinks and does always admits of a double interpretation — the subjective or individual, and the objective interpretation in relation to the world at large.

* In the fourth century the Roman Empire numbered hundreds of thousands of monks and nuns. It was not unusual for an abbot to have 10,000 monks in one cloister

and in the year 373 the one single Egyptian town Oxyrynchus had 20,000 nuns and 10,000 monks! Now consider the total numbers of the population of that time, and it will be clear what a great influence this ascetic epidemic must have had upon the non-multiplication of the bastard races. (See further details in Lecky's *History of European Morals*, 11th ed. ii. 105 ff.)

317 THE CHAOS

SACREDNESS OF PURE RACE

Here we touch upon a deep scientific fact; we are touching upon the revelation of the most important secret of all human history. Every one comprehends that man can in the true sense of the word only become “man“ in connection with others. Many, too, have grasped the meaning of Jean Paul's profound remark, which I prefixed as motto to a former chapter, that “only through man does man enter into the light of day“; few, however, have realised the fact that this attainment of manhood — this entry into the light of life — depends in degree upon definite organic conditions, conditions which in old days were observed instinctively and unconsciously, but which, now that owing to the increase of knowledge and the development of thought the impulses of instinct have lost their power, it becomes our duty consciously to recognise and respect. This study of the Roman Chaos of Peoples teaches us that race, and nationality which renders possible the formation of race, possess a significance which is not only physical and intellectual but also moral. Here there is before us something which we can characterise as a sacred law, the sacred law in accordance with which we enter upon the rights and duties of manhood: a “law,“ since it is found everywhere in nature, “sacred,“ in so far as it is left to our free will to ennoble ourselves or to degenerate as we please. This law teaches us to look upon the physical constitution as the basis of all that ennobles. For what is the moral apart from the physical? What would a soul be without body? I do not know. If our breast conceals something that is immortal, if we men reach with our thoughts to something transcendent, which we, like the blind, touch with longing hands without ever being able to see it,

318 THE CHAOS

if our heart is the battlefield between the finite and the infinite, then the constitution of this body — breast, brain, heart — must be of immeasurable consequence. “However the great dark background of things may in truth be constituted, the entrance to it is open to us only

in this poor life of ours, and so even our ephemeral actions contain this earnest, deep, and inevitable significance," says Solon in the beautiful dialogue of Heinrich von Stein. * "Only in this life!" But wherewith do we live if not with our body? Indeed, we do not need to look forth into any world beyond (which will appear problematic to many people), as Solon does in the passage quoted; the entrance even to this earthly life is solely and only open to us through our body and this life will be for us poor or rich, ugly or beautiful, insipid or precious, according to the constitution of this our one, all-embracing organ of life. I have already shown from examples taken from methodical animal breeding and from human history how race arises and is gradually ennobled, also how it degenerates; what then is this race if not a collective term for a number of individual bodies? It is no arbitrary idea, no abstraction; these individualities are linked with one another by an invisible but absolutely real power resting upon material facts. Of course the race consists of individuals; but the individual himself can only attain to the full and noblest development of his qualities within definite conditions which are embraced in the word "race." This is based upon a simple law, but it points simultaneously in two directions. All organic nature, vegetable as well as animal, proves that the choice of the two parents is of decisive influence upon the individual that is born; but besides this it proves that the principle prevailing here is a collective and progressive one, because in the first place a common parent-stock must gradually be formed, from

* *Helden und Welt: dramatische Bilder* (Chemnitz, 1883).

319 THE CHAOS

which then, similarly step by step, are produced individuals who are on an average superior to those outside such a union, and among these again numerous individuals with really transcendent qualities. That is a fact of nature, just in the same sense as any other, but here, as in all phenomena of life, we are far from being able to analyse and explain it. Now what must not be lost sight of in the case of the human race is the circumstance that the moral and intellectual qualities are of preponderating importance. That is why in men any want of organic racial consistency, or fitness in the parent stock, means above all things a lack of all moral and intellectual coherence. The man who starts from nowhence reaches nowhither. The individual life is too short to be able to fix the eye on a goal and to reach it. The life of a whole people, too, would be too short if unity of race did not stamp it with a definite, limited character, if the transcendent splendour of many-sided and varying gifts were not concentrated by unity of stem, which permits a gradual ripening, a gradual development in definite directions, and finally

enables the most gifted individual to live for a super-individual purpose.

Race, as it arises and maintains itself in space and time, might be compared to the so-called range of power of a magnet. If a magnet be brought near to a heap of iron filings, they assume definite directions, so that a figure is formed with a clearly marked centre, from which lines radiate in all directions; the nearer we bring the magnet the more distinct and more mathematical does the figure become; very few pieces have placed themselves in exactly the same direction, but all have united into a practical and at the same time ideal unity by the possession of a common centre, and by the fact that the relative position of each individual to all the others is not arbitrary but obedient to a fixed law. It has ceased to be a heap, it has become a form. In the same way a human

320 THE CHAOS

race, a genuine nation, is distinguished from a mere congeries of men. The character of the race becoming more and more pronounced by pure breeding is like the approach of the magnet. The individual members of the nation may have ever so different qualities, the direction of their activities may be utterly divergent, yet together they form a moulded unity, and the power — or let us say rather the importance — of every individual is multiplied a thousandfold by his organic connection with countless others.

I have shown above how Lucian with all his gifts absolutely squandered his life; I have shown Augustine helplessly swaying to and fro like a pendulum between the loftiest thoughts and the crassest and silliest superstition: such men as these, cut off from all racial belongings, mongrels among mongrels, are in a position almost as unnatural as a hapless ant, carried and set down ten miles from its own nest. The ant, however, would suffer at least only through outward circumstances, but these men are by their own inner constitution barred from all genuine community of life.

The consideration of these facts teaches us that whatever may be our opinion as to the *causa finalis* of existence, man cannot fulfill his highest destiny as an isolated individual, as a mere exchangeable pawn, but only as a portion of an organic whole, as a member of a specific race. *

THE TEUTONIC PEOPLES

There is no doubt about it! The raceless and nationless chaos of the late Roman Empire was a pernicious and fatal condition, a sin against nature. Only one ray of light shone over that degenerate world. It came from the north. *Ex septentrione Lux!* If we take up a map, the Europe of the fourth century certainly seems at the

* "The individuals and the whole are identical," the Indian thinkers had taught (see Garbe's *Sāmkhya-Philosophie*, p. 158).

321 THE CHAOS

first glance to be more or less in a state of chaos even north of the Imperial boundary; we see quite a number of races established side by side, incessantly forcing their way in different directions: the Alemanni, the Marcomanni, the Saxons, the Franks, the Burgundians, the Goths, the Vandals, the Slavs, the Huns and many others. But it is only the political relations that are chaotic there; the nations are genuine, pure-bred races, men who carry with them their nobility as their only possession wherever destiny drives them. In one of the next chapters I shall have to speak of them. In the meantime I should like merely to warn those whose reading is less wide, against the idea that the "barbarians" suddenly "broke into" the highly civilised Roman Empire. This view, which is widespread among the superficially educated, is just as little in accordance with the facts as the further view that the "night of the Middle Ages" came down upon men because of this inroad of the barbarians.

It is this historical lie which veils the annihilating influence of that nationless time, and which turns into a destroyer the deliverer, the slayer of the laidly worm. For centuries the Teutons had been forcing their way into the Roman Empire, and though they often came as foes, they ended by becoming the sole principle of life and of might. Their gradual penetration into the Imperium, their gradual rise to a decisive power had taken place little by little just as their gradual civilisation had done; * already in the fourth century one could count numerous colonies of soldiers from entirely different Teutonic tribes (Batavians, Franks, Suevians, &c.) in the whole European extent of the

* Hermann is a Roman cavalier, speaks Latin fluently and has thoroughly studied the Roman art of administration. So, too, most of the Teutonic princes. Their troops, too, were at home in the whole Roman empire and so acquainted with the customs of so-called civilised men, long before they immigrated with all their goods and chattels into these lands.

322 THE CHAOS

Roman Empire; * in Spain, in Gaul, in Italy, in Thrace, indeed often even in Asia Minor, it is Teutons in the main that finally fight against Teutons. It was Teutonic peoples that so often heroically warded off the Asiatic peril from the Eastern Empire; it was Teutonic people that on the

Catalaunian fields saved the Western Empire from being laid waste by the Huns. Early in the third century a bold Gothic shepherd had been already proclaimed Emperor. One need only look at the map of the end of the fifth century to see at once what a uniquely beneficent moulding power had here begun to assert itself. Very noteworthy too is the difference which reveals itself here in a hundred ways, between the innate decency, taste and intuition of rough but pure, noble races and the mental barbarism of civilised mestizos. Theodosius, his tools (the Christian fanatics) and his successors had done their best to destroy the monuments of art; on the other hand, the first care of Theodoric, the Eastern Goth, was to take strong measures for the protection and restoration of the Roman monuments. This man could not write, to sign his name he had to use a metal stencil, but the Beautiful, which the bastard souls in their "Culture," in their hunting after offices and distinctions, in their greed of gold had passed by unheeded, the Beautiful, which to the nobler souls among the Chaos of Peoples was a hateful work of the devil, the Goth at once knew how to appreciate; the sculptures of Rome excited his admiration to such a degree that he appointed a special official to protect them. Religious toleration, too, appeared for a time wherever the still unspoiled Teuton became master. Soon also there came upon the scene the great Christian missionaries from the highlands of the north, men who convinced not by means of "pious lies" but by the purity of their hearts.

It is nothing but a false conception of the Middle Ages,

* See Gobineau: *Inequality of the Human races*, Bk. VI. chap. iv.

323 THE CHAOS

in conjunction with ignorance as to the significance of race, which is responsible for the regrettable delusion that the entry upon the scene of the rough Teutons meant the falling of a pall of night over Europe. It is inconceivable that such hallucinations should be so long-lived. If we wish to know to what lengths the bastard culture of the Empire might have led, we must study the history, the science and the literature of the later Byzantium, a study to which our historians are devoting themselves today with a patience worthy of a better subject. It is a sorry spectacle. The capture of the Western Roman Empire by the Barbarians, on the contrary, works like the command of the Bible, "Let there be Light." It is admitted that its influence was mainly in the direction of politics rather than of civilisation; and a difficult task it was — one that is even now not wholly accomplished. But was it a small matter? Whence does Europe draw its physiognomy and its significance — whence its intellectual and moral preponderance, if not from the foundation and development of

Nations? This work was in very truth the redemption from chaos. If we are something to-day — if we may hope perhaps some day to become something more — we owe it in the first instance to that political upheaval which, after long preparation, began in the fifth century, and from which were born in the fulness of time new noble races, new beautiful languages, and a new culture entitling us to nourish the keenest hopes for the future. Dietrich of Berne, the strong wise man, the unlearned friend of art and science, the tolerant representative of Freedom of Conscience in the midst of a world in which Christians were tearing one another to pieces like hyenas, was as it were a pledge that Day might once more break upon this poor earth. In the time of wild struggle that followed, during that fever by means of which alone European humanity could recover and awaken from the hideous

324 THE CHAOS

dream of the degenerate curse-laden centuries of a chaos with a veneer of order to a fresh, healthy, stormily pulsing national life — in such a time learning and art and the tinsel of a so-called civilisation might well be almost forgotten, but this, we may swear, did not mean Night, but the breaking of a new Day. It is hard to say what authority the scribblers have for honouring only their own weapons. Our European world is first and foremost the work not of philosophers and book-writers and painters, but of the great Teuton Princes, the work of warriors and statesmen. The progress of development — obviously the political development out of which our modern nations have sprung — is the one fundamental and decisive matter. We must not, however, overlook the fact that to these true and noble men we equally owe everything else that is worth possessing. Every one of those centuries, the seventh, the eighth, the ninth, produced great scholars; but the men who protected and encouraged them were the Princes. It is the fashion to say that it was the Church that was the saviour of science and of culture; that is only true in a restricted sense. As I shall show in the next division of the first part of this book, we must not look upon the Early Christian Church as a simple, uniform organism, not even within the limits of the Roman union in Western Europe; the centralisation and obedience to Rome which we have lived to see to-day, were in earlier centuries absolutely unknown. We must admit that almost all learning and art were the property of the Church; her cloisters and schools were the retreats and nurseries in which in those rough times peaceful intellectual work sought refuge; but the entry into the Church as monk or secular priest meant little more than being accepted into a privileged and specially protected class, which imposed upon the favoured individual hardly any

return in the way of special duties. Until the thirteenth century every educated

325 THE CHAOS

man, every teacher and student, every physician and professor of jurisprudence belonged to the clergy: but this was a matter of pure formality, founded exclusively upon certain legal conditions; and it was out of this very class, that is, out of the men who best knew the Church, that every revolution against her arose — it was the Universities that became the high-schools of national emancipation. The Princes protected the Church, the learned clerics on the contrary attacked her. That is the reason why the Church waged unceasing war against the great intellects which, that they might work in peace, had sought refuge with her; had she had her way, science and culture would never again have been fledged. But the same Princes who protected the Church also protected the scholars whom she persecuted. No later than the ninth century there arose in the far north (out of the schools of England, which even in those early days were rich in important men) the great Scotus Erigena: the Church did all that she could to extinguish this brilliant light, but Charles the Bald, the same man who was supposed to have sent great tribute to the Pope of Rome, stretched his princely hand over Scotus; when this became insufficient, Alfred bade him to England where he raised the school of Oxford to a pinnacle of success, till he was stabbed to death by monks at the bidding of the central government of the Church. From the ninth century to the nineteenth, from the murder of Scotus to the issue of the Syllabus, it has been the same story. A final judgment shows the intellectual renaissance to be the work of Race in opposition to the universal Church which knows no Race, the work of the Teuton's thirst for knowledge, of the Teuton's national struggle for freedom. Great men in uninterrupted succession have arisen from the bosom of the Catholic Church; men to whom, as we must acknowledge, the peculiar catholic order of thought with its all-embracing

326 THE CHAOS

greatness, its harmonious structure, its symbolical wealth and beauty has given birth, making them greater than they could have become without it; but the Church of Rome, purely as such, that is to say, as an organised secular theocracy, has always behaved as the daughter of the fallen Empire, as the last representative of the universal, anti-national Principle. Charlemagne by himself did more for the diffusion of education

and knowledge than all the monks in the world. He caused a complete collection to be made of the national poetry of the Teutons. The Church destroyed it. I spoke a little while ago of Alfred. What Prince of the Church, what schoolman, ever did so much for the awakening of new intellectual powers, for the clearing up of living idioms, for the encouragement of national consciousness (so necessary at that time), as this one Prince? The most important recent historian of England has summed up the personality of this great Teuton in the one sentence: "Alfred was in truth an artist." * Where, in the Chaos of Peoples, was the man of whom the same could be said? In those so-called dark centuries the farther we travel northward, that is to say, the farther from the focus of a baleful "culture," and the purer the races with which we meet, the more activity do we find in the intellectual life. A literature of the noblest character, side by side with a freedom and order worthy of the dignity of man, develops itself from the ninth to the thirteenth century in the far-away republic of Iceland; in the same way, in remote England, during the seventh, eighth and ninth centuries we find a true popular poetry flourishing as it seldom has done since. † The passionate love of music which then came to light touches us as though we heard the beating of the wings of a guardian angel sent down from heaven, an angel heralding the

* Green: [*History of the English People, Bk. I. c. iii.*](#)

† Olive F. Emerson: *History of the English Language*, p. 54.

327 THE CHAOS

future. When we hear King Alfred taking part in the songs of his chosen choir — when a century later we see the passionate scholar and statesman Dunstan never, whether on horseback or in the Council Chamber, parted from his harp: then we call to mind the old Grecian legend that Harmonia was the daughter of Ares the God of War. Fighting, in lieu of a sham order, was what our wild ancestors brought with them, but at the same time they brought creative power instead of dreary barrenness. And as a matter of fact in all the more important Princes of that time we find a specially developed power of imagination: they were essentially fashioners. We should be perfectly justified were we to compare what Charlemagne was and did at the end of the eighth and beginning of the ninth centuries, with what Goethe did at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries. Both rode a tilt against the Powers of Chaos, both were artists; both "avowed themselves as belonging to the race which out of darkness is striving to reach the light."

No! and a thousand times no! The annihilation of that monstrosity, a

State without a nation, of that empty form, of that soulless congeries of humanity, that union of mongrels bound together only by a community of taxes and superstitions, not by a common origin and a common heart-beat, of that crime against the race of mankind which we have summed up in the definition "Chaos of Peoples" — that does not mean the falling darkness of night, but the salvation of a great inheritance from unworthy hands, the dawn of a new day.

Yet even to this hour we have not succeeded in purging our blood of all the poisons of that Chaos. In wide domains the Chaos ended by retaining the upper hand. Wherever the Teuton had not a sufficient majority physically to dominate the rest of the inhabitants by assimilation, as, for instance, in the south, there the

328 THE CHAOS

chaotic element asserted itself more and more. We have but to look at our present position to see where power exists and where it is wanting, and how this depends upon the composition of races. I am not aware whether any one has already observed with what peculiar exactitude the modern boundary of the universal Church of Rome corresponds with what I have pointed out as the general boundary of the Roman Imperium, and consequently of the chaotic mongreldom. To the east I admit that the line does not hold good, because here in Servia, Bosnia, &c., the Slavonic invaders of the eighth century and the Bulgarians annihilated everything foreign; in few districts of modern Europe is Race so uncontaminated, and the pure Slavs have never accepted the Church of Rome. In other places too there have been encroachments on both sides of the old boundary-line, but these have been unimportant, and moreover easily explained by political relations. On the whole the agreement is sufficiently striking to give rise to serious thought: Spain, Italy, Gaul, the Rhenish provinces, and the countries south of the Danube! It is still morning, and the powers of darkness are ever stretching out their polypus arms, clinging to us with their powers of suction in a hundred places, and trying to drag us back into the Night out of which we were striving to escape. We can arrive at a judgment upon these apparently confused, but really transparent, conditions, not so much by poring over the details of chronicles, as by obtaining a clear insight into the fundamental historical facts which I have set out in this chapter.

329

FIFTH CHAPTER

THE ENTRANCE OF THE JEWS INTO THE HISTORY OF THE WEST

“Let us forget whence we spring. No more talk of 'German,' or of 'Portuguese' Jews. Though scattered over the earth we are nevertheless a single people“ — RABBI SALOMON LIPMANN-CERFBERR in the opening speech delivered on July 26, 1806, at the meeting preparatory to the Synedrium of 1807 which Napoleon called together.

THE JEWISH QUESTION

HAD I been writing a hundred years ago, I should hardly have felt compelled at this point to devote a special chapter to the entrance of the Jews into Western history. Of course the share they had in the rise of Christianity, on account of the peculiar and absolutely un-Aryan spirit which they instilled into it, would have deserved our full attention, as well as also the economic part which they played in all Christian countries; but an occasional mention of these things would have sufficed; anything more would have been superfluous. Herder wrote at that time: “Jewish history takes up more room in our history and more attention than it probably deserves in itself.“ * In the meantime, however, a great change has taken place: the Jews play in Europe, and wherever European influence extends, a different part to-day from that which they played a hundred years ago; as Viktor Hehn expresses it, we live

* *Von den deutsch-orientalischen Dichtern*, Div. 2.

330 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

to-day in a “Jewish age“; * we may think what we like about the past history of the Jews, their present history actually takes up so much room in our own history that we cannot possibly refuse to notice them. Herder in spite of his outspoken humanism had expressed the opinion that “the Jewish people is and remains in Europe an Asiatic people alien to our part of the world, bound to that old law which it received in a distant climate, and which according to its own confession it cannot do away with.“ † Quite correct. But this alien people, everlastingly alien, because — as Herder well remarks — it is indissolubly bound to an alien law that is hostile to all other peoples — this alien people has become precisely in the course of the nineteenth century a disproportionately important and in many spheres actually dominant constituent of our life. Even a hundred years ago that same witness had sadly to confess that the “ruder nations of Europe“ were “willing slaves of Jewish usury“; to-day he could say the same of by far the greatest part of the civilised world. The

possession of money in itself is, however, of least account; our governments, our law, our science, our commerce, our literature, our art... practically all branches of our life have become more or less willing slaves of the Jews, and drag the feudal fetter il not yet on two, at least on one leg. In the meantime the “alien“ element emphasised by Herder has become more and more prominent; a hundred years ago it was rather indistinctly and vaguely felt; now it has asserted and proved itself, and so forced itself on the attention of even the most inattentive. The Indo-European, moved by ideal motives, opened the gates in

* *Gedanken über Goethe*, 3rd ed. p. 40. The passage as it stands reads, “From the day of Goethe's death, the 22nd March, 1832, Börne dated the freedom of Germany. In reality, however, one epoch was with that day closed and the Jewish age in which we live began.“

† *Bekehrung der Juden*. Abschnitt 7 of the *Untersuchungen des vergangenen Jahrhunderts zur Beförderung eines geistigen Reiches*.

331 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

friendship: the Jew rushed in like an enemy, stormed all positions and planted the flag of his, to us, alien nature — I will not say on the ruins, but on the breaches of our genuine individuality.

Are we for that reason to revile the Jews? That would be as ignoble as it is unworthy and senseless. The Jews deserve admiration, for they have acted with absolute consistency according to the logic and truth of their own individuality, and never for a moment have they allowed themselves to forget the sacredness of physical laws because of foolish humanitarian day-dreams which they shared only when such a policy was to their advantage. Consider with what mastery they use the law of blood to extend their power: the principal stem remains spotless, not a drop of strange blood comes in; as it stands in the *Thora*, “A bastard shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord; even to his tenth generation shall he not enter into the congregation of the Lord“ (*Deuteronomy* xxiii. 2); in the meantime, however, thousands of side branches are cut off and employed to infect the Indo-Europeans with Jewish blood. If that were to go on for a few centuries, there would be in Europe only one single people of pure race, that of the Jews, all the rest would be a herd of pseudo-Hebraic mestizos, a people beyond all doubt degenerate physically, mentally and morally. For even the great friend of the Jews, Ernest Renan, admits, “*Je suis le premier à reconnaître que la race sémitique, comparée à la race indo-européenne, représente réellement une combinaison inférieure de la nature humaine.*“ * And in one of his best but unfortunately little-known writings he says again, “*L'épouvantable simplicité de l'esprit sémitique rétrécit le cerveau humain, le ferme à toute idée délicate, à tout sentiment fin, à toute*

* *Histoire générale et système comparé des langues sémitiques*, 5e éd. p. 4. It will

make little difference to this view when I show, as I shall do immediately, that the Jews are not pure Semites but half Syrians.

332 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

recherche rationnelle, pour le mettre en face d'une éternelle tautologie: Dieu est Dieu"; * and he demonstrates that culture could have no future unless Christian religion should move farther away from the spirit of Judaism and the "Indo-European genius" assert itself more and more in every domain. That mixture then undoubtedly signifies a degeneration: degeneration of the Jew, whose character is much too alien, firm and strong to be quickened and ennobled by Teutonic blood, degeneration of the European who can naturally only lose by crossing with an "inferior type" — or, as I should prefer to say, with so different a type. While the mixture is taking place, the great chief stem of the pure unmixed Jews remains unimpaired. When Napoleon, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, dissatisfied that the Jews, in spite of their emancipation, should remain in proud isolation, angry with them for continuing to devour with their shameful usury the whole of his Alsace, although every career was now open to them, sent an ultimatum to the council of their elders demanding the unreserved fusion of the Jews with the rest of the nation — the delegates of the French Jews adopted all the articles prescribed but one, namely, that which aimed at absolute freedom of marriage with Christians. Their daughters might marry outside the Israelite people, but not their sons; the dictator of Europe had to yield. † This is the admirable law by which real Judaism was founded. Indeed, the law in its strictest form forbids marriage altogether between Jews and non-Jews; in *Deuteronomy* vii. 3, we read, "Thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son"; but, as a rule, emphasis is laid only on the last clause; for example, in *Exodus*

* *De la Part des peuples sémitiques dans l'histoire de la civilisation*, p. 39.

† In the second book I shall find it necessary to give more details concerning this famous synedrium and its casuistic distinction between religious and civil law — a distinction which neither *Talmud* nor *Thora* recognises.

333 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

xxxiv. 16, the sons alone are forbidden to take strange daughters, not the daughters to take strange sons, and in *Nehemiah* xiii., after both sides have been forbidden to marry outside the race, only the marriage of a son with a foreign wife is described as a "sin against God." That is also a perfectly correct view. By the marriage of a daughter with a Goy, the purity of the Jewish stem is in no way altered, while this stem thereby gets a footing in the strange camp; on the other hand, the marriage of a son with a Goya "makes the holy seed common" as the book of *Ezra* ix. 2, drastically expresses it. * The possible conversion of the Goya to Judaism

would not help matters: the idea of such a conversion was rightly quite strange to the older law — for the question is one of physical conditions of descent — but the newer law says, with enviable discernment: “Proselytes are as injurious to Judaism as ulcers to a sound body.” † Thus was the Jewish race kept pure in the past and it is still kept so: daughters of the house of Rothschild have married barons, counts, dukes, princes, they submit to baptism without demur; no son has ever married a European; if he did so he would have to leave the house of his fathers and the community of his people. ‡

* In the new literal translation of Professor Louis Segond the passage reads, “the sacred race defiled by mixture with strange peoples”; in the translation of De Wette it is, “they have mingled the holy seed with the peoples of the earth.”

† From the *Talmud*, according to Döllinger, *Vorträge* i. 237. In another place the *Talmud* calls the proselytes a “burden.” (See the Jew Philippon: *Israelitische Religionslehre*, 1861, ii. 189.)

‡ How pure the Jewish race still is, has been shown by Virchow's great anthropological examination of all the school children of Germany; Ranke gives details in his book, *Der Mensch*, 2nd ed. ii 293: “The purer the race, the smaller is the number of mixed forms. In this connection it is certainly a very important fact that the smallest number of mixed forms was found among the Jews, whereby their decided isolation as a race from the Teutonic peoples, among which they live, is shown most clearly.” — Measurements in America have, according to the *American Anthropologist*, vol. iv., in the meantime led to the conviction that there too the Jewish race “has kept itself absolutely pure.” (Quoted from the *Politisch-anthropologische Revue*, 1904, March, p. 1003.)

334 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

These details are somewhat premature; they really belong to a later portion of the book; but my object has been at once and by the shortest way to meet the objection — which unfortunately is still to be expected from many sides — that there is no “Jewish question,” from which would follow that the entrance of the Jews into our history had no significance. Others, again, talk of religion: it is a question, they say, of religious differences only. Whoever says this overlooks the fact that there would be no Jewish religion if there were no Jewish nation. But there is one. The Jewish nomocracy (that is, rule of the law) unites the Jews, no matter how scattered they may be over all the lands of the world, into a firm, uniform and absolutely political organism, in which community of blood testifies to a common past and gives a guarantee for a common future. Though it has many elements not purely Jewish in the narrower sense of the word, yet the power of this blood, united with the incomparable power of the Jewish idea, is so great that these alien elements have long ago been assimilated; for nearly two thousand years have passed since the time when the Jews gave up their temporary inclination to proselytising. Of course, I must, as I showed in the preceding chapter, distinguish between Jews of noble and of less noble birth; but what binds together the incompatible parts is (apart from gradual fusing) the

tenacity of life which their national idea possesses. This national idea culminates in the unshakable confidence in the universal empire of the Jews, which Jehovah promised. "Simple people who have been born Christians" (as Auerbach expresses it in his sketch of Spinoza's life) fancy that the Jews have given up that hope, but they are very wrong; for "the existence of Judaism depends upon the clinging to the Messianic hope," as one of the very moderate and liberal Jews lately wrote. * The whole Jewish religion is in fact founded on

* Skreinka: *Entwicklungsgeschichte der jüdischen Dogmen*, p. 75.

335 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

this hope. The Jewish faith in God, that which can and may be called "religion" in their case, for it has become since the source of a fine morality, is a part of this national idea, not *vice versa*. To assert that there is a Jewish religion but no Jewish nation is simply nonsense. *

The entry of the Jews into the history of the West signifies therefore beyond doubt the entrance of a definite element, quite different from and in a way opposed to all European races, an element which remained essentially the same, while the nations of Europe went through the most various phases; in the course of a hard and often cruel history it never had the weakness to entertain proposals of fraternity, but, possessed as it was of its national idea, its national past, and its national future, felt and still feels all contact with others as a pollution; thanks also to the certainty of its instinct, which springs from strict uniformity of national feeling, it has always been able to

* At the Jewish congress held in Basle in 1898, Dr. Mandelstam, Professor in the University of Kiev, said in the chief speech of the sitting of August 29, "The Jews energetically reject the idea of fusion with the other nationalities and cling firmly to their historical hope, *i.e.*, of world empire" (from a report of one who took part in the congress in *Le Temps*, Sept. 2, 1898). The Vienna newspapers of July 30 and 31, 1901, report a speech on Zionism which the Vienna Rabbi, Dr. Leopold Kahn, delivered in a room of the orthodox Jewish school in Pressburg. In this speech Dr. Kahn made the following admission: "the Jew will never be able to assimilate himself; he will never adopt the customs and ways of other peoples. The Jew remains Jew under all circumstances. Every assimilation is purely exterior." Words well worth laying to heart! In the *Festschrift zum 70. Geburtstage A. Berliner's*, 1903, Dr. B. Felsenthal publishes a series of *Jewish Theses* in which he supports with all his energy the thesis that Jewry is a people, not a religion, "Judaism is a special stem, and every Jew is born into this stem." This stem is, according to him, "one of the ethnically purest peoples that exist." Felsenthal reckons that from Theodosius to the year 1800, "perhaps not quite 300 non Semites were adopted into the Jewish race," and it is characteristic that he denies proselytes the right of looking upon themselves as full-blooded Jews. "The Jewish people, the Jewish stem is the given fact, the constant thing, the necessary substratum, the substantial kernel. The Jewish religion is something attached to this kernel, a quality — an accident, as it is called in the language of the philosophical schools." I quote from the special impression, made by Itzkowski, Berlin.

336 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

exercise a powerful influence upon others, while the Jews themselves have been influenced but skin-deep by our intellectual and cultural development. To characterise this most peculiar situation from the standpoint of the European, we must repeat the words of Herder: the Jewish people is and remains alien to our part of the world; from the standpoint of the Jew the same fact is formulated somewhat differently; we know from a former chapter how the great free-thinking philosopher Philo put it: “only the Israelites are men in the true sense of the word.” * What the Jew here says in the intolerant tone of racial pride was more politely expressed by Goethe, when he disputed the community of descent of Jews and Indo-Europeans, no matter how far back the origin was put: “We will not dispute with the chosen people the honour of its descent from Adam. We others, however, have certainly had other ancestors as well.” †

THE “ALIEN PEOPLE“

These considerations make it our right and our duty to look upon the Jew in our midst as a peculiar and, in fact, alien element. Outwardly his inheritance was the same as ours; inwardly it was not so: he inherited quite a different spirit. One single trait is all that is necessary to reveal in an almost alarming manner to our consciousness the yawning gulf which here separates soul from soul: the revelation of Christ has no significance for the Jew! I do not here speak of pious orthodoxy at all. But read, for example, in Diderot, the notorious free-thinker, the wonderful words on the Crucified One, see how Diderot represents man in his greatest sorrow turning to the

* See p. [217](#).

† *Conversations with Eckermann*, October 7, 1828. Giordano Bruno made a similar assertion, viz., that only the Jews were descended from Adam and Eve, the rest of mankind were of much older origin. (See *Lo spaccio della bestia trionfante*.)

337 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

Divine One, and makes us feel that the Christian religion is the only religion in the world. „*Quelle profonde sagesse il y a dans ce que l'aveugle philosophie appelle la folie de la croix! Dans l'état où j'étais, de quoi m'aurait servi l'image d'un législateur heureux et comblé de gloire? Je voyais l'innocent, le flanc percé, le front couronné d'épines, les mains et les pieds percés de clous, et expirant dans les souffrances; et je me disais: Voilà mon Dieu, et j'ose me plaindre!*“ I have searched through a whole library of Jewish books in the expectation of finding similar words —

naturally not belief in the divinity of Christ, nor the idea of redemption, but the purely human feeling for the greatness of a suffering saviour — but in vain. A Jew who feels that is in fact no longer a Jew, but a denier of Judaism. And while we find even in Mohammed's *Koran* at least a vague conception of the importance of Christ and profound reverence for His personality, a cultured, leading Jew of the nineteenth century calls Christ “the new birth with the deathmask,” which inflicted new and painful wounds upon the Jewish people; he cannot see anything else in Him. * In view of the cross he assures us that “the Jews do not require this convulsive emotion for their spiritual improvement,” and adds, “particularly not among the middle classes of the inhabitants of the cities.” His comprehension goes no further. In a book, republished in 1880 (!), by a Spanish Jew (Mose de Leon) Jesus Christ is called a “dead dog” that lies “buried in a dunghill.” Besides, the Jews have taken care to issue in the latter part of the nineteenth century several editions (naturally in Hebrew) of the so-called “censured passages” from the *Talmud*, those passages usually omitted in which Christ is exposed to our scorn and hatred as a “fool,” “sorcerer,” “profane person,” “idolater,” “dog,” “bastard,” “child of lust,” &c.; so, too, his sublime

* Graetz: *Volkstümliche Geschichte der Juden*, i, 591.

338 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

mother. * We certainly do the Jews no injustice when we say that the revelation of Christ is simply something incomprehensible and hateful to them. Although he apparently sprang from their midst, he embodies nevertheless the negation of their whole nature — a matter in which the Jews are far more sensitive than we. This clear demonstration of the deep cleft that separates us Europeans from the Jew is by no means given in order to let religious prejudice with its dangerous bias settle the matter, but because I think that the perception of two so fundamentally different natures reveals a real gulf; it is well to look once into this gulf, so that on other occasions, where the two sides seem likely to unite each other, we may not be blind to the deep abyss which separates them.

When we understand what a chasm there is between us we are forced to a further conclusion. The Jew does not understand us, that is certain; can we hope to understand him, to do him justice? Perhaps, if we are really intellectually and morally superior to him, as Renan insisted in the passage quoted above, and as other perhaps more reliable scholars have likewise said. † But we should

* See Laible: *Jesus Christus im Talmud*, p. 2 ff. (*Schriften des Institutum Judaicum in Berlin*, No. 10; in the supplement the original Hebrew texts are given.) This absolutely impartial scholar, who is, moreover, a friend of the Jews, says: “The hatred and scorn of the Jews was always directed in the first place against the person of Jesus” (p. 25). “The Jesus-hatred of the Jews is a firmly established fact, but they want to show it as little

as possible“ (p. 3). Hatred of Christ is described by the same scholar as the “most national trait of Judaism“ (p. 86); he says, “at the approach of Christianity the Jews were seized ever and again with a fury and hatred that were akin to madness“ (p. 72). Even to-day no orthodox Jew may use the name of Christ either in speech or in writing (pp. 3 and 32); the most common cryponyms are “the bastard,“ “the hanged,“ often, too, “Bileam.“

† See especially the famous passage in Lassen's *Indische Altertumskunde*, where the great Orientalist proves in detail his view that the Indo-European race is “more highly and more fully gifted,“ that in it alone there is “perfect symmetry of all mental powers.“ (See i. 414, of the 1847 edition.)

339 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

then have to judge him from the lofty heights of our superiority, not from the low depths of hatred and superstition, and still less from the swampy shallows of misunderstanding in which our religious teachers have been wading for the last two thousand years. It is surely an evident injustice to ascribe to the Jew thoughts which he never had, to glorify him as the possessor of the most sublime religious intuitions, which were perhaps more alien to him than to any one else in the world, and at best are to be found only in the hearts of a few scattered individuals as a cry of revolt against the special hardness of heart of this people — and then to condemn him for being to-day quite different from what he should be according to such fictitious conceptions. It is not only unfair, but as regards public feeling, regrettably misleading; for through his connection with our religious life — a connection which is entirely fictitious — his head seems enveloped in a kind of nimbus, and then we are greatly incensed when we find no holy person under this sham halo. We expect more of the Jews than of ourselves, who are merely the children of the heathen. But the Jewish testimony is very different and more correct; it leads us to expect so little that every noble trait discovered later and every explanation found for Jewish failings gives us genuine pleasure. Jehovah, for instance, is never tired of explaining, “I have seen this people and behold it is a stiff-necked people,“ * and Jeremiah gives such a characterisation of the moral constitution of the Jews that Monsieur Edouard Drumont could not wish it to be more richly coloured, “And they will deceive every one his neighbour, and will not speak the truth: they have taught their tongue to speak lies, and weary themselves to commit iniquity.“ † Little wonder, after this description, that Jeremiah calls the Jews “an

* *Exodus* xxxii. 9, xxxiv. 9; *Deuteronomy* ix. 13, &c.

† ix. 5.

340 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

assembly of treacherous men,“ and knows only one desire, “Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging-place of wayfaring men; that I might

leave my people and go from them.“ For our incredible ignorance of the Jewish nature we are ourselves solely to blame; never did a people give so comprehensive and honest a picture of its own personality as the Hebrew has done in his Bible, a picture which (so far as I can judge from fragments) is made more complete by the *Talmud*, though in faded colours. Without, therefore, denying that it must be very difficult for us who are “descended from other ancestors“ to form a correct judgment of the “alien Asiatic people,“ we must clearly see that the Jews from time immemorial have done their best to inform the unprejudiced about themselves, a circumstance which entitles us to hope that we may gain a thorough knowledge of their nature. As a matter of fact, the events which take place before our eyes should be sufficient for that. Is it possible to read the daily papers without becoming acquainted with Jewish ways of thinking, Jewish taste, Jewish morals, Jewish aims? A few annual volumes of the *Archives israélites* teach us in fact more than a whole anti-Semitic library, and indeed not only about the less admirable, but also about the excellent qualities of the Jewish character. But here, in this chapter, I shall leave the present out of account. If we are to form a practical and true judgment concerning the significance of the Jew as joint-heir and fellow-worker in the nineteenth century, we must above all become clear as to what he is. From what a man is by nature follows of strict necessity what he will do under certain conditions; the philosopher says: *operari sequitur esse*; an old German proverb expresses the same thing in a more homely way, “Only what a man is, can one get out of him.“

341 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

HISTORICAL BIRD'S-EYE VIEW

Pure history in this case does not bring us either quickly or surely to our goal, and besides it is not my task to furnish a history of the Jews. As in other chapters, so here too I have a horror of copying what has been written before. Every one, of course, knows how and when the Jews entered into Western history: first by the Diaspora, then by being scattered. Their changing fortunes in various lands and times are likewise no secret to us, although, indeed, much that we know is absolutely untrue, and of much that we ought to know we are entirely ignorant. But I do not need to tell any one that throughout the Christian centuries the Jews played an important though at times circumscribed *rôle*. Even in the earliest Western Gothic times they understood how to acquire influence and power as slave-dealers and financial agents. Though they were not everywhere, as they were among the Spanish Moors, powerful Ministers of State, who, following the example of Mardochai, filled the most lucrative posts with “their many brothers,“ though they did not attain everywhere, as they did in Catholic Spain, to

the rank of Bishop and Archbishop, * yet their influence was always and everywhere great. The Babenberg princes as early as the thirteenth century set their successors the example of letting Jews manage the finances of their States and honouring these administrators with titles of distinction; † the great Pope Innocent III. gave important posts at his Court to Jews; ‡ the knights of France had to pledge their

* See the book of the Jew, David Mocatta, *The Jews in Spain and Portugal*, where a detailed account is given of how there were in Spain “generations and generations of secret Jews who mingled with all classes of society and were in possession of every post in the State and especially in the Church!”

† Graetz, ii. 503.

‡ Israel Abrahams: *Jewish Life in the Middle Ages*.

342 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

goods with the Jews, in order to be able to take part in the Crusades; * Rudolf von Habsburg favoured the Jews in every way; he vindicated them “as servants of his imperial exchequer,” and by freeing them from being subject to ordinary justice he made it very difficult indeed for any action brought against them to be carried through; † in short, what I call the entrance of the Jews into Western history has never ceased to make itself felt at all times and places. If any one were qualified to study history for the sole purpose of disentangling the question of Jewish influence, he would, I think, bring to light some unexpected facts. Without this detailed study the fact of this influence can only be established clearly and beyond doubt where the Jews were in considerable numbers. In the second century, for example, the Jews on the island of Cyprus are more numerous than the other inhabitants; they resolve to found a national State and with this intent follow the procedure known from the Old Testament: they slay in one day all the other inhabitants, 240,000 in number; and in order that this island State may not be without support on the mainland, they at the same time slay the 220,000 non-Jewish inhabitants of Cyrene. ‡ In Spain they pursue the same policy with greater caution and astonishing perseverance. Under the rule of that thoroughly Western Gothic king, who had showered benefits on them, they invite their kinsmen, the Arabs, to come over from Africa, and, not out of any ill-feeling, but simply because they hope to profit thereby, they betray their noble protector; under the Kalifs they then acquire gradually an even larger share in the government; “they concentrated,” their great supporter the historian Heman writes, “the intellectual and the material powers al-

* André Réville: *Les payans au Moyen-Age*, 1896, p. 3.

† See among others Realis: *Die Juden und die Judenstadt in Wien*, 1846, p. 18, &c.

‡ Mommsen: *Römische Geschichte*, v, 543.

343 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

together in their own hands“; the prosperous Moorish State was, it is true, thereby intellectually and materially ruined: but this was a matter of indifference to the Jews, as they had already obtained as firm a footing in the Christian State of the Spaniards which was destined to take the place of the Moorish one. “The movable wealth of the land was here absolutely in their power; the heritable property they made gradually theirs by usury and the purchase of mortgaged estates of nobles. From the offices of Secretary of State and Minister of Finance downwards all the offices which had to do with taxes and money were in Jewish hands. Through usury almost all Aragon was mortgaged to them. In the cities they formed the majority of the wealthy population.“ * But here, as elsewhere, they were not always shrewd; they had employed their power to obtain all kinds of privileges; for example, the oath of a single Jew sufficed to prove debt claims against Christians (the same was the case in the Archduchy of Austria and in many places), while the testimony of a Christian against a Jew had no weight before a tribunal, and so on; these privileges they abused so outrageously that the people finally revolted. The same would probably have happened in Germany if the Church and intelligent statesmen had not put a stop to the evil in time. Charlemagne had written to Italy for Jews to manage his finances; soon, as farmers of taxes, they secured for themselves wealth and influence in every direction, and used these to get important concessions for their people, such as commercial privileges, less severe punishment for crime and the like; the whole population was even forced to make Sunday their market day, as Saturday, the customary market day, did not suit the Jews because it was

* Heman: *Die historische Weltstellung der Juden*, 1882, p. 24 ff. For a somewhat differently tinged account which, however, in actual facts is entirely at one with this, see Graetz *Volksth. Gesch. d. Juden*, ii. 344 ff.

344 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

their Sabbath; it was at that time fashionable for courtiers to visit the synagogues! But the reaction set in soon and strongly, and not only, as the historians are wont to represent it, as the result of priestly agitation — such things belong to the shell, not to the kernel of history — but in the first place because the Teuton is in fact just as much a born merchant and industrialist as he is a born warrior, and because, as soon as the growth of cities awakened these instincts in him, he saw the game of his unfair rival, and, full of violent indignation, demanded his removal. And so, if such were the purpose of this chapter, we could trace the ebb and flow of Jewish influence to the present day, when all the wars of the

nineteenth century are so peculiarly connected with Jewish financial operations, from Napoleon's Russian campaign and Nathan Rothschild's *rôle* of spectator at the Battle of Waterloo to the consulting of the Bleichröders on the German side and of Alphonse Rothschild on the French side at the peace transactions of the year 1871, and to the "Commune," which from the beginning was looked upon by all intelligent people as a Jewish-Napoleonic machination.

CONSENSUS INGENIORUM

Now this political and social influence of the Jews has been very variously judged, but the greatest politicians of all times have regarded it as pernicious. Cicero, for example (no great politician but an experienced statesman), displays a genuine fear of the Jews; where a legal transaction encroaches on their interest, he speaks so low that only the judges hear him, for he is well aware, as he says, that all the Jews hold together and that they know how to ruin the one who opposes them; while he thunders the most vehement charges against Greeks, against Romans, against the most powerful men of his time, he advises caution in dealing with the Jews; they are to him an

345 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

uncanny power and he passes with the greatest haste over that city of "suspicion and slander," Jerusalem: such was the opinion of a Cicero during the consulate of a Julius Caesar! * Even before the destruction of Jerusalem the Emperor Tiberius, who was, according to many historians, the best ruler that the Roman Imperium ever possessed, recognised a national danger in the immigration of the Jews. Even Frederick the Second, the Hohenstauffen, certainly one of the most brilliant men that ever wore a crown or carried a sword, a more freethinking man than any monarch of the nineteenth century, an enthusiastic admirer of the East and a generous supporter of Hebrew scholars, nevertheless held it to be his duty, contrary to the custom of his contemporaries, to debar the Jews from all public offices, and pointed warningly to the fact that wherever the Jews are admitted to power, they abuse it; the very same doctrine was taught by the other great Frederick the Second, the Hohenzollern, who gave universal freedom, but not to the Jews; similar were the words of Bismarck, while he still could speak openly, in the Landtag (1847) and the great historian Mommsen speaks of Judaism as of a "State inside the State." — As regards the social influence in particular, I will only quote two wise and fair authorities, whose judgment cannot be suspected even by the Jews, namely, Herder and Goethe. The former says, "A ministry, in which the Jew is supreme, a household, in which a Jew has the key of the wardrobe and the management of the finances, a department or commissariat, in which

Jews do the principal business ... are Pontine marshes that cannot be drained“; and he expresses the opinion that the presence of an indefinite number of Jews is so pernicious to the welfare of a European State, that we “dare not be influenced by general humane principles“; it is a national question,

* See the *Defence of Lucius Flaccus*, xxviii.

346 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

and it is the duty of every State to decide “how many of this alien people can be tolerated without injury to the true citizens?“ * Goethe goes still deeper: “How should we let the Jews share in our highest culture, when they deny its origin and source?“ And he became “violently enraged“ when the law of 1823 permitted marriage between Jews and Germans, prophesying the “worst and most frightful consequences,“ particularly the “undermining of all moral feelings“ and declaring that the bribery of the “all-powerful Rothschild“ must be the cause of this “folly.“ † Goethe and Herder have exactly the same opinion as the great Hohenstauffen, the great Hohenzollern, and all great men before and after them: without superstitiously reproaching the Jews with their peculiar individuality, they consider them an actual danger to our civilisation and our culture; they would not give them an active part in our life. We cannot proceed with our discussion and simply pass over such a *consensus ingeniorum*. For to these well-weighed, serious judgments derived from the fulness of experience and the insight of the greatest intellects we have nothing to oppose but the empty phrases of the *droits de l'homme* — a parliamentary clap-trap. ‡

* *Adrastea: Bekehrung der Juden*.

† Wilhelm Meister's *Wanderjahre*, iii. 11, and the conversation with von Müller on September 23, 1823.

‡ I have intentionally limited my quotations. But I cannot refrain from defending in a note the great Voltaire against the almost established myth that he was altogether favourable and as superficial in his humanitarian judgment of the influence of the Jews upon our culture, as is the modern fashion. Even Jews of such broad culture as James Darmesteter (*Peuple Juif*, 2e éd. p. 17) print the name Voltaire in thick type and represent him as one of the intellectual originators of their emancipation. The opposite is true; more than once Voltaire advises that the Jews be sent back to Palestine. Voltaire is one of the authors whom I know best, because I prefer interesting books to wearisome ones, and I think I could easily collect a hundred quotations of a most aggressive nature against the Jews. In the essay of the *Dictionnaire Philosophique* (end of Section 1) he says: “*Vous ne trouverez dans les Juifs qu'un peuple ignorant et barbare, qui joint depuis longtemps la plus sordide avarice à la plus détestable superstition et à la plus invincible haine pour*

347 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

PRINCES AND NOBILITY

On the other hand, it is certain and must be carefully observed that, if the Jews are responsible for many a shocking historical development, for the fall of many heroic, powerful peoples, still greater is the responsibility of those Europeans who have always from the most base motives encouraged, protected and fostered the disintegrating activity of the Jews, and these are primarily the Princes and the nobility — and that too from the first century of our era to the present day. Open the history of any European nation you like wherever the Jews are numerous and begin to realise their strength, you will always hear bitter complaints against them from the people, from the commercial classes, from the circles of the learned and the poets; everywhere and at all times it is the Princes and the nobility that protect them: the Princes because they need money for their wars, the nobility because they live extravagantly.

tous les peuples qui les tolèrent et qui les enrichissent.“ In *Dieu et les hommes* (chap. x.) he calls the Jews “*La plus haïssable et la plus honteuse des petites nations.*“ Enough has surely been said to make his attitude clear! But this opinion should have all the more force, since Voltaire himself in many long treatises has made a thorough study of Jewish history and the Jewish character (so thorough that he who has been decried as a “superficial dilettante“ is occasionally quoted to-day by a scholar of the first rank like Wellhausen). And so it is noteworthy when he writes (*Essai sur les Moeurs*, chap. xlii.): “*La nation juive ose étaler une haine irréconciliable contre toutes les nations, elle se révolte contre tous ses maîtres; toujours superstitieuse, toujours avide du bien d'autrui, toujours barbare — rampante dans le malheur, et insolente dans la prospérité.*“ His judgment of their mental qualities is brief and apodeictic, “*Les Juifs n'ont jamais rien inventé*“ (*La défense de mon oncle*, chap. vii.), and in the *Essai sur les Moeurs* he shows in several chapters that the Jews had always learned from other nations but had never taught others anything; even their music, which is generally praised, Voltaire cannot endure: “*Retournez en Judée le plus tôt que vous pourrez ... vous y exécuteriez à plaisir dans votre détestable jargon votre détestable musique*“ (6^{me} lettre du Dictionnaire). He explains elsewhere this remarkable mental sterility of the Jews by their inordinate lust for money; “*L'argent fut l'objet de leur conduite dans tous*

348 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

Edmund Burke * tells us, for example, of William the Conqueror that, as the income from “talliage“ and all kinds of other oppressive taxes did not satisfy him, he from time to time either confiscated the notes of hand of the Jews or forced them to hand them over for next to nothing, and, as almost the whole Anglo-Norman nobility of the eleventh century was under the thumb of Jewish usury, the King himself became the pitiless creditor of his most illustrious subjects. In the meantime he protected the Jews and gave them privileges of various kinds. This one example may stand for thousands and thousands. † If then

les temps“ (*Dieu et les hommes*, xxix.). Voltaire scoffs at the Jews in a hundred places; for instance, in *Zadig* (chap. x.), where the Jew utters a solemn prayer of thankfulness

to God for a successful piece of fraud; the most biting satire against the Jews that exists is beyond doubt the treatise *Un Chrétien contre six Juifs*. And yet in all these utterances there was a certain reserve, as they were destined for publication; on the other hand, in a letter to the Chevalier de Lisle on December 15, 1773 (that is, at the end of his life, not in the heat of youth), he could speak his opinion freely: “*Que ces déprépuçé d'Israël se disent de la tribu de Naphthali ou d'Issachar, cela est fort peu important; ils n'en sont pas moins les plus grand gueux qui aient jamais souillé la face du globe.*” Evidently this fiery Frenchman had just the same to say of the Jews as any fanatical Bishop; he differs at most in the addition which he occasionally makes to his bitterest attacks, “*Il ne faut pourtant pas les brûler.*” There is a further difference in the fact that it is a humane, tolerant and learned man that utters this very sharp judgment. But how, in a man of such open mind, can we explain the existence of a view so pitilessly one-sided and so ruthlessly intolerant, a view which in its utter lack of moderation compares very unfavourably with the words of the German sages quoted above? Our age could learn much here, if it wished to! For we see that the Gallic love of equality and freedom is not based upon love of justice nor respect for the individual; and we may draw the further conclusion; understanding is not got from principles, and universal humanity does not ensure the possibility of living together in dignified peace, it is only the frank recognition of what separates our own kind and our own interests from those of others that can make us just towards an alien nature and alien interests.

* *An Abridgment of English History*, iii. 2.

† The famous economist Dr. W. Cunningham, in his book [*The Growth of English Industry and Commerce during the Early and Middle Ages*](#) (3rd ed., 1896, p. 201), compares the activity of the Jews in England from the tenth century onward to a sponge, which sucks up all the wealth of the land and thereby hinders all economic development. Interesting,

349 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

the Jews have exercised a great and historically baneful influence, it is to no small degree due to the complicity of these Princes and nobles who so shamefully persecuted and at the same time utilised the Jews. And in fact this lasts until the nineteenth century: Count Mirabeau was in closest touch with the Jews even before the Revolution, * Count Talleyrand, in opposition to the delegates from the middle classes, supported in the Constituante their unconditional emancipation; Napoleon protected them, when after such a short time bitter complaints and entreaties for protection against them were sent in to the Government from all France, and he did so although he himself had exclaimed in the Council of State, “These Jews are locusts and caterpillars, they devour my France!” — he needed their money. Prince Dalberg sold to the Frankfort Jews, in defiance of the united citizens, the full civic rights for half a million Gulden (1811), the Hardenbergs and Metternichs at the Vienna Congress fell into the snare of the Rothschild bank, and, in opposition to the votes of all the representatives of the Bund, they supported the interests of the Jews to the disadvantage of the Germans and finally gained their point, in fact, the two most conservative States which they represented were the first to raise to hereditary nobility — an honour which was never conferred on honest and deserving Jews — those members of the

too, is the proof that even at this early period the Government did everything in its power to make the Jews take up decent trades and honest work and thereby at the same time amalgamate with the rest of the population, but all to no purpose.

* With regard to Mirabeau's being influenced by "the shrewd women of the Jews" (as Gentz says) and his connection with essentially Jewish secret societies, see besides Graetz, *Volks. Geschichte der Juden* (iii. 600, 610 ff.), particularly L'Abbé Lémann, *L'entrée des Israélites dans la société française*, iii. chap. 7; as converted Jew this author understands what others do not, and at the same time he tells what Jewish authors keep secret. The important thing in Mirabeau's case was probably that from youth he was deeply in debt to the Jews (Carlyle: *Essay on Mirabeau*).

350 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

"alien Asiatic people" who, in the years of general suffering and misery, had by the vilest means acquired immense wealth. * If then the Jews were for us pernicious neighbours, justice requires us to admit that they acted according to the nature of their instincts and gifts, and showed at the same time a really admirable example of loyalty to self, to their own nation and to the faith of their fathers; the tempters and the traitors were not the Jews but we ourselves. We were the criminal abettors of the Jews, and it is so to-day, as it was in the past; and we were false to that which the lowest inhabitant of the Ghetto considered sacred, the purity of inherited blood; that, too, was formerly the case, and to-day it is more so than ever. The Christian Church alone of all the great powers seems to have acted on the whole justly and wisely (of course we must discount the Bishops who were really secular Princes, as well as some of the Popes). The Church has kept the Jews in check, treated them as aliens, but at the same time protected them from persecution. Every seemingly "ecclesiastical" persecution has its source really in economic conditions that have become unbearable; we see that nowhere more clearly than in Spain. To-day, when public opinion is so fearfully misled by the active, irreconcilable antagonism of the Jews, especially to every manifestation of the Christian faith, it may be well to remind the reader that the last act of the preparatory meeting to the first Synedrium summoned in our times, that of 1807, was a spontaneous utterance of thanks to the ministers of the various Christian Churches for the protection extended to them throughout the centuries. †

* This is, of course, an old custom of Princes, by which not only the Jews but others also profit; Martin Luther even had to write: "The Princes have thieves hanged, who have stolen a Gulden or half a one, and yet make transactions with those who rob everybody and steal more than all others" (*Von Kaufhandlung und Wucher*).

† Diogène Tama: *Collection des actes de l'Assemblée des Israélites de France et du royaume d'Italie* (Paris, 1807, pp. 327, 328; the author is a

351 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

INNER CONTACT

Here we must end these hastily sketched historical fragments. They show that “the entrance of the Jews“ has exercised a large, and in many ways an undoubtedly fatal, influence upon the course of European history since the first century. But that tells us little about the Jew himself; the fact that the North American Indian dies out from contact with the Indo-European does not prove that the latter is evil and pernicious; that the Jew injures or benefits us is a judgment which is conditional in too many ways to permit of our forming a true estimate of his nature. In fact, for nineteen centuries the Jew has had not merely an outer relationship with our culture as a more or less welcome guest, but also an inner contact. As Kant rightly says, the preservation of Judaism is primarily the work of Christianity. * From its midst — if not from its stem and its spirit — Jesus Christ and the earliest members of the Christian Church arose. Jewish history, Jewish conceptions, Jewish thought and poetry became important elements in our mental life. It cannot be right to separate the outward friction entirely from the inner penetration. If we had not ceremoniously adopted the Jew into our family circle, he would no more have found a home

Jew and was Secretary of the Jewish deputy of Bouches-du-Rhône, M. Constantini). After a detailed proof the document closes with the following: “*Les députés israélites arrêtent: Que l'expression de ces sentiments sera consignée dans le procès-verbal de ce jour pour qu'elle demeure à jamais comme un témoignage authentique de la gratitude des Israélites de cette Assemblée pour les bienfaits que les générations qui les ont précédés ont reçus des ecclésiastiques des divers pays d'Europe.*“ The proposal was moved by Mr. Isaac Samuel Avigdor, representative of the Jews of the Alpes-Maritimes. Tama adds that the speech of Avigdor was received with applause and its insertion in the minutes *in extenso* adopted. — The Jewish historians of to-day do not say a word concerning this important event. Not only Graetz passes it over in silence, but Bédarride also in his *Les Juifs en France*, 1859, although he seems as if he were reporting in full from the minutes.

* *Die Religion*, general note to third chapter.

352 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

among us than the Saracen or the other wrecks of half-Semitic peoples who saved their existence — but not their individuality — by unconditional amalgamation with the nations of South Europe. The Jew, however, was proof against this; though now and then one of them might be dragged to the stake, the very fact that they had crucified Jesus Christ surrounded them with a solemn, awe-inspiring nimbus. And while the people were thus fascinated, the scholars and holy men spent their days and nights in studying the books of the Hebrews: struck down by the commands of Jewish shepherds like Amos and Micah, the monuments of an art, whose like the world has never since seen, fell to the ground; through the scorn of Jewish priests science sank into

contempt; Olympus and Walhalla became depopulated, because the Jews so wished it; Jehovah, who had said to the Israelites, "Ye are my people and I am your God," now became the God of the Indo-Europeans; from the Jews we adopted the fatal doctrine of unconditional religious intolerance. But at the same time we adopted very great and sublime spiritual impulses; we were taught by prophets, who preached such strict and pure morals as could have been found nowhere else save on the distant shores of India; we became acquainted with such a living and life-moulding faith in a higher divine power that it inevitably changed our spirit and gave it a new direction. Though Christ was the master-builder, we got the architecture from the Jews. Isaiah, Jeremiah, the Psalmists became, and still are, living powers in our spiritual life.

WHO IS THE JEW?

And now, when this inner contact is beginning to grow weaker, while the outer friction referred to above is being daily more felt, now, when he cannot any longer

353 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

rid ourselves of the presence of Jews, it is not sufficient for us to know that almost all pre-eminent and free men, from Tiberius to Bismarck, have looked upon the presence of the Jew in our midst as a social and political danger, we must be in a position to form definite judgments on the basis of adequate knowledge of facts and to act accordingly. There have been published Anti-Semitic catechisms, in which opinions of well-known men have been collected in hundreds; but apart from the fact that many a remark when taken apart from the context does not give quite fairly the intention of the writer, and that out of many others it is merely ignorant blind prejudice that speaks, a single opinion of our own is manifestly worth more than two hundred quotations. Moreover I do not know how we can form a competent judgment, if we do not learn to take a higher standpoint than that of political considerations, and I do not know how we can arrive at this standpoint except through history, not, however, modern history — for there we should be judge and suitor at the same time — but through the history of the growth of the Jewish people. There is no lack of documents; in the nineteenth century especially they have been tested, critically sifted and historically classified by the devoted work of learned men, mostly Germans, but also distinguished Frenchmen, Dutchmen and Englishmen; much remains to be done, but enough has already been accomplished to enable us to survey clearly and surely in its general features one of the most remarkable pages of human history. This Jew, who appears so eternally unchangeable, so constant, as Goethe says, really grew into what he is, grew slowly, even artificially. And of a surety he will pass away like all

that has grown. This fact already brings him nearer to us as a human being. What a "Semite" is, no one can tell. A hundred years ago science thought it knew what it meant; Semites

354 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

were the sons of Shem; now the answer becomes more and more vague; it was thought that the criterion of language was decisive: a very great error! The idea "Semite" indeed remains indispensable because it embraces collectively a many-sided complex of historical phenomena; but there is absolutely no sure boundary-line; at the periphery this ethnographical conception merges into others. Finally "Semite" remains as the name of an original race, like "Aryan," one of those counters without which one could not make oneself understood, but which one must beware of accepting as good coin. The real genuine coins are those empirically given, historically developed national individualities, of which I have spoken in the former chapter, such individualities as the Jews for example. Race is not an original phenomenon, it is produced; physiologically by characteristic mixture of blood, followed by inbreeding; psychically by the influence which long-lasting historical and geographical conditions exercise upon that special, specific, physiological foundation. * If we wish then (and I think that must be the principal task of this chapter) to ask the Jew: Who art thou? we must first try to discover whether there was not a definite mixture of blood underlying the fact of this so clearly marked race, and then — if the answer is in the affirmative — trace how the peculiar soul, which thus was produced, differentiated itself more and more. Nowhere can we trace this process as we can in the Jew: for the whole national history of the Jews is like a continuous process of elimination; the character of the Jewish people ever becomes more individual, more outspoken, more simple; finally there remains in a way nothing of the whole being but the central skeleton; the slowly ripened fruit is robbed of its downy, fresh-coloured covering and of its juicy flesh, for these

* Cf. [p. 288](#). For the Semites, see also [p. 361](#).

355 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

might become spotted and worm-eaten; the stony kernel alone remains, shrivelled and dry, it is true, but defying time. However, as I have pointed out, this was not always the case. That which has been transferred from the sacred books of the Hebrews to the Christian religion does not come down from the senility of real Judaism, but partly from the youth of the much wider and more imaginative "Israelite" people, partly from the mature years of the Judean, just after he had separated from Israel and when he had not yet proudly isolated himself from the other nations of

the earth. The Jew whom we now know and see at work has become Jew gradually; not, however, as pseudo-history would have us believe, in the course of the Christian Middle Ages, but on his national soil, in the course of his independent history; the Jew moulded his own destiny; in Jerusalem stood the first Ghetto, the high wall which separated the orthodox and the pure-born from the Goyim, and prevented the latter from entering the real city. Neither Jacob, nor Solomon, nor Isaiah would recognise his posterity in Rabbi Akiba (the great scribe of the *Talmud*) much less in Baron Hirsch or the diamond king Barnato. *

Let us therefore try by the shortest way, *i.e.*, by the greatest possible simplification, to make plain the essential features of this peculiar national soul, as it gradually became more clearly and one-sidedly developed. This needs no great learning; for to the question: Who

* For the Messianic period the dream of the later Jews (in contrast to the more free-thinking Israelites of former centuries) was to keep strangers out of Jerusalem altogether: read *Joel* iii. 2; and as this very late prophet — from the Hellenic period — says at the same time that God will always dwell in Jerusalem and only in Jerusalem, this command means the banishment of all peoples from God's presence. Such was the tolerance of the Jews! — It is only logical that most of the Rabbis excluded all non-Jews from a future world, while others endured them there as a despised throng (*see* Tractate *Gittin*, fol. 57a of the *Babylonian Talmud*, and Weber, *System der altsynagogalen palästinischen Theologie*, p. 372, from Laible); the comical thing is the assertion of the Jews to-day that their religion is the “religion of humanity!”

356 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

art thou? the Jew himself, as I have said, and his ancestor the Israelite have given from the first the clearest of answers: then we have the mass of scientific work, from Ewald to Wellhausen and Ramsay, from De Wette and Reuss to Duhm and Cheyne; we have only to make out the sum total, as the practical man needs it, who, in the midst of the stormy bustle of the world, wishes to be able to base his judgment upon definite ascertained facts.

I have only two more remarks to make, about method pure and simple. Having already, particularly in the chapter on the [Revelation of Christ](#), discussed the Jew in detail and as this theme will probably come up again, I may here confine myself to the central question and refer the reader for much information on other points to what has been said or will be said elsewhere in my book. As regards the authors consulted, I could not help using, in addition to the Bible and some thoroughly competent modern Jewish writers, also some scholars who are not Jews; this was quite necessary for our knowledge of the prophets and the correct interpretation of historical events; but these scholars, even the most free-thinking of them, are all men who display great — perhaps exaggerated — admiration of the Jewish nation, at least in its earlier form, and who are all inclined to look upon this people as in some sense

a “chosen“ one, so far as religion is concerned. I have, however, in the interests of the exposition entirely disregarded those writers who are avowedly Anti-Semitic.

SYSTEMATIC ARRANGEMENT OF THE INVESTIGATION

There is one point — in my opinion a very important one — upon which the science of the last years has shed a good deal of light, namely, the anthropogeny of the

357 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

Israelites, that is, the history of the physical development of this special national race. Of course here, as everywhere, there is a past which is closed to our knowledge, and beyond doubt much that daring archaeologists have felt and guessed with the feelers of their wonderfully trained instinct rather than seen with their own eyes, will yet be essentially corrected by newer investigations and discoveries. But that makes no difference to us here. The important thing — the great, solid achievement of history — is, first, the fact that the Israelite people represents the product of manifold mixing, and that, too, not between related races (as the ancient Greeks, or the English of to-day) but between types that morally and physically are absolutely distinct; and secondly, the fact that genuine Semitic blood (if this makeshift word is to have a sense at all) makes up, I suppose, hardly the half of this mixture. These are certain results of exact anatomical anthropology and of historical investigation, two branches of knowledge which here extend to each other a helping hand. A third point completes those just named; for it we are indebted to the critical endeavours of Biblical archaeology, which has at last thrown light upon the very complicated chronology of the books of the Old Testament, which belong to entirely different centuries and were put together quite arbitrarily, though not without a plan: these teach us that the real Jew is not to be identified with the Israelite in the wider sense of the word, that the house of Judah, even at the time of its settling in Palestine, was through blood-mixture and character distinct in several points from the house of Joseph (which embraced the other tribes): the Judean stood in fact in a kind of intellectual dependence upon the Josephite, and only at a relatively late time, after the violent separation from his brothers, did he begin to go his own way, the way that led to Judaism, and which very soon afterwards by the elevation

358 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

of inbreeding to a religious principle isolated him from the whole world. The Jew can be called an Israelite in so far as he is an offshoot of that

family; the Israelites, on the other hand, even those of the tribe of Judah, were not Jews; the Jew began to develop only after the more powerful tribes of the North had been destroyed by the Assyrians. In order to ascertain who the Jew is, we have therefore first of all to establish who the Israelite was and then to ask how the Israelite of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin became a Jew. And here we must be careful how we use our sources of information. For it was only after the Babylonian captivity that the specifically Jewish character was artificially brought into the Bible, by whole books being invented and ascribed to Moses and frequently by the introduction in verse after verse of interpolations and corrections which obliterated the wider views of old Israel and replaced them by the narrow Jerusalemic cult of Jehovah, giving the impression that this cult had existed from time immemorial and had been directly ordained by God. This has long prevented us from clearly understanding the gradual and perfectly human historical development of the Jewish national character. Now at last light has been thrown on this sphere too. Here also we can say: we hold in our hand a sure and lasting result of scientific investigation. Whether later investigations prove this or that sentence of the Hexateuch, which to-day is ascribed to the "jahvistic" text, to belong to the "elohistic," or to have been inserted by the later "editor," whether a definite utterance was made by Isaiah himself or by the so-called second Isaiah — all these are certainly important questions, but their solution will never in any way alter the established fact that real Judaism, with the special Jehovah faith and the exclusive predominance of priestly law, is due to a demonstrable and very peculiar historical sequence of events and to

359 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

the active intervention of certain far-sighted and clear-headed men.

These three facts form the essential basis of all knowledge of the Jewish character; they must not remain the possession of a learned minority but must be incorporated in the consciousness of all educated people. I repeat them in preciser form:

(1) The Israelite people has arisen from the crossing of quite different human types;

(2) The Semitic element may well have been the stronger morally, but physically it contributed scarcely one-half to the composition of the new ethnological individuality; it is therefore wrong shortly to call the Israelites "Semites," for the part played by the various human types in the formation of the Israelite race demands a quantitative and qualitative analysis;

(3) The real Jew only developed in the course of centuries by gradual physical separation from the rest of the Israelite family, as also by progressive development of certain mental qualities and systematic starving of others; he is not the result of a normal national life, but in a

way an artificial product, produced by a priestly caste, which forced, with the help of alien rulers, a priestly legislation and a priestly faith upon a people that did not want them.

This furnishes us with the arrangement of the following discussion. I shall first of all consult history and anthropology, in order that we may learn from what races the new Israelite race (as the foundation of the Jewish) was descended; then the part played by these various human types must be analysed with regard to their physical and particularly their moral significance, and here our attention must be directed especially to their religious views: for the basis of Judaism is the faith which it teaches and we cannot judge the Jew correctly either in history or in our midst, if we are not quite clear about

360 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

his religion; last of all I shall try to show how under the influence of remarkable historical events specific Judaism was established and stamped for ever with its peculiar and incomparable individuality. In this way we shall perhaps attain the object of this chapter, as I have defined it; for the Jewish race — though later at certain times it adopted not a few alien elements — remained on the whole purer than any other, and the Jewish nation has been from the first an essentially “ideal“ one, that is, one resting on faith in a definite national idea, not on the possession of a free State of its own, nor on communal life and work on the soil of that State: and this idea is the same to-day as it was two thousand years ago. Now race and ideal make up the personality of the human being; they answer the question: Who art thou?

ORIGIN OF THE ISRAELITE

The Israelites * sprang from the crossing of three (perhaps even four) different human types: the Semitic, the Syrian (or, more correctly, Hittite) and the Indo-European. Possibly Turanian blood, or, as it is more frequently called in Germany, Sumero-Accadian blood, also flowed in the veins of the original ancestors.

In order that the reader may clearly understand how this crossing took place, I must first give a brief historical sketch. It will freshen the memory in regard to familiar facts and help to make the history of the origin of the Jewish race comprehensible.

Although the term “Semite,” as applied to a pure autonomous race existing since the beginning of time,

* And not they only but also their relatives, the Ammonites, the Moabites and the Edomites. These four make up the family of the “Hebrews,” a name usually — but wrongly — applied to the Israelites alone or sometimes even to the Jews. See Wellhausen: [*Israelitische und jüdische Geschichte*](#), 3rd ed. p. 7. To the same family

belong likewise the Midianites and the Ishmaelites (Maspero: *Histoire ancienne*, 1895, ii. 65.)

361 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

a special creation of God, so to speak, is certainly a mere abstraction, yet it is not so hazardous as the word “Aryan“: for there still exists to-day a people which is supposed to represent the pure, untarnished type of the primeval Semite, viz., the Bedouin of the Arabian desert. * Let us discard the hazy Semite and confine ourselves to the Bedouin of flesh and blood. It is supposed, and there are good grounds for the supposition, that some thousands of years before Christ, human beings, very closely resembling the Bedouins of to-day, migrated from Arabia in an almost unbroken stream to east and north into the land of the two rivers. Arabia is healthy, so its population increases; its soil is extremely poor, so a portion of its inhabitants must seek sustenance elsewhere. It seems that sometimes great migratory hordes composed of armed men had thus wandered forth; in such cases the surplus population had been cast out with irresistible force from their home, and left as conquerors upon the neighbouring countries; in other cases single families with their herds wandered peacefully over the indefinitely marked boundary from one grazing-place to another: if they did not at once turn off to the west, as many of them did, it might happen that they advanced as far as the Euphrates and so, following the stream, worked their way into the north. In historical times (under the Romans and subsequent to Mohammed) we have memorable instances of this summary manner of getting rid of superfluous population; † in the great civilised States between

* This seems to be unanimously asserted by all writers. I have quoted Burckhardt in the course of this chapter. Here I shall only refer to a more modern, universally recognised authority — W. Robertson Smith. In his *Religion of the Semites* (1894, p. 8) he says: “It can be taken for granted that the Arabs of the desert have from time immemorial been an unmixed race.“ The same author points out that it is inadmissible to put the Babylonians, Phoenicians, &c., down as “Semites“: the only established fact is the relationship of the languages, and all these so-called “Semitic“ nations have sprung from a decided mixture of blood.

† The last example was in the end of the nineteenth century, when the

362 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

the Tigris and the Euphrates, Semitisation was also the work of great, though more peaceful, masses. Wherever, in fact, as in Babylonian Accadia, the Semites came into contact with a ripe, strong, self-reliant culture, they prevailed over it by fusion with the people — a process which in the case of the Babylonians we can now trace almost step by step. * The Beni Israel, on the other hand, emigrated as simple shepherds in small groups and had, in order to secure the safety of their

cattle, to avoid all warlike operations, of which their small number would have rendered them incapable in any case. † The Bible narrative naturally gives us only the faint reflection of primeval oral traditions concerning the earliest wanderings of this Bedouin family; they are in addition much falsified by the misconceptions, theories and purposes of late-born scribes; still there is no reason to doubt the correctness of the general details given, all the less so as they contain nothing that is improbable. Everything is indeed much abbreviated: whole families have dwindled into a single person (a universal Semitic custom, “such as we find only in the case of the Semites,” says Wellhausen); other pretended ancestors are simply the names of the places in the neighbourhood of which the Israelites had long stayed; movements which required several generations to accomplish are accredited to a

Arabs, who from time immemorial had migrated not only to north and east, but also to west and south, completely devastated a great part of Central Africa. Immense kingdoms, which in the year 1880 were densely populated and entirely under cultivation, have since become a desert. Stanley tells us of a single Arab chieftain who laid waste a region of two thousand square miles! (See the books of Stanley, Wissman, Hinde, &c., and the short summary in Ratzel: *Völkerkunde*, 2nd ed. ii. 430.) Cf. also [p. 115, note](#).

* See Hummel, Sayce, Budge and Maspero with regard to the lost race of the Accadians or Sumerians, the creators of the magnificent Babylonian culture, and their gradual Semitisation.

† To complete and correct what follows, see the interesting and excellent book of Carl Steuernagel: *Die Einwanderung der israelitischen Stämme in Kanaan*. Berlin, 1901.

363 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

single individual. This need of simplifying the complex, of pressing together what lies far apart, is just as natural to this people as it is to the poet who consciously creates. Thus, for example, the Bible represents Abraham, when already a married man, as emigrating from the district of Ur, on the lower course of the Euphrates, to northern Mesopotamia, at the foot of the Armenian mountain range, to that Paddan-Aram, of which the book of *Genesis* so often speaks and which lies beyond the Euphrates, between it and the tributary Khabur, in a straight line about 375 miles, but following the valley and the line of grazing-tracts at least 937 miles from Ur (*cf.* the map on p. 365); but more than that, this same Abraham is said to have moved later from Paddan-Aram towards the south-west, to the land of Canaan, from there to Egypt and finally (for I leave his shorter journeys out of account) from Egypt to Canaan again and all this accompanied by so numerous herds of cattle that he was forced, in order to find sufficient grazing land for them, to separate from his nearest relatives (*Genesis* xiii.). In spite of this compression the old Hebrew tradition contains all we require to know, particularly in places where the oldest tradition is before us in almost unfalsified form, and Biblical criticism already gives us full information with regard to it. *

From this tradition we learn that the Bedouin family in question first of all wandered into the valley of the southern Euphrates and stayed a considerable time in the neighbourhood of the city of Ur. This city lay to the south of the great river and formed the farthest outpost of Chaldea. Here for the first time the nomads came into touch with civilisation. The shepherds could not indeed enter into this district itself, since magnificent cities and a highly developed agriculture required every inch of ground available, but here they

* Cf. especially Gunkel's *Handkommentar zur Genesis*, 1901 (now published in a second improved edition).

364 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

received imperishable impressions and instruction (to which I shall refer later); it was here too that they first became acquainted with such names as Abraham and Sarah, which their love of punning make them translate later into Hebrew (*Genesis* xvii. 1-6). They could not stay long in the vicinity of such high culture, or perhaps they were pushed forward by sons of the desert who were pressing on behind. And thus we see them moving ever farther and farther towards the north, * to the then sparsely populated Paddan-Aram, † where they must have stayed for a long time — at the very least for several centuries. When, however, the pasture of Mesopotamia was no longer sufficient for the increased number of human beings and cattle, a portion of them moved from that north-eastern corner of Syria, Paddan-Aram, to the south-western corner nearest Egypt, to Canaan, where they were hospitably received by a settled agricultural people and received permission to pasture their herds on the mountains. But Paddan-Aram lived long in the memory of the descendants of Abraham as their genuine home. Jehovah himself calls Paddan-Aram Abraham's "country" (*Genesis* xii. 1), and the mythical Abraham still speaks, long after he has settled in Canaan, with longing of his distant "country" and sends messengers to his "land" (*Genesis* xxiv. 4 and 7), in order to get in touch again with the relatives who had remained

* The direction was marked out for them; from Ur they could choose no other course; for the wilderness runs for several hundred miles parallel to the Euphrates, only a small stretch of watered land separating the two; but suddenly, exactly at the 35th degree, the wilderness ceases and the land of Syria opens up to west, south and north. Syria stretches southwards to Egypt, westwards to the Mediterranean Sea, northwards to the Taurus, in the east it is bounded to-day by the Euphrates, but according to former conditions and ideas it embraced Mesopotamia, which lies beyond the middle Euphrates, and here the children of Abraham had their home for centuries.

† At a later time Mesopotamia was for long an artificially watered and consequently richly-cultivated region; in former times, however, it was, as it is to-day, a poor land, where only nomadic shepherds could find a living (cf. Maspero: *Histoire ancienne*, i. 563.)

365 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

there. And thus the sons of Abraham, although already settled in Canaan, remained half Mesopotamians during all the long years which have been compressed and represented under the pseudo-mythical names Isaac



SKETCH-MAP

and Jacob; it is a perpetual coming and going; the southern branch feeling that it belongs to one principal northern stem. * But the moment came when they had to move farther towards the south; in dry years the pastures of Canaan were no longer sufficient, and perhaps

* This period, during which "Father Jacob developed into the people of Israel,"

Wellhausen describes as an interval of several centuries' duration ([*Israelitische und jüdische Geschichte*](#), p. 11).

366 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

too the Canaanites felt the burden of their increasing numbers; so at the time when the friendly half-Semitic Hyksos were in power, they wandered away to the land of Goshen, belonging to Egypt. It was this long stay in Egypt * that first broke off all connection between them and their kinsmen, so that, when the Israelites once more returned to Palestine, they still recognised the Moabites, Edomites and the other Hebrews as distant blood-relations, but felt for them no longer love but hatred and contempt, a state of feeling which received a refreshingly artless expression in the genealogies of the Bible, according to which some of these races owe their origin to incest, while others are descended from harlots.

We can only speak of Israelites in the historical sense of the word from the moment when, as a not very numerous, but yet firmly united people, they forcibly took possession of Canaan on their flight from Egypt, and founded there a State that experienced many different but mostly very sad strokes of fortune, but which, in spite of the fact that it lay (like the rest of Syria) between hammer and anvil, that is, between warring "great Powers," continued to stand as an independent kingdom for almost seven hundred years. We must emphasise the fact that these Israelites were not very numerous; it is important from an historical as well as from an anthropological point of view; for to this circumstance we must ascribe the fact that the former and really domiciled inhabitants of Canaan (a mixture of

* According to Genesis xv. four hundred years, which is naturally not to be taken literally but simply as an expression for an almost unthinkably long time. The number forty was among the Hebrews the expression for an indefinitely large number, four hundred *a fortiori*. Renan is of opinion that the stay of the Israelites in Egypt did not last more than one hundred years and that only the Josephites (probably only very distant relations with a strong mixture of Egyptian blood) were settled there for very long (*Histoire du peuple d'Israël*, 13e éd. i. pp. 112, 141, 142).

367 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

Hittites and Indo-European Amorites) were never destroyed and always formed and even still form the stock of the population. * The mingling of races, of which I shall immediately speak, and which had begun as soon as the Israelites entered Syrian territory, continued in the autonomous State of Israel, that is, in Palestine, and came to a sudden stop only after the Babylonian exile, and that in Judea alone, by the introduction of a new law. The fact that the Jews at a later time separated as an ethnological unity from the rest of the Israelites is purely and simply due

to this, that the inhabitants of Judea by energetic enactments at last put a stop to the continual fusion (see *Ezra* ix. and x.).

The reader who would like further information on this matter may supplement the knowledge he has derived from this hasty sketch by consulting Wellhausen's concise *Israelitische und jüdische Geschichte*, Stade's *Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, Renan's detailed and yet lightly written *Histoire du peuple d'Israël*, and Maspero's comprehensive and luminous *Histoire ancienne des peuples de l'Orient classique*; † in the meantime my sketch may suffice to show the origin of the Israelites in broad outline and to impress upon the memory in the simplest form the seemingly complicated facts of the case. I shall now attempt to show how the original, purely Semitic

* Sayce: *The Races of the Old Testament*, 2nd ed. pp.76, 113. "The Roman drove the Jew out of the land that his fathers had conquered; the Jews, on the other hand, had never succeeded in driving out the genuine possessors of Canaan.... The Jew held Jerusalem and Hebron, as well as the surrounding cities and villages, otherwise (even in Judea itself) he formed only a fraction of the population. As soon as the Jew was removed, for example, at the time of the Babylonian exile or after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, the original population, freed from the pressure, increased ... and the Jewish colonies in Palestine are to-day just as much foreigners as the German colonies there."

† I name only the latest, most important and most reliable books, written by real scholars but accessible to the unlearned. Of the older ones Duncker's *Geschichte des Altertums* also remains unsurpassed in many respects for the history of Israel.

368 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

emigrant became by crossing first of all a Hebrew and then an Israelite.

THE GENUINE SEMITE

The preceding historical sketch shows us a Bedouin family as the starting-point. * Let us first of all establish the one fact: this pure Semite, the original emigrant from the deserts of Arabia, is and remains the impelling power, the principle of life, the soul of the new ethnical unity of the Israelites which arose out of manifold crossing. No matter how much, in consequence not only of their destiny but above all of crossing with absolutely different human types, his descendants might differ in course of time morally and physically from the original Bedouin, yet in many points, good as well as bad, he remained their *spiritus rector*. Of the two or three souls which had their home in the breast of the later Israelites, this was the most obtrusive and long-lived. However, we can only congratulate this Bedouin family on their crossing, for any change in the manner of living is said to have a very bad effect on the high qualities of the genuine and purely Semitic nomads. The learned Sayce, one of the greatest advocates of the Jews at the present day, writes: "If the Bedouin of the desert chooses a settled life, he, as a rule, unites in himself all the

vices of the nomad and of the

* As a matter of fact the current opinion is that the Semite and even that purest Bedouin type are the most absolute mongrels imaginable, the product of a cross between negro and white man! Gobineau preached this doctrine fifty years ago, and was laughed at; to-day his opinion is the orthodox one; Ranke defines it thus in his *Völkerkunde* (ii. 399): “The Semites belong to the mulatto class, a transition stage between black and white.” But I think that caution is here necessary. What is taking place before our eyes is not warranted to strengthen the belief that from mulattoes there could spring a firm, unchangeable type that would survive the storms of time: quicksand is not more fickle and changeable than this half-caste; here, then, in defiance of all experience we should have to suppose that the unthinkable, the unexampled had taken place in the case of the Bedouins. (*Cf.*, too, August Ford's remarks, 1900).

369 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

peasant. Lazy, deceitful, cruel, greedy, cowardly, he is rightly regarded by all nations as the scum of mankind.” * But long before they settled down, this Bedouin family, the Beni Israel, had fortunately escaped such a cruel fate by manifold crossing with non-Semites.

We saw that the original Bedouin family first stayed for a considerable time on the Southern Euphrates in the neighbourhood of the city of Ur: did crossing take place at this stage? It has been asserted that it did. And since fairly genuine Sumero-Accadians presumably formed the basis of the population of the Babylonian Empire at that time — for the Semites had merely annexed this State and its high civilisation without performing either the mental work or the manual † — it is assumed that the stock of Abraham was quickened by Sumero-Accadian blood. The occurrence of such strange names as Abraham (this was the name of the first legendary founder and king of Ur among the Sumerians) has given weight to this view, as also the fragments of half-understood Turanian ‡ wisdom and mythology, of which the first chapters of *Genesis* are composed. But such assumptions are purely hypothetical and hence, to begin with, hardly merit serious consideration. Not even probability speaks for this view. The poor shepherds had hardly touched the hem of civilisation, what people then would have entered into family relations with them? And as regards the adoption of such meagre cosmogonic conceptions as we find in the Bible, intercourse with other Hebrews is sufficient to explain that; for the mythology, the science and the culture of the Sumerians (in which we still share, thanks

* [*The Races of the Old Testament*](#), p. 106.

† See especially Sayce: *Assyria*, p. 24 ff., and *Social Life among the Assyrians and Babylonians*; also Winckler: *Die Völker Vorderasiens* (1900), p. 8.

‡ The word “Turanian“ has escaped my pen, because many authors regard the Sumero-Accadians as Turanians. See Hommel: *Gesch. Babyloniens und Assyriens*, pp. 125, 244 f.

370 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

to the idea of creation and of the fall of man, the division of the week and the year, the foundation of geometry, and the invention of writing) had spread far and wide; Egypt was their pupil, * and the Semite, incapable of such deep intuition as the Egyptian, had long ago, before the Beni Israel began their wanderings, adopted as much of Egyptian culture as seemed advantageous and practical and had, as active mediators, spread it wherever they went. The crossing with Sumero-Accadians is therefore just as improbable as it is unproved.

We are, however, on sure ground, as soon as the emigrants move to north and west. For now they are in the heart of Syria and they never again leave it (except at the time of their short stay on the borders of Egypt). Here, in Syria, our purely Semitic Bedouin family has been changed by crossing, here its members became Hebrews by mingling with an absolutely different type, the Syrian — as so many a Bedouin colony before and after them. At a later period part of the family was forced to emigrate from Mesopotamia, which lay in the north-east corner, to Canaan, in the extreme south-west, where similar race-moulding influences, to which quite new ones were also added, asserted themselves in a still more definite way. It was only here, in Canaan, that the Abrahamide Hebrews changed gradually into genuine Israelites. To this very Canaan the Israelites, now increased in numbers, returned as conquerors, after their sojourn in Egypt; and here they received, in addition to alien blood, a new culture, which transformed them from nomads into settled farmers and city-dwellers.

We can, therefore, without making any mistake, distinguish two anthropogenetic spheres of influence, which successively came into prominence, a more general one, provided by the entrance into Syria and in particular

* See Hommel: *Der babylonische Ursprung der ägyptischen Kultur* (1892).

371 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

by the long stay in Mesopotamia, in regard to which we have no very definite historical dates, but which we may and must deduce from the known ethnological facts; in the second place, a more particular Canaanite influence, which we can prove from the detailed testimony of the Bible. Let us discuss first the more general sphere of influence and then the more particular one.

THE SYRIAN

If we turn up a text-book of geography or an encyclopaedia, we shall

find it stated that the present population of Syria is “to the greatest extent Semitic.” This is false; just as false as the statement we find in the same sources, that the Armenians are “Aryans.” Here again we see the widespread confusion of language and race; we should, on the same footing, logically have to maintain that the negroes of the United States were Anglo-Saxons. Scientific anthropology has in recent years, by thorough investigation of an enormous amount of material, irrefutably proved that from the most remote times to which prehistoric discoveries reach back, the main population of Syria has been formed from a type which is absolutely different, physically and morally, from the Semitic, as it is from everything which we are wont to comprise under the term “Aryan”; and this applies not to the population of Syria alone, but also to that of all Asia Minor and the extensive region which we call Armenia at the present day. There are races which have an inborn tendency to restless wandering (*e.g.*, the Bedouin, the Laplander, &c.), others which possess a rare power of expansion (*e.g.*, the Teutonic races); but this inhabitant of Syria and Asia Minor seems to have been distinguished and still to be distinguished by his obstinate attachment to his native soil and the invincible power of his physical constancy. His original home was the

372 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

trusting-place of nations, he himself almost always being vanquished, and the great battles of the world being fought over him — yet he survived them all and his blood asserted itself to such an extent that the Syrian Semite of to-day should be called Semite in language rather than in race, and the so-called Aryan Armenian, of Phrygian origin, has perhaps not 10 per cent. of Indo-European blood in his veins. On the other hand, the so-called “Syrian” of to-day, the Jew and the Armenian can hardly be distinguished from one another, and this is easily explained, since the primal race which unites all three makes them daily more and more like each other. We may most appropriately apply a quotation from Schiller's *Braut von Messina* to this Syrian stem:

Die fremden Eroberer kommen und gehen;
Wir gehorchen, aber wir bleiben stehen.

Now the people which enters history at a later time under the name of Israelites was subject to this powerful ethnical influence for many centuries, at least for over ten centuries. That is what I called the general sphere of influence by which our genuine Semitic Bedouin family became a group of the so-called “Hebrews.” Hebrews are, in fact, a cross between Semite and Syrian. It must not be thought that the nomad shepherds immediately crossed with the strange race, the process was rather as follows: on the one hand they found a considerable number of half and

quarter Hebrews, who formed the point of connection; on the other hand they doubtless subdued the original inhabitants (as the predominance of the Semitic languages, Hebrew, Aramaic, &c., proves) and begot sons and daughters with their Syrian slaves; later (in half-historical times) we see them voluntarily intermarrying with the independent families of the alien people, and this had beyond doubt been for centuries the custom. However, no matter what theories we

373 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

may hold about the process of fusion, certain it is that it did take place.

To be able to speak of that other Syrian type it would be convenient to have a name for him. Hommel, the well-known Munich scholar, calls him the *Alarodian*; * he thinks he may ascribe to him considerable expansion even over Southern Europe and finds him in the Iberians and Basques of to-day. But the layman must be very discreet in his use of such hypotheses; before this book is printed, the Alarodians may have been thrown among the scrap-iron of science. The example of the French zoologist and anthropologist, G. de Lapouge, is worthy of imitation; he does not trouble himself about history and origin, but gives names to the various physical types according to the Linnean method, such as *Homo europaeus*, *Homo Afer*, *Homo contractus*, &c. So far as formation of skull is concerned, this type from Asia Minor would correspond pretty exactly to Lapouge's *Homo alpinus*; † but here we may safely and simply call him *Homo syriacus*, the primeval inhabitant of Syria. And just as we found a point of support for the Semitic type in the Bedouin, so we find in the Hittite tribe a peculiarly characteristic representative of the Syrian type, and moreover the one with which the Israelites in Palestine were closely connected; it no longer, of course, exists among us as a national individuality, but it is daily becoming better known from history and from manifold surviving representations. ‡ This Syrian type is distinguished by the prevalence of a particular anatomical characteristic:

* He takes the name from a tribe mentioned by Herodotus as living at the foot of Mount Ararat.

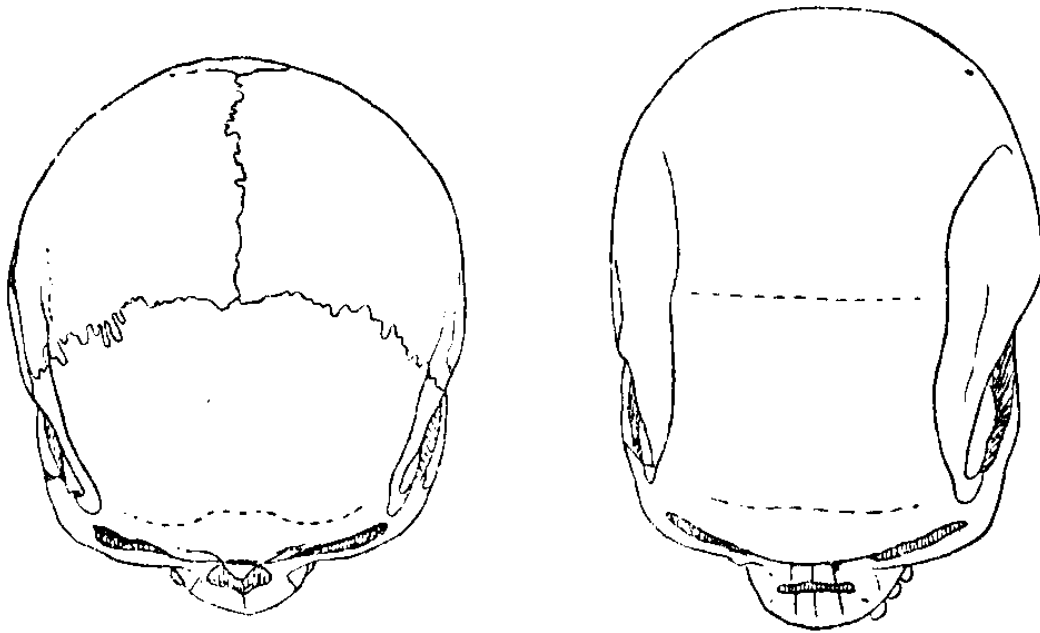
† Lapouge: *La dépopulation de la France*, *Revue d'Anthropologie*, 1888, p. 79. F. von Luschan has definitely pointed out the resemblance of the Syrian to the Savoyard.

‡ A summary of our knowledge of the Hittites will be found in Winckler's *Die Völker Vorderasiens*, 1900, p. 18 ff. The expression "Hittite" in this book signifies the same to me as the x to a mathematician in a properly stated but not yet numerically solved equation

374 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

he is round-headed, or, as the natural scientists say, "brachycephalous," that is, with a short skull, the breadth of which is nearly equal to the length. * The Bedouin, on the other hand, and also every Semite whose

blood is not strongly mixed with foreign elements, is decidedly “dolichocephalic.” “Long, narrow heads,” writes von Luschan, “are a



SHORT SKULL (brachycephalous)

LONG SKULL (dolichocephalous)

(After de Mortillet)

striking characteristic of the Bedouin to-day, and we should have to claim the same for the oldest Arabs were it not proved from numerous illustrations on the old Egyptian monuments fortunately preserved.” † Naturally there is more than this one anatomical criterion; corresponding to the round head there is the thick-set body;

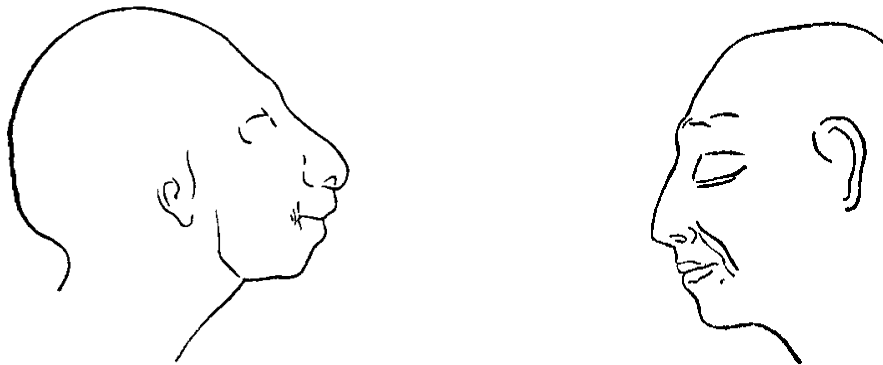
* The skull is regarded as particularly long when the relation of breadth to length is not over 75 to 100, particularly short when it is 80 or more. When I studied anthropology with Carl Vogt, all the students were measured craniometrically; in the case of one the rare relation of 92 to 100 was established, that is, his head was almost quite round; he was an Armenian, a typical representative of the Syrian type of skull.

† F. v. Luschan: *Die anthropologische Stellung der Juden* (Lecture delivered in the General Meeting of the German Anthropological Society of the year 1892). This lecture is to be found in the *Correspondenzblatt* of the Society for 1892, Nos. 9 and 10. It summarises extensive researches and I shall often quote from it further on.

375 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

it is the expression of a complete and peculiar physiological character. But the skull is the most convenient part of the skeleton for making comparative studies regarding extinct races, and it is also the most expressive, and no matter how endless the variation in the individuals, it maintains the typical forms with great constancy. But the Hittite had

another and much more striking anatomical distinguishing feature, a very



HITTITES

ephemeral one, it is true, since cartilage and not bone went to form it, but it has been splendidly preserved in pictures and so is well known to us to-day — the nose. The so-called “Jewish nose“ is a Hittite legacy. The genuine Arab, the pure Bedouin, has usually “a short, small nose little bent“ (I quote von Luschan and refer to the illustrations given) and even when the nose is more of the eagle type, it never possesses an “extinguisher“ (as Philip von Zesen, the language-reformer, called it) of the specific, unmistakable Jewish and Armenian form. Now by continuous crossing with the round-headed type of the alien people the Israelite has gradually lost his narrow, long Bedouin head, receiving as compensation the so-called Jewish nose. Certainly the long head still occurred, maintaining itself especially among the nobler families; even among the Jews of to-day we find a small percentage of genuine long heads; but the long head disappeared more and more. The

376 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

nose alone is no reliable proof of Jewish descent; the reason is clear; this Syrian legacy is common to all peoples who have Syrian blood in their veins. In the case of this anthropological discovery we have to do with no hypothetical assertions, such as too frequently occur in theological and critical or historical works; it is the sure result of thorough scientific investigation of a sufficiently large material; * this material



TRUE BEDOUIN OF THE PRESENT DAY †

extends from a very ancient time down to the present, and is excellently supported by the numerous representations found in Egypt and Syria, and gradually assigned to their proper period. We can in a way trace the process by which the Israelite “became Jew“ by the Egyptian monuments, although, in fact, even in the oldest of them (which do not go far back into Israelite history, since it was only in Solomon's time that the Jewish people became known beyond their borders) there is little of the genuine Semitic type revealed. Genuine Hittites and half-Hittites are here represented as Israelite soldiers; only the leaders (*see*, for instance, the so-called portrait of

* Von Luschan's *Mitteilungen* of the year 1892 have 60,000 measurements to support them.

† From a photograph in Ratzel's *Völkerkunde*. The other typical pictures are from well-known reliefs on Egyptian monuments.

377 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

King Rehoboam, Solomon's son) remind us of Bedouin types, but even they sometimes rather resemble good European countenances.

With these last remarks we pass from the general prehistoric sphere of influence to that of Canaan, which likewise continued for over a thousand years and provides us with plenty of sure facts to go upon. For before the Hebrew Israelites had the honour of



AMORITISH ISRAELITE (portrait of a son of Solomon)

being immortalised by the art of Egyptian painters, they had moved from Mesopotamia to Canaan. We must distinguish between their first appearance in Canaan and their second: in the former case they remained there as nomadic shepherds on the best terms with the rightful inhabitants of the cities and the owners of the tracts under cultivation; in the second case they entered the country as conquerors. In the former case, in fact, they were not numerous, in the second they were a whole nation. However uncertain and disputed many historical details still may be, one fact is certain: when they entered the land first the Israelites found the Hittites living there, those Hittites who formed a most important stem of the *Homo syriacus*. Abraham says to the inhabitants of Hebron, to the “children of Heth,” as he expressly calls them: “I am a stranger and a sojourner

378 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

with you“ (*Genesis* xxiii. 4) and he begs, as only a stranger on suffrage could beg, a “burying-place“ for his wife Sarah. Isaac's eldest son, Esau, has only daughters of Heth as his wives (*Genesis* xxvi. 34); the younger son, Jacob, is sent to distant Mesopotamia, that he may take a Hebrew woman as his wife, and from this we must conclude that there was none in Palestine, no Hebrew girl at least, who would as regards wealth have been a suitable match for him. Isaac would not have insisted upon it, a well-to-do Hittite would have pleased him, but Rebecca, his Mesopotamian wife, had no love for her Hittite daughters-in-law, the wives of Esau, and said she would rather die than let any more such come into the house (*Genesis* xxvii. 46). Among the sons of Jacob it is

again specially mentioned of Judah that he married Hittite wives (i *Chronicles* ii. 3). These popular tales are a source of historical information; we see that the Israelites had a clear recollection of having, as a very limited number of shepherds, lived among a strange, cultured and friendly people that dwelt in cities; the rich elders of the race could indulge in the luxury of sending for wives for their sons from their former home; but these sons themselves like to follow their direct inclination rather than the principle of exclusiveness; they married the maidens whom they saw around them — unless they were such heartless mercenary match-makers as Jacob; the poorer classes, of course, selected wives where they found them. In addition there was the begetting of children with slave girls. Of Jacob's twelve sons, for instance, four are the sons of slave girls and they enjoy the same rights as the others. — All this refers to the earliest contact with the Hittites of Canaan which the Bible mentions. Now there followed, according to legend, the long stay on the borders of Egypt, in the land of Goshen. But here, too, the Israelites were surrounded by Hittites. For the Hittites extended to the

379 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

borders of Egypt, where at that time their kinsmen, the Hyksos, held the sceptre; the city of Tanis, which was the rallying-point for the Israelites in Goshen, was essentially a Hittite city; from the earliest times it had been in the closest contact with Hebron; when the Israelites moved with their flocks from Hebron to the district of Tanis, they accordingly remained in the same ethnical surroundings. * And when they afterwards returned to Canaan as conquerors, they, indeed, gradually overthrew the Canaanites, who consisted mostly of Hittites, but they also, for the first time, entered into close intercourse with them. For, as I insisted above, the Canaanite did not disappear. We need only read the first chapter of the *Book of Judges* to see what Wellhausen too attests: "The Israelites did not conquer the former population systematically, but made their way among them ... it is impossible to speak of a complete conquest of the land of Palestine." And with regard to the manner in which this alien non-Semitic blood permeated the Hebrew blood more and more, the same author says, "The most important event in the period of Judges took place fairly quietly, namely, the fusion of the new Israelite population of the land with the old population. The Israelites of the time of the Kings had a strong Canaanite admixture in their blood; they were by no means pure descendants of those who once had immigrated from Egypt.... If the Israelites had destroyed the old settled inhabitants, they would have made a desert of the land and robbed themselves of the prize of victory. By sparing them and, as it were, grafting themselves upon them, they grew into their culture. They made themselves at home in houses which they had not built, in fields and

gardens which they had not laid out and cultivated. Everywhere, like lucky heirs, they reaped the fruits of

* Cf. Renan: *Israël* i. chap. 10.

380 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

the labour of their predecessors. Thus they themselves underwent an inner transformation fraught with many consequences; they grew quickly into a cultured people.“ * At an earlier time, in Hebron or Tanis, the Israelites had learned from the Hittites the art of writing; † now they learned from them how to cultivate crops and vines, how to build and to manage cities — in short, through them they became a civilised people; and through them also they became for the first time a State. Never could the various tribes, living as they did in constant jealousy, in suspicious isolation, have formed themselves into a unity but for the Canaanite element, the cement of the State. And what is more, their religious conceptions, too, received their special colouring and organisation from the Canaanites: Baal, the God of agriculture and of peaceful work, coalesced with Jehovah, the God of armies and of raids. We see how much Baal was honoured among the Israelites (in spite of later corrections on the part of the Jews) from facts such as this, that the first Israelite hero on the soil of Palestine is called Jerubbaal, ‡ and, moreover, takes to wife a Hittite: that the first King, Saul, calls one of his sons Ishbaal, David one of his Baaliada, Jonathan his only son Meribbaal, &c. The Israelite borrowed from the Canaanite the whole tradition of Prophets, as also the whole outward cult and the tradition of the sacred places. § I need not discuss in detail what every one can find in the Bible (sometimes certainly obscured by so many strange-sounding names that one needs an expert guide), namely, the great part played by the Hittites and by their relatives the Philistines in the history of Israel. Till the fusion

* [*Israelitische und jüdische Geschichte*](#), 3rd ed. pp. 37, 46 and 48.

† Renan: *Israël* i. 136.

‡ A fact which the later edition of the Bible sought to conceal (*Judges* vi. 32) while the older editors thought nothing of it (1 *Samuel* xii. 11).

§ Cf. Wellhausen, as above, pp. 45 f., 102 f; concerning the sacred places see his *Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israels*, 4th ed. p. 18 f.

381 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

was far advanced and the difference in names had disappeared, we find them everywhere, particularly among the best soldiers; and how many details in this connection must have disappeared after the later editing of the Bible by the Jews, who endeavoured to cut out all that was alien to them and to introduce the fiction of a pure descent from Abraham!

David's bodyguard is composed if not wholly yet to a great extent of men who do not belong to Israel; Hittites and Gittites hold important posts as officers; the bulk of the soldiers were Cerethites and Pelethites, Philistines and all other kinds of aliens, partly Syrian, partly almost purely European, some of Hellenic race. * David, in fact, won the throne only by the help of the Philistines — and probably as their vassal; † he even did everything in his power to encourage the fusion of the Israelites with their neighbours, and himself set the example by marrying women of Syrian and Indo-European descent.

THE AMORITES

Since the word “Indo-European“ has slipped from my pen I must here dwell upon a fact which I have as yet scarcely mentioned. The Canaanites consisted principally, but not solely, of Hittites; the Amorites lived in close connection with them, but they were often settled in separate districts, and thus kept their race relatively pure. These Amorites were tall, fair, blue-eyed men of ruddy complexion; they were “from the north,“ that is, from Europe; the Egyptians, therefore, called

* There were also Arabs, Hebrews from non-Israelite stems, Arameans and all kinds of pseudo-Semitic aliens. As there are said to have been 1,300,000 men in Israel and Judah capable of bearing arms according to the (certainly very false) popular account (2 *Samuel* xxiv.), we get the impression that the Israelites themselves were not very warlike. See especially Renan: *Israël* ii. livre 3, chap. i.

† Wellhausen: [*Israelitische und jüdische Geschichte*](#) (3 Ausg.), p. 58.

382 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

them Tamehu, the “North men,“ and moreover they seem, though this is of course problematic, not to have reached Palestine very long before the return of the Israelites from Egypt. * To the east of the Jordan they had founded mighty kingdoms with which the Israelites later had to wage many wars; another portion had entered Palestine and lived there in the closest friendship with the Hittites; † others had joined the Philistines, and that in such large numbers, increased perhaps by direct immigration from the purely Hellenic West, that many historians have regarded the Philistines as predominantly Aryan-European. ‡ These, our own kinsfolk, are those children of Anak, the “men of great stature“ who inspired the Israelites with such terror, when the latter first secretly entered Southern Palestine on a scouting expedition (*Numbers* xiii.); to them belonged the brave Goliath, who challenges the Israelites to a knightly combat but is killed by the treacherously slung stone; § to them belong those “Rephaims“ who carry gigantic spears and heavy mail of iron (1 *Samuel* xvii. 5 ff., 2 *Samuel* xxi. 16 ff.). And while the Bible relates in

* The fact that the book of *Genesis* (xiv. 13) represents Abraham as already living in

peaceful alliance with three Amorites in the plain of Hebron has naturally no claim to historical validity.

† See especially Sayce: [*The Races of the Old Testament*](#), p. 110 ff.

‡ Cf. Renan: *Israël* ii. livre 3, chap. 3. For the Hellenic origin of a considerable proportion of the Philistines and the introduction of a number of Greek words through them into Hebrew, see Renan: *Israël*, i. p. 157 note, and Maspero, ii. p. 698. As a matter of fact the question of the origin of the Philistines and Amorites is still very hotly debated; we can calmly leave the dispute to historians and theologians; the anthropological results are results of exact science, and philology must follow them, not *vice versa*. Certain it is that the Amorites and at least a portion of the Philistines were tall, fair, blue-eyed dolichocephali: thus they belong to the type *homo europaeus*. That is sufficient for us laymen.

§ The legend which ascribes this cowardly act to David is a late interpretation; the original account is given in 2 *Samuel* xxi. 19 (cf. Stade: *Geschichte des Volkes Israel* i. 225 ff.). It is important to know this when forming an estimate of David's characters. See p. 385.

383 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

great detail the heroic deeds of the Israelites against these tall fair men, it could not, on the other hand, conceal the fact that it was from them (the still very savage pure Indo-European tribe of the Gittites) that David drew his best and most reliable soldiers. It was only by the Philistines that the Philistines were conquered, only by the Amorites the Amorites. The Gittites, for example, were not conquered by David, but followed him of their own accord (2 *Samuel* xv. 19 ff.) from their love of war;



AMORITE

their leader, Ittai, was appointed commander of a third of the Israelite army (2 *Samuel* xviii. 2). Of this "Aryan corps," as he calls it, Renan says:

“It was as brave as the Arabian but excelled it in reliability; to establish anything permanently its support was necessary.... It was this that frustrated the treacherous plans of Absalom, of Sebah, of Adonijah; it was this that saved the threatened throne of Solomon ... it supplied the cement of the Israelite kingdom.“ * But these men were not only brave and faithful soldiers, but also builders of cities; their cities were the best built and the strongest (*Deuteronomy* i. 28); † one of them in particular became

* Renan: *Israël* ii 30-32.

† Sayce ([Races of the Old Testament](#), p. 112) gives an account of Flinders Petrie's recent excavations of Amorite cities with walls 2½ metres thick.

384 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

world-famous: not far from Hebron, the chief city of their Hittite friends, the Amorites founded a new city, Jerusalem. The King of Jerusalem who marches against Joshua is an Amorite (*Joshua* x. 5), and even though the narrative says that he was defeated and slain with all the other kings, one must take that and the whole book of Joshua *cum grano salis*; for the conquest of Palestine in reality cost the Israelites a great deal of trouble, and was accomplished only very slowly and by the help of foreigners; * at any rate the city of Jerusalem was till David's time an Amorite city, mixed with much Hittite blood, a mixed population which the Bible calls Jebusites, but it remained free from Israelites; it was only in the eighth year of his reign that David with his alien mercenaries won this fortress and, because of its strength, chose it as his residence. But the Amorite-Hittite population continued to be of importance by reason of their numbers and position; † David has to buy ground from a well-to-do Amorite, to erect an altar thereon (*2 Samuel* xxiv. 18 ff.), and it is with a Gittite, one of his most trusted leaders, that he deposits the sacred ark of the covenant, after he has transferred it to Jerusalem (*2 Samuel* iv. 10). ‡ Thus, too, the prophet Ezekiel represents God as calling to the city of Jerusalem: “Thy birth and thy nativity is of the land of Canaan; thy father was an Amorite, and thy mother an Hittite!“ (*Ezekiel* xvi. 3). And then he reproaches the Israelite inhabitants with mixing with these alien elements: “Thou playedst the harlot and pouredst out thy fornications on every one that passed by“ (*Ezekiel*

* See especially Wellhausen's *Prolegomena*, in many passages.

† In *Joshua* xv. 63 we read: “As for the Jebusites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the children of Judah could not drive them out; the Jebusites dwell with the children of Judah at Jerusalem unto this day.“

‡ Wellhausen proves (*Prolegomena*, p. 43) that Obbedom was really, as the passage quoted says, a Gittite and not a Levite, as the later version gives it (*1 Chronicles* xvi. 18).

385 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

xvi. 15) — a piece of simplicity on the part of the pious Jew, since the great men of his race had not been sparing with the example, and he himself, as a Jerusalemite, was the child of this threefold crossing; Ezekiel, the real inventor of specific Judaism, had already before his mind that paradoxical idea of a Jew of pure race, which is a *contradictio in adjecto*. The Judean, in fact, had adopted more Amorite blood than any other Israelite, and that for the simple reason that the Amorites were pretty numerous in the south of Palestine, the districts of Simeon, Judah and Benjamin, whereas they were less numerous in the north. The Egyptian monuments, on which the various peoples are most characteristically represented, prove incontestably that at the time of Solomon and his successors the inhabitants of Southern Israel, especially the leaders of the army, were distinguished by the predominance of the clearly marked Amorite, that is Indo-European, type.

Indeed it has been sometimes questioned whether David himself was not half or three-quarters Amorite. The Bible emphasises in several places his fairness, and, as Virchow has proved by countless statistics, “the skin with all that belongs to it is even more constant than the skull”; now fair complexion and light hair never occurred among the Hebrews and the members of the Syrian group, these characteristics of the European being first brought into the land by the Amorites and the Hellenes; that is why David's fairness was so striking. * In these circumstances it is probably not

* Luther had translated the passages in question (2 *Samuel* xvi. 12, xvi. 42) by the word “brownish”; Genesius, on the other hand, in his dictionary translates the Hebrew word by “red,” and while admitting that it usually refers to the hair, he takes great pains to prove that David must have been black-haired and that “red” here refers to the complexion (in the 1899 edition this apologetic attempt is dropped); the best scientific translators to-day look upon the word as meaning “fair-haired,” and it seems pretty certain that David was distinctly fair-haired.

386 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

too daring to suppose that a shepherd born in Bethlehem (that is, in the district most thickly populated by Amorites) may have had an Amorite mother. His character, its great faults as well as its fascinating qualities, his daring, his spirit of adventure, his carelessness, his fanciful nature, distinguish David, it seems to me, from all the heroes of Israel; equally so his endeavour to organise the kingdom and to unite the scattered tribes into one whole, which drew upon him the hatred of the Israelites. His outspoken predilection for the Philistines, too, among whom he had gladly served as a soldier (*see, for example, 2 Samuel* xxi. 3), is a striking feature, as also the remarkable fact, pointed out by Renan (*Israël*, ii. 35), that he treated the Philistines generously in war, but the Hebrew peoples

with frightful cruelty, as though they were repugnant to him. Should there be any truth in this supposition, Solomon could hardly be called an Israelite; for it is very unlikely that his mother Bathsheba, the wife of the Hittite Uriah, was an Israelite. * Thus we should have an explanation of the peculiar incompatibility between Solomon's nature and aims and the character of Israel and Judah. Renan says it openly: "*Salomon n'entendait rien à la vraie vocation de sa race*"; † he was a stranger with all a stranger's wishes and a stranger's aims in the midst of the people he thought to make great. And thus this short period of splendour in the history of the Israelite people — David, Solomon — would in reality be nothing else but an "episode" brought about by the exultant strength of an entirely different blood, but soon crushed by the unbending will of the Syro-Semite, who was not inclined to follow in those paths, nor indeed capable of doing so.

* Renan; *Israël* ii. 97.

† *Ibid.* ii. 174

387 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

COMPARATIVE NUMBERS

Concerning that which I previously termed the special sphere of influence, we possess, as can be seen, sufficient historical material. If my purpose were not limited to describing the origin of the Jews I might add a great deal more — for example, that the tribe of Joseph, the most gifted and energetic of all Israelites from whom are descended Joshua, Samuel, Jerubbaal, &c., and the great dynasty of the Omrides, were half-Egyptians, as *Genesis* xli. 45 tells us with the brevity of such folklore, in that Joseph marries the daughter of a priest from Heliopolis, who bears him Ephraim and Manasseh... but this fact is of little or no importance in fixing the Jewish line of descent; for marriages between the different tribes of Israel were made almost impossible by law, and were particularly improbable owing to the persistent antipathy of the children of Joseph to those of Judah. It is just as unnecessary to speak of their contact with many other Hebrew families. The later admixture of negro blood with the Jewish in the Diaspora of Alexandria — of which many a man of Jewish persuasion at this day offers living proof — is also a matter of little importance. What I have said is detailed enough to enable every one to picture to himself the anthropogeny of the Jew in its broad outlines. We have seen that there cannot be the least doubt that the historical Israelite, from whom the real "Jew" later separated himself, is the product of a mixture. He even enters history as a half-caste, namely, as a Hebrew; this Hebrew then contracts marriages with alien non-Semitic women: first of all with the Hittites, a special stem of the widespread and clearly marked *homo syriacus*; in the second place with

the tall, fair, blue-eyed Arnorites from the Indo-European group. Now this historical testimony is confirmed in an irrefutable manner by that of science. F. von Luschan thus sum-

388 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

marises the evidence in the paper already quoted: "The Jews are descended, first from real Semites, secondly from Aryan Amorites, thirdly and chiefly from the descendants of the old Hittites. These are the three most important elements in the Jew, and in comparison other mixtures are of very little account." This diagnosis — let it be noted — refers to the Jews at the time when they were separated from Israel, and it is equally applicable to-day; the measurements have been made on old material and on the very newest, and that with the result that the various adoptions of aliens (Spaniards, Southern French, &c.) into Judaism, on which feuilletonists and unctuous moralists are wont to lay much emphasis, have remained absolutely without influence; a race so characteristically composed and then kept so strictly pure immediately absorbs such drops of water.

The first point is thus settled: the Israelite people is descended from the crossing of absolutely different human types. The second point, in which the relation of the different races to each other has to be discussed, will require only one paragraph as far as pure statistics are concerned; but what would be the use of figures if they did not give us distinct conceptions? That would be purely and simply the x , y , z of elementary algebra; the problem is correctly solved, but does not mean anything, as all the figures are unknown; the quality of the different races will therefore detain our attention longer than the quantity.

Now as far as the quantitative composition of the Israelite blood is concerned, we must not forget that even 60,000 measurements are little in comparison with the millions that have lived in the course of centuries; it would be wrong to apply them to the single individual; statistics of masses cannot lift even the hem of the veil which envelops the personality. Nevertheless, we should also remember that beyond the individuality of the person

389 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

there is the individuality of the whole people; and numbers can be much better applied to this more abstract personality. I cannot tell simply from the race of an individual what he will do in a definite case; but I can, for example, with great certainty prophesy how a large number of Italians, as a collective body, or an equal number of Norwegians will act in a definite case. For our knowledge of the character of a people anthropological figures are therefore of real value. Now these figures give the following results with regard to the Jews (of former times and to-day,

in east and in west); 50 per cent. show clear evidence of belonging to the type *homo syriacus* (short heads, characteristic, so-called “Jewish” noses, inclination to stoutness, &c.); only 5 per cent. have the features and the anatomical structure of the genuine Semite (the Bedouin of the desert); in the case of 10 per cent. we find a colour of skin and hair, often too of complexion, which points to the Amorite of Indo-European descent; 35 per cent. represent indefinable mixed forms, something of the nature of Lombroso's “combined photographs,” where countenances occur in which the one feature contradicts the other: skulls which are neither long like those of the genuine Semite, nor half-long like those of the Amorite, nor round like those of the Syrian, noses which are neither Hittite, nor Aryan, nor Semitic, or, again, the Syrian nose, but without the head that belongs to it, and so on *ad infinitum*. The chief result of this anatomical survey is that the Jewish race is in truth a permanent but at the same time a mongrel race which always retains this mongrel character. In the former chapter I have tried to make clear the difference between mixed and mongrel races. All historically great races and nations have been produced by mixing; but wherever the difference of type is too great to be bridged over, then we have mongrels. That is the case here. The crossing between Bedouin and Syrian

390 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

was — from an anatomical point of view — probably worse than that between Spaniard and South American Indian. And to this was added later the ferment of a European-Aryan element!

CONSCIOUSNESS OF SIN AGAINST RACE

It is very proper to lay strong emphasis on this; for such a process, however unconsciously it may go on, is an incestuous crime against nature; it can only be followed by a miserable or a tragical fate. The rest of the Hebrews, and with them the Josephites, had a wretched end; like the families of the more important pseudo-Semitic mestizos (the Phoenicians, Babylonians, &c.) they disappeared and left no trace behind; the Jew, on the other hand, chose the tragic fate: that proves his greatness, and that is his greatness. I shall soon return to this theme, since this resolve on his part means the founding of Judaism; I shall only add one remark, for it is appropriate here and has never yet, so far as I know, been made, namely, that this deep consciousness of sin, which weighed upon * the Jewish nation in its heroic days, and which has found pathetic expression in the words of its chosen men, is rooted in these physical relations. Naturally the intelligence, and the vanity which is common to us all, explained it quite differently, but the instinct went deeper than the understanding, and as soon as the destruction of the Israelites and their own captivity had awakened the conscience of the

Jew, his first act was to put an end to that incest (as I called it above, using the very word of Ezekiel) by the strict prohibition of every crossing, even with nearly related tribes. An inexplicable contradiction has been found in the fact that it was the Jews who brought into our

* “Since the exile the consciousness of sin was (in the case of the Jews), so to say, permanent,” says Wellhausen in his *Prolegomena*, 4th ed p. 431.

391 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

bright world the ever-threatening conception of sin, and that they nevertheless understand by sin something quite different from us. Sin is for them a national thing, whereas the individual is “just” when he does not transgress the “law”; * redemption is not the moral redemption of the individual, but the redemption of the State; † that is difficult for us to understand. But there is something more: the sin unconsciously committed is the same to the Jew as a conscious sin; ‡ “the notion of sin has for the Jew no necessary reference to the conscience of the sinner, it does not necessarily involve the conception of a moral badness, but points to a legal responsibility.” § Montefiore also expressly declares that according to the view of the postexilic legislators “sin was looked upon not as a contamination of the individual soul, but as a pollution of the physical purity, a disturbance of that untroubled purity of the land and its inhabitants which is the one condition under which God can continue to dwell among His people and in His sanctuary” (p. 326). Wellhausen expresses himself thus: “In the case of the Jews ... there is no inner connection between the good man and that which is good; the action of the hands and the desire of the heart are severed.” ¶ I am, as I said, convinced that the key to this remarkable and contradictory conception is to be found in the history of the physical growth of this people: their existence is

* See *Matthew* xix. 20. The Jew Graetz even to-day approves fully of the utterance of the rich man and shows that the demand “to repent of his sins” has no meaning for the Jew (*Volkstümliche Geschichte der Juden* i. 577).

† W. Robertson Smith: *The Prophets of Israel and their Place in History*, 1895, p. 247.

‡ *Ibid.* p. 102; Montefiore: *Religion of the Ancient Hebrews*, 2nd ed. p. 558 (supplement by Rabbi Schechter).

§ W. Robertson Smith: *The Prophets of Israel and their Place in History*, p. 103. In another place he writes: “Sin is to the Hebrew every action that puts a man in the wrong with one who has the power to punish him for it.” (p. 246).

¶ [Israelitische und jüdische Geschichte](#), 3rd ed. p. 380.

392 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

sin, their existence is a crime against the holy laws of life; this, at any rate, is felt by the Jew himself in the moments when destiny knocks heavily at his door. Not the individual but the whole people had to be

washed clean, and not of a conscious but of an unconscious crime; and that is impossible, “though thou wash thee with nitre, and take thee much soap,” as Jeremiah (ii. 22) says to his people. And in order to wipe out the irretrievable past, in order to fuse that past with the present, in which wisdom and the power of will should set a limit to sin and make a place for purity — the whole Jewish history from the beginning had to be falsified, and the Jews represented as a people chosen above all other peoples by God and of stainlessly pure race, protected by Draconian laws against every crossing. Those who brought that about were not liars, as has probably been supposed, but men who acted under the pressure of that necessity which alone raises us above ourselves and makes us ignorant instruments of mighty dispensations of fate. * If anything is calculated to free us from the blindness of our times and the phrase-making of our authorities †

* The words of Jeremiah, “The pen of the Scribes is in vain“ (viii. 8), have been applied to the then recent introduction of *Deuteronomy* and to the recasting and extension of the so-called Law of Moses (of the existence of which none of the Prophets had known anything). This is the view of the orthodox Jew Montefiore (*Religion of the Ancient Hebrews*, 201, 202), and is probably correct.

† Herr von Luschan also, as one can perceive from the conclusion of his work on the ethnographical position of the Jews which is so valuable from a statistical point of view, sees our salvation in the complete amalgamation and fusion of the various human races. One cannot believe one's eyes and ears when these men of the school of Virchow pass from facts to thoughts. The whole history of mankind shows us that progress is conditioned by differentiation and individualisation; we find life and activity only where clearly marked national personalities stand side by side opposed to each other (as in Europe to-day), the best qualities degenerate under the influence of uniformity of race (as in China), the crossing of incompatible types leads, as we see in all organic spheres, to sterility and monstrosity ... and yet “amalgamation“ is to be our ideal! Do they not see that uniformity and chaos are the same?

“Ich liebte mir dafür das Ewigleere!“

393 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

and to open our eyes to the law of nature, that great peoples result only from the ennoblement of the race and that this can only take place under definite conditions, the neglect of which brings in its train degeneration and sterility, it is the sight of this sublimely planned and desperate struggle of the Jews who had become conscious of their racial sin.

HOMO SYRIACUS

If we now return to racial statistics, we find ourselves face to face with a difficult theme; we may measure skulls and count noses, but how do these results reveal themselves in the inner nature of the Jew? We hold the bone of the skull in the hand, it is what Carlyle calls “a hard fact.“ This skull, indeed, symbolises a whole world; any one with the skill to weigh the mass of it rightly, and to interpret its lines in their mutual

relations, could tell us much about the individual: he would see possibilities of which the race in question becomes conscious only after generations, and recognise limitations which separate one man from the other from the very first. On looking at the two skulls on p. 374, the long one and the round one, we seem to see two microcosms. But the power of interpretation is denied us; we judge men by their deeds, that is really indirectly and according to a fragmentary method, for these deeds are determined only by definite circumstances. Everything remains piecemeal here. Now the protoplasm of a one-celled alga is such an extremely complicated structure that the chemists do not yet know how many atoms they must suppose in the molecule, and how they can unite them under a symbolical formula that is at all acceptable; who would presume to find the formula for a human being or a whole people? The following characterisation of the Hittites, the Amorites and the Semites can only serve to give a very general conception.

394 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

On the Egyptian pictures the Hittites look anything but intelligent. The exaggerated “Jewish” nose is continued upwards by a retreating brow and downwards by a still more retreating chin. * Perhaps the *homo syriacus* was not really distinguished by the possession of great and brilliant gifts; I cannot say that he has given any signs of it in modern times in places where he is supposed to predominate. But he unquestionably possessed good qualities. That his race predominated and still predominates in the various crossings shows great physical power. Moreover, he possessed corresponding endurance and diligence. To judge from the few pictures he must also have been shrewd, in fact extremely cunning (which of course has nothing to do with brilliant intellect, on the contrary). His history, too, shows him to be shrewd: he has known how to rule and how to submit to an alien power where the conditions were favourable. He put barren districts under cultivation, and when the population increased, he built cities and was such a capable merchant that in the Bible the same word served to denote merchant and Canaanite. That he could face death bravely is proved by the long struggle with Egypt † and the occurrence of such characters as Uriah. ‡ A feature of kindness is evident in all the otherwise very different portraits. We can form a vivid mental picture of how these men — equally remote

* See especially the figures on a Hittite monument near Aintab (Sayce: *Hittites*, p. 62), and the types from Egyptian monuments on p. 375.

† The Hittites seem for a long time to have ruled all Syria and probably all Asia Minor; their power was as great as that of Egypt in its splendour (see Wright: *Empire of the Hittites*, 1886; and Sayce: *The Hittites*, 1892). But one should be cautious, for the Hittite script is not yet deciphered, and though Hittite physiognomy, dress, art and writing form a definite idea for science, the history of this people, of whom nothing was

known a few years ago, is still to a large extent wrapt in mystery.

‡ See (2 Samuel xi.) in what a noble, manly way Uriah acts. This stern undemonstrative devotion to duty presents an agreeable contrast to David's criminal levity.

395 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

from symbolical mythology and from fanatical Bedouin delusion — could introduce that simple cult, which the Israelites found in Palestine and adopted — the festival of the vintage (it was New Year also to them, and the Jews later called it the Feast of the Tabernacle), the festival of spring (Easter, transformed later by the Jews into Passover) with the offering of the first-born of cattle and sheep, the festival of the finished harvest (Pentecost, called by the Jews “Festival of the Weeks”), nothing but joyful festivals of a long-settled agricultural people, not those of a nomadic race, festivals without any deeper connection with the spiritual life of man, a simple nature-religion such as may have suited and still certainly would suit simple, industrious and “tolerably honest“ people. * As we find human sacrifice only where (as in Phoenicia) the Semitic element strongly predominated, † we may assume that a Semitic and not a Hittite custom reveals itself in the cases where the Canaanite service of Baal permits such horrors at the festival: they are, however, exceptional and probably occur only when alien princesses have come by marriage into the land... ‡ On the whole the Hittites give us the impression of a respectable

* Cf. the details in Wellhausen: *Israelitische und jüdische Geschichte*, chap. vi. In spite of the later careful expurgation we find still here and there in the Thora mention of this joyful nature-cult, as, for example, the festival of the vintage in the house of God at Sichem (*Judges* ix. 27). See, too, how the ark of the covenant is brought by David to Jerusalem “amid joy and exultation,” with music, song and dance (2 Samuel vi. 12-15).

† Von Luschan has, by numerous measurements, established the fact that the Phoenician type “was closely related to the Arabian.”

‡ Concerning the much more complicated cult in the former capital of the Hittite kingdom, Carchemish (Mabog), see Sayce: *The Hittites*, chap. vi. But I consider Lucian, whom he quotes, a very late and unreliable witness. On the other hand, it is interesting to see how far the lack of imagination went in the case of the Hebrews. Even in the laying out of the Jewish temple, of the outer and inner court, of the curtain before the Holy of Holies, as also the privilege of the High Priest to enter this place: all these (said to have been dictated by God to Moses on Mount Sinai) are exact imitations of the primeval Hittite cult.

396 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

mediocrity with great vitality rather than of any special capacity for extraordinary achievements, they possess more endurance than power. Goethe says somewhere that there is no greatness without something extravagant; according to this definition of Goethe the Hittites can hardly lay claim to greatness.

HOMO EUROPÆUS

On the other hand, in the Amorites — “tall as cedars and strong as oaks“ (*Amos* ii. 9), with their bold challenges, their unbridled love of adventure, their insane loyalty even to death towards alien, self-imposed masters, their thick city walls, from which they loved to make forays in the mountains, — the element of extravagance seems to me to be peculiarly characteristic. It was a wild, cruel extravagance, but capable of the very highest things. We seem to catch a glimpse of quite another being when on the Egyptian monuments among the countless number of physiognomies we suddenly see before us this free, frank, open countenance so full of character and intelligence. Like the eye of genius amid the common throng of men, so these features appear to us amid the mass of cunning and bad, stupid and evil countenances, amid this whole ruffraff of Babylonians, Hebrews, Hittites, Nubians and all the rest of them. O *homo europæus!* how couldst thou stray among such company? Yes, thou seemst to me like an eye that looks into a divine transcendental world. And fain would I call to thee: follow not the advice of the learned anthropologists, do not amalgamate with that crowd, mingle not with the Asiatic rabble, obey the great poet of thy race, remain true to thyself... but I am 3000 years too late. The Hittite remained, the Amorite disappeared. This is one among the many differences between noble and ignoble: nobility is more difficult to

397 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

maintain. Though giants in form these men are nevertheless very delicate in their inner organisation. No people degenerates so quickly as Lapouge's *homo europæus*; how rapidly, for instance, the Greeks became barbarians, *in Syros, Parthos, Aegyptios degenerarunt*, as Livy himself testifies (38, 17, 11). He completely loses his peculiar qualities, that which is his alone he seems incapable of giving to others, the others do not possess the vessel to hold it; he, on the other hand, possesses a fatal capacity of assimilating all that is alien. People, it is true, talk to-day of the fair-haired Syrians, we hear too that 10 per cent. of the Jews are fair; but Virchow has told us that skin and hair endure longer than the skull, and it is probable that the skull would last longer than the brain; I do not know, but I really believe that the Indo-European left in Asia, as elsewhere, beyond the memory of his deeds, little more than skin and hair. I have looked for him in the *Talmud*, but in vain. *

HOMO ARABICUS

It seems to me very difficult to say anything about the third of this group, the genuine Semite; for it is characteristic of this *homo arabicus*

not to enter into or influence human history until he has ceased to be a genuine Semite. So long as he remains in his wilderness (and for his peace and greatness of soul he should always remain there), he really does not belong to history at all; it is also very difficult, indeed wellnigh impossible, to get definite

* Yet one Teuton actually occurs there (Tractate *Schabbeth*, vi. 8. fol. 23a of the *Jerusalem Talmud*). He is the slave of a Jew. Ordered to accompany home Rabbi Hila, a friend of his master, he saved him from death by inducing a mad dog that rushed at the latter to attack himself, and he was fatally bitten. But this loyalty does not induce the pious Jew to utter one word of admiration or thanks. He merely quotes *Isaiah* xliii. 4: "Since thou wast precious, O Israel, in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore I will give men for thee and people for thy life."

398 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

particulars concerning him there; we merely hear that he is brave, hospitable, pious, also revengeful and cruel — these are mere elements of character, there is nothing to give us a clue to his intellectual gifts. Burckhardt, who travelled for years in Arabia, represents the Bedouin as absolutely dormant intellectually, so long as love or war does not stretch the slack bow — and then he at once goes to extremes. * But if he breaks into the civilised world, it is to murder and burn, as under Abu Bekr and Omar, or to-day in Central Africa. † As soon as he has laid waste everything far and wide, the genuine Semite disappears, we hear nothing more of him; wherever he appears in the history of civilisation crossing has in the meantime taken place — for no type seems to mix more quickly and more successfully than that which has sprung from a compulsory inbreeding of thousands of years' duration. The noble Moor of Spain is anything but a pure Arab of the desert, he is half a Berber (from the Aryan family) and his veins are so full of Gothic blood that even at the present day noble inhabitants of Morocco can trace their descent back to Teutonic ancestors. That is why Harun-al-Raschid's reign is such a bright moment in a dark, sad history, because the pure Persian family of the Barmecides, which remained true to the Iranian religion of Zarathustra, ‡ stands by the side of the Khalif as a civilising and refining influence. Not a single one of the so-called "Semitic" civilised States of antiquity is purely Semitic, — no, not one: neither

* *Beduinen und Wahaby*, Weimar, 1831.

† Note how the famous Moorish historian of the fourteenth century, Mohammed Ibn Khaldun, considered by many the founder of scientific history and himself half Arab, speaks: "Cast your eyes around, look at all lands, which have been conquered by the inhabitants of Arabia since the earliest times! The civilisation and population disappeared, the soil itself seemed to change and become unfruitful at their touch" (*Prolegomena zur Weltgeschichte*) 2nd Part; I quote from Robert Flint: *History of the Philosophy of History*, 1893, p. 166.

‡ Renan: *L'islamisme et la science (Discours et Conférences, 3e éd. p. 382).*

399 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

the Babylonian nor the Assyrian nor the Phoenician. History tells us so and anthropology supports the statement. We still hear “wonders and fairy tales” about the rich blessing poured upon us by this civilising work of the so-called Semites: but when we look more closely we always find that the genuine Semitic is simply “grafted” upon the really creative element (as Wellhausen said of the Israelites), and so it is very difficult to decide how much and what in particular is to be ascribed to the Semite as such, and what, on the other hand, to his host. * We know to-day, for example, that the Semites did not invent writing with letters any more than they did the so-called “Arabian ciphers”; it is from the Hittites that the pretended “Phoenician” or “Semitic”

* See Jhering's suggestive but very fanciful *Vorgeschichte der Indoeuropäer*, in which the author characterises the whole Babylonian culture as Semitic, although he admits that the Semites “took it over” and although he points out that the Sumero-Accadians were an influential and vigorous force even in late times (pp. 133, 243, &c.). So, too, von Luschan in the essay mentioned, where he takes the trouble at the end to blow the trumpet of the “Semites” although in the same lecture he has already proved that the most famous Semitic peoples had but little Semitic blood in their veins.... O logic of the scientists! And finally he dishes up the old story of how Arabian science flourished luxuriantly in Spain and what it meant for us — a tale the foolishness of which no other than Renan had exposed years ago. “The Semitic spirit,” he writes, “is fundamentally antiphilosophical and antiscientific ... there is much talk of an Arabian science and an Arabian philosophy, and certainly the Arabs were our teachers during one or two centuries; but that was the case simply because the original Hellenic writings were yet undiscovered. This whole Arabian science and philosophy was nothing but a wretched translation of Hellenic thought and knowledge. As soon as authentic Greece stepped forth from the shadow, these poor products fell into nothing, and it is not without reason that all the authorities on the Renaissance undertake a real crusade against them. Moreover we find on closer examination that this Arabian science was in no respect Arabian. Not only was its basis purely Hellenic, but among those who devoted their energies to the introduction and spread of knowledge, there was not a single genuine Semite; they were Spaniards and (in Bagdad) Persians, who made use of the prevailing Arabian tongue. It is exactly the same with the philosophical part ascribed to the Jews in the Middle Ages; they translated from foreign tongues, nothing more. Jewish philosophy is Arabian philosophy; not a single new thought is added. One page of Roger Bacon possesses

400 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

writing * is derived, and “the legend of the handing down of the alphabet to the Aryans by the Phoenicians is now discarded for good,” since much older letters have been found than the oldest pseudo-Semitic ones — letters which prove the existence of a “primitive Aryan-European script, which only at a later period was somewhat influenced, in the east, by the Asiatic writings.” † — We see, on the other hand, that where the Semitic will prevailed in the pure sphere of religion (not of property) it forced and

commanded mental sterility: we see it in the Jews after the Babylonian captivity (for the victory of the religious party is unquestionably a victory of the Semitic element) and we see it in Mohammedanism. "Jewish life was, after the exile, devoid of all intellectual and mental interests except the religious ... the typical Jew interested himself neither in politics, literature, philosophy nor art The Bible really formed his whole literature, and its study was his only mental and

more scientific value than the whole of this borrowed Jewish wisdom, which we must, of course, respect, but which is absolutely devoid of originality." (*De la part des peuples sémitiques dans l'histoire de la civilisation*, éd. 1875, p. 22 ff.). Renan treats the same subject in more detail in his lecture of the year 1883: *L'islamisme et la science*: "Not only are these thinkers and scholars not of Arabian descent," he says there, "but the tendency of their minds is altogether non-Arabian."

* Renan: *Israël*, i. 134 ff.

‡ Professor Hueppe: *Zur Rassen- und Sozialhygiene der Griechen*, 1897, p. 26. All authorities at the present day admit that the so-called "Phoenician" letters were not the invention of Semitic genius: Halévy supposes an Egyptian origin, Hommel (with more probability) a Babylonian, that is Sumarian, origin. Delitzsch thinks that the Syrian half-Semites had formed their alphabet by the fusion of two different ones, the Babylonian and the Egyptian; the last investigator of this matter, however, arrives at the conclusion that the alphabet is altogether an invention of the Europeans, and was first brought to Asia by the Hellenic Myceneans (see H. Kluge: *Die Schrift der Mykenier*, 1897). With regard to the Mycenean letters which have now become quite well known, a reliable authority, Salomon Reinach, writes (*L'Anthropologie*, 1902, xiii. 34): *Une chose est certaine: c'est que l'écriture linéaire des tablettes ne dérive ni de l'Assyrie ni de l'Égypte, qu'elle présente un caractère nettement européen, qu'elle offre comme une image anticipée de l'épigraphie hellénique.*

401 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

intellectual interest"; this is written by an unprejudiced critic, the Jewish scholar C. G. Montefiore (pp. 419 and 543). An equally reliable witness, Hirsch Graetz, quotes a remark of Rabbi Akiba: "Whoever devotes himself to reading exoteric writings (that is, to any study but the sacred Jewish Thora) has lost his right to future life." * The Mishna teaches, "to have one's son taught Greek science is as accursed as to engage in the breeding of swine." † That the Hittites, who form, as we have seen, the half of the Jewish blood, always protested against such doctrines and devoted their attention by preference to everything "exoteric," is a different matter; I am here trying to define the "Semite" only. As regards the sterilising influence of the most genuine Semitic religion, the Mohammedan, it is too obvious to require proof. We stand here then, to begin with, before a mass of negative and very few positive facts; any one who is not content with phrases will find it difficult to get a clear conception of the personality of the genuine Semite, and yet for our purpose the answering of the question, Who is the Jew? is so important that we must strive to get that conception. Let us call the learned to our aid!

If I consult the work of the most eminent and consequently most reliable of all ethnographers in Germany, Oskar Peschel, I shall find no answer to this question; he was a prudent man. Ratzel writes as follows: The Semite has greater intensity, or, so to say, one-sidedness of religious feeling than either the Hamite or the Indo-Teuton; violence, exclusiveness, in short fanaticism, is his distinguishing-mark; religious extravagances, including human sacrifices, are nowhere so widespread as in his midst; the general of the Mahdi even

* *Gnosticisimus und Judentum* (Krotoschin, 1846, p. 99). The meaning of the word “exoteric,” which is not quite clear in this connection, is explained when we compare other passages, where, for example, the reading of Greek poets is called an “exoteric” occupation (p. 62).

† Quoted from Renan: *L'Origine du Christianisme*, i. 35.

402 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

in 1883 had prisoners roasted alive in ovens; the Semite is individualistic, he clings more to family and religion than to the State; since he is not a good soldier, foreign mercenaries had to win his victories for him; in the oldest times the Semite may have done great things for science, but it is possible that these achievements are of foreign origin — later at any rate he does not accomplish much in this sphere, his best work being in religion. * This characterisation seems to me to be very unsatisfactory and scrappy; it says very little, and besides is in certain respects false. It is all very fine to roast one's enemies in ovens — from China to the artistic Netherlands of the sixteenth century where do we not find cruelty? — but to see in that a “higher intensity of religious feeling” is silly, especially when one places the Semite in this respect above the profoundly religious and wonderfully creative Egyptian, and also above the Indo-Teuton, whose religious literature is by far the greatest in the world, and whose “religious feeling” has from time immemorial revealed itself in the fact that thousands and millions of human existences were dedicated and sacrificed to religion alone. When the Brahman, in one of the oldest Upanishads (at least 800 or 1000 years before Christ † teaches that man should regard every inhalation and exhalation by day and by night as a continual sacrifice to God, ‡ does that not represent “the greatest intensity of religious feeling” that the world has ever known? And what is the meaning of the phrase, the Semite is individualistic? As far as we can judge, wherever religion came under Semitic influence,

* *Völkerkunde*, ii. 391; summarised from Ratzel's own words.

† Cf. Leopold von Schröder: *Indiens Litteratur und Kultur* (1887), 20th Lecture.

‡ *Kaushitaki-Upanishad* ii. 5. Deussen, the greatest living authority, gives the following gloss to this passage: The Brahman means, “Religion shall not consist in outward worship but in devoting one's whole life with every breath to its service“

(*Sechzig Upanishad's des Veda*, p. 31).

403 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

it differed from the Indo-Teutonic (and East-Asiatic) creed in becoming national. The individual, except as member of the community, shrunk almost to a negligible quantity (*cf.* [p. 245](#)); and the pseudo-Semitic States have, without exception, deprived the individual of all freedom. It seems to me that there is more individualism among Teutonic than among Semitic peoples; at any rate the assertion that the Semite is individualistic could only be made with many qualifications. Much more profound are the remarks of that thorough scholar Christian Lassen, who knew more of souls than of skulls. Although his characterisation of the Semite dates from the fourth decade of last century, when the half-Semites were not yet clearly distinguished from the genuine stem, he seizes upon points which reveal the intellectual kernel of the Semitic personality. He writes: "The Semitic way of looking at things is subjective and egoistical. His poetry is lyrical, hence subjective, his soul pours out its joys and sorrows, its love and hatred, its admiration and its contempt; ... the epic, in which the Ego of the poet steps into the background, he cannot successfully treat, still less the drama, which demands from the poet a still greater abandonment of the personal standpoint." * Nor does philosophy belong to the Semites; they have adopted, or rather, only the Arabs

* Is this individualism after all? Certainly, but in a quite different sense from the case of the Indo-Teuton. In the case of the Semite, as we see from Lassen's remarks, the individual stands, so to speak, in his own way, hence his achievements are only collective. In the case of Greek and Teuton, each work bears the stamp of a definite personality, of an individual. Fr. von Schack holds exactly the same view as Lassen: "The whole creative activity of the Arabs bears a subjective character. Everywhere it is preferably their own 'soul-life' that they express. They draw into it the things of the outer world, and show but little inclination to look straight at reality, and so to represent nature in sharp and definite outlines, or to study the individuality of others, thus representing men and conditions of life in a concrete manner. Accordingly those forms of poetry which demand abandonment of the Ego and imaginative power are least congenial to them" (*Poesie und Kunst der Araber*, i. 99).

404 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

have, the philosophy of the Indo-Teutons. Their views and conceptions occupy their minds too much to allow them to rise sufficiently out of themselves to grasp pure thought, and to separate the more general and the necessary from their own individuality and its contingencies. * "In his religion the Semite is selfish and exclusive; Jehovah is merely the God of the Hebrews, and they acknowledge no other than him: all other Gods are absolutely false and have neither share nor part in the truth; Allah wishes to be not only the God of the Arabs, but to conquer the whole

world, and his nature is as egoistic as that of Jehovah; he, too, denies every iota of truth to all other Gods, but it is of no use to acknowledge Allah, unless you serve him under the exclusive form which proclaims Mohammed his prophet. According to their doctrine the Semites were bound to be intolerant and inclined to fanaticism, as also to stubborn clinging to their religious law. Tolerance appears most pronounced in the case of the Indo-Teutonic peoples; this tolerance is the result of greater freedom of thought, which does not bind itself exclusively to mere form... The qualities of the Semitic spirit, the passionate temperament, the stubborn will, the firm belief in exclusive justification, their whole egoistical nature — were bound to make their possessors in the highest degree capable of great and daring deeds.“ † Lassen then proceeds to discuss the pseudo-Semitic States, with regard to which he says that these magnificently planned structures all went to ruin because “here, too, the intractable arbitrariness of the

* Concerning science in particular, Grau writes in his well-known philo-Semitic work, *Semiten und Indogermanen* (2nd ed. p. 33): “The Hebrews, like all Semites, are much too subjective to allow the pure impulse of knowledge to become a power in them. Natural science, in the objective sense which it has among the Indo-Teutons, viz., that nature should retain her own essence and character, while man is merely her interpreter, is unknown to the Hebrew.“ On p. 50 Grau says: “Everything objective is strange to the Hebrew.“

† *Indische Altertumskunde* (ed. 1847), i. 414-416.

405 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

stubborn selfish will interfered as a hindering power.“ * From this characterisation we have really learned something, almost everything indeed, but the facts must be polished and pointed before a clear and transparent conception enters our consciousness. I shall try to do this. Lassen shows us that the will is the predominant power in the soul of the Semite; it is at the root of all his actions. This will impels, but it also retards. It makes its possessor capable of great and daring deeds: it stands in his way wherever the spirit soars to a loftier activity. The result is a character that is passionate and eager for great deeds, coupled with an intellect which is by no means adequate to this impulse, since it can never unfold itself by reason of the impetuosity of the will. In this being the will is at the head, the mind stands next, and lowest of all the understanding. Lassen especially emphasises the egoism of the Semite, he repeatedly refers to it. In his poetry, his philosophy, his religion, his politics, everywhere he sees an “egoistical nature“ at work. That is an unavoidable consequence of that hierarchy of qualities. Selfishness is rooted in will; the only things that can keep it from excess are the gifts of feeling and understanding — a warm heart, profound knowledge of the system of the universe, artistic-creative work, the noble thirst after knowledge. But, as Lassen hints, as soon as the stormy will with its

selfishness predominates, even beautiful qualities remain undeveloped: religion degenerates into fanaticism, thinking becomes magic or caprice, art expresses only the love

* It is interesting and important to note how the organ of the mind — language — is suited to and expresses this special Semitic type. Renan writes: “A quiver full of steel arrows, a firmly wound cable, an iron trumpet, whose few strident notes rend the air: that is the Hebrew language. This language is incapable of expressing a philosophical thought, a scientific result, a doubt, or even the feeling of the Infinite. It can say but little, but what it does say is like the blow of the hammer on the anvil“ (*Israël* i. 102). Is that not the language of stubborn will?

406 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

and the hatred of the moment, it is expression but not creation, science becomes industry.

This Semite would seem, then, to be the right counterpart to the Hittite; in the case of the one we have the beautiful harmony of a nature developed on all sides with moderation, tenacious constancy of will united with prudence and a genial view of life; in the other we find a leaning towards the Immoderate and the Arbitrary, a character in which the balance is disturbed, one in which the most necessary and at the same time the most dangerous gift of man — the will — has been abnormally developed. Those who do not believe that the so-called “races“ fell ready-made from heaven, who refuse, like me, to pay heed to the delusion of supposed primeval beginnings (since growth is only a phase of existence, not *vice versa*), will probably surmise that this unexampled development of the one quality with the corresponding neglect of the others is the result of a life in the desert for thousands of years, during which the intellect was starved and the feelings confined to a narrow circle, while the will — the will of this individual who had to stand entirely on his own feet, who though in the midst of the unbroken silence of nature was surrounded day and night by foes and danger — was bound to demand all the sap of the body for its service, and constantly to strain to the utmost the powers of the intellect. Be that as it may, such a character has assuredly in it the possibility of true greatness. The extravagance which we missed in the Hittite is here present. And as a matter of fact now that we have carried the analysis to the inner being of the Semite, we are able to lay our finger on the only point where greatness can be expected: clearly only in the sphere of will and in all those achievements which result from the predominance of will over other qualities. That Ibn Khaldun who asserts that “the Semite is utterly incapable of establishing anything permanent,“ praises as

407 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

incomparable the simplicity of his needs (lack of imagination), the instinct which makes him cling to his family and separates him from others (impoverished feelings), the ease with which he can be exalted by a prophet to the delirium of ecstasy, obeying the divine command in deep humility (bad judgment in consequence of the non-development of the reasoning faculty). In this sentence I have commented on each assertion of Ibn Khaldun, but my motive has been in no way to undervalue the merits of contentedness, loyalty to family, and obedience to God, but merely to show how each one of the qualities named means the triumph of the power of will. The important thing, however, is to distinguish — this is, in fact, altogether the most important task of the thinker; and to understand rightly what a genuine Semite is, we must comprehend that the contentedness of an Omar, for whom nothing in the world has any interest, is not the same thing as that of an Immanuel Kant, who desires no outward gifts simply because his all-embracing mind possesses the whole world; that loyalty to one's own blood is something quite different from the loyalty of the Amorites, for example, to their self-imposed master — the one is simply an instinctive expansion of the egoistical circle of the will, the other a free, personal decision of the individual, a kind of lived poetry; above all we must, or rather we ought to, learn (I dare not hope to live to see it) to distinguish between true religion and an insane belief in some God, and also not to confuse monolatry with monotheism. That does not at all prevent us from acknowledging the specifically Semitic greatness. Though Mohammedanism may be the worst of all religions, as Schopenhauer asserts, who can repress a thrill of almost uncanny admiration when he sees a Mohammedan go to his death as calmly as if he were going for a walk? And this power of the Semitic will is so great that it forces itself, as in the case mentioned,

408 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

upon peoples who have not a drop of Arab blood in their veins. By contact with this will man becomes transformed; there is in it such a power of suggestion that it fascinates us as the eye of the serpent does the bird, and at its command we seem to lose the power of song and flight. And thus it was that the Semite became a power of the first moment in the history of the world. Like a blind power of nature — for the will is blind — he hurled himself upon other races; he disappeared in them, they took him in; it was obvious what these races had given him, not what he had given them; for what he gave possessed no physiognomy, no form, it was only will: an increased energy which often impelled to great achievements, an excitability difficult to control, and an unquenchable thirst after possession which often led to destruction, in short, a definite direction of will; wherever he settled, the Semite had, to begin with, only adopted and assimilated what he found, but he had changed the character of the people.

HOMO JUDAEUS

Cursory as may have been this attempt to illustrate clearly some distinguishing characteristics of the Hittites, the Amorites and the Semites, I believe that it will contribute to a sensible and true discernment of the Israelite and Jewish character. We must in any case approach such a task with modesty and self-effacement. At any rate clear pictures of living men and their deeds will give a more vivid conception than figures, though figures are better than phrases. But with every step we must become more cautious, and if we look back at those figures, we shall not be inclined to “construct” the Israelite from percentages of Semites, Amorites and Hittites, somewhat as the cook makes a pudding from a recipe; that would be childish folly. But that dis-

409 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

cussion of the matter brings many points more humanly home to us. Whatever, for instance, in a national character is inexplicable contradiction — and the Jewish people is fuller of contradictions than any other — confuses us to begin with, often indeed distresses us; but this impression passes away when we know the organic cause of the contradiction. Thus it is at once apparent that from the crossing of Hebrews and Hittites contradictory tendencies must result; for while the Hebrews physically grafted themselves upon the Hittites, they were inoculated with a culture which morally and intellectually did not belong to them, which had not sprung naturally from their own need, from an inventive richness of their own mind; it was taking possession in contrast to original possession. As a matter of fact the Hebrews obtained a real title to this culture by adopting the blood of the creative Hittites and becoming Israelites; but by this very act contrast and inner discord were henceforth assured. The two types were fundamentally too different to amalgamate completely, and this became evident especially in the contrast between Judah and Israel which soon manifested itself; for in the north the Syrian was predominant and the crossing had been much more rapid and thorough; * in the south, on the other hand, the Amorites were more numerous, and an almost constant infiltration of genuine Semitic blood from Arabia continued. What here took place between tribe and tribe repeated itself inside the narrower unity: so long as Jerusalem stood, those of weak faith and the worldly-minded continually withdrew; they fled from the home of strict law and unadorned life. The same phenomenon is seen to-day, but not so clearly. I think that without straining a point we may fairly say that we can trace here the lasting influence of the *homo*

* The Hittites were more numerous in the north, the Amorites in the south. (See

Sayce: *Hittites*, pp. 13 and 17.)

410 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

syriacus on the one hand, and of the *homo arabicus* on the other.

I leave it to the reader to make further observations of this kind on the contributions of the various types to the formation of this particular human race, and turn my attention at once to the most vital point — the influence of the Semitic spirit upon religion. That is clearly the essential question, if we are to understand the origin and character of Judaism; and while the special business talent is perhaps rather a Hittite than a Semitic legacy, in the sphere of religion the Semitic element probably strongly predominates. * I prefer to discuss this matter at once, and from the general standpoint, rather than later, when the Jewish religion as a particular phenomenon will occupy our attention; for the wider horizon will give us a broader view, and if we ask ourselves how the special Semitic spirit, the predominant feature of which we now know to be Will, everywhere and of

* In regard to business aptitude a proof is given us by the Armenians, in whose veins there is much more “alarodic,” that is, Syrian blood (about 80 per cent. according to a communication by letter from Professor Hueppe), but apart from that only Indo-European, Phrygian and not Semitic blood, and who — without the characteristic “Jewish nose,” the Hittite legacy — show the same greed, the same business cunning and the same passionate fondness for usury as the Jews, but all to a much higher degree, so that there is a proverb in the Levant that an Armenian is a match for three Jews. In David Hogarth's book, *A Wandering Scholar in the Levant* (1896, p. 147 ff.), we find interesting details concerning the character of the Armenians, especially their genius for intrigue and incitement. It is true that Burckhardt in his famous book, *Über die Beduinen und Wahaby* (Weimar, 1831), represents the genuine Semites, too, as evil, over-cunning business people. “In their private dealings the Arabs cheat each other as much as possible,” he says, “they practise usury, too, whenever they have an opportunity” (p. 149, 154). But after Burckhardt had lived longer among the Bedouins he somewhat modified his judgment, and while admitting that “greed of gain” is one of their chief characteristics, declared that the inclination to cheating originated from their contact with the cities and the thieving population settled there (p. 292). Whoever lies has lost his honour among them (296) and Burckhardt can assert that “with all their faults the Bedouins are one of the noblest nations with which I ever had occasion to be acquainted” (288). — In regard to this not unimportant question the recent experiences of the French in

411 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

necessity affects the religious sentiment of peoples, the answer to that question will enlighten us regarding the case in hand, and will in addition considerably facilitate the task we have set ourselves in the further course of this work. For it is a question of a power which is still at work in our midst, and which presumably will make itself felt in future, distant centuries — a power which we cannot fathom by the

exclusive consideration of limited, specific Judaism.

EXCURSUS ON SEMITIC RELIGION

I have said that the Semite changed the character of nations. The change of character is most evident in the sphere of religion. While in other spheres it is difficult to define the share of the specifically Semitic spirit in mixed races, here we clearly and unmistakably see its influence; for here its tyrannical will extends to cosmic dimensions and changes the whole view of "religion." Schopenhauer says in one place: "Religion is the metaphysics of the people." Now consider what kind of religion men can have whose most outstanding characteristic is the absolute lack of every metaphysical emotion, every philosophical capacity! * This one sentence expresses the profound contrast between Semite and Indo-European. It would be inexplicable how one could see in the Semite the religious man *κατ' ἔξοχην*, if

Algiers are of interest: the Kabyles gladly return to civilisation, whereas the pure Arabian stems have little inclination thereto and demand from the world freedom and nothing more; they reveal themselves as an element absolutely hostile to culture. They prefer to give rather than to sell, to steal than to bargain, they prefer licence to any law. In all these points the contrast to the Hittites, as we see them in history, is very striking. The immoderate will of the Semites, their greed of gain, of which Burckhardt speaks, will have quickened very much the Syrian talent for business, nevertheless this capacity seems to be a Syrian, not a Semitic legacy.

* Renan: *Histoire des langues sémitiques*, p. 18, "L'abstraction est inconnue dans les langues sémitiques, la métaphysique impossible."

412 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

we were not still living in the dense mist of inherited historical prejudices and superstition; it is certain at any rate that wherever Semitic influence penetrated, the conception of religion underwent a great change. * For everywhere else in the whole world, even among savage peoples, religion is interwoven with the mysterious. Plato says that in the other world the soul "will be initiated into a mystery, which one may name the perfect bliss." † Jesus Christ says of the doctrine which is the essence of His religion, that it is a "mystery." ‡ What here has been most sublimely expressed, we find in all stages of the human hierarchy except among the Semites. Schopenhauer calls this, from his standpoint as a philosopher, "metaphysics"; we may, I think, simply say that in the world of feeling as of thought man everywhere meets inexplicable contradictions; this attracts his attention, and he begins to have a feeling that his understanding is only adequate to a portion of existence, that what his five senses convey to him and what his combinative logic constructs therefrom neither exhaust the essence of the world outside himself nor his own being; he conjectures that besides the perceptible cosmos there

is an imperceptible, besides the thinkable an unthinkable; the simple world extends and becomes a “double kingdom.” § The sight of death itself points to an unknown world, and birth seems to him like a message from the same realm. At every step we see only “miracles”; the greatest wonders for us are ourselves. How simply the savage wonders and everywhere suspects the existence of another world is from travellers' accounts well known to us; of Goethe, on the other hand, perhaps the most finely organised brain that humanity has produced, Carlyle says: “Before his eye lies the whole world extended and transparent, as though melted

* See p. [213 ff.](#)

† *Phoedrus*, 250.

‡ See p. [187.](#)

§ *Faust*, Second Part, Act i., last words of Faust.

413 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

to glass, but on every side surrounded by wonders, everything Natural being in truth a Supernatural”; * and Voltaire, the so-called scoffer, closes his scientific researches with the words: “*Pour peu qu'on creuse, on trouve une abîme infini.*” And so all mankind from the highest to the lowest are agreed: the living feeling of a great world-secret, the vague realisation that the natural is “supernatural,” is common to all; it unites the Australian negro to a Goethe and a Newton. The Semite alone stands apart. Of the Arab of the desert Renan says: “No one in the world has so little inclination to mysticism, no one is more averse to contemplation and devotion. God is the creator of the world, he has made it, that is sufficient to him as an explanation.” † This is pure materialism in contrast to what other men call religion, by which they all understand “something unthinkable and inexpressible.” Thus Montefiore can proudly say of the religion of his fathers, in which the Semitic impulse has found its highest and most perfect form, that it contains nothing esoteric, not the least inner incomprehensibility; and that hence this religion, which knows neither superstition nor secret, has become the teacher of nations. ‡ The same Jewish author is never tired of pointing out with admiration that the Semites never knew anything of the Fall, of justification by faith, of redemption, of grace; § by this he merely shows that they have scarcely any idea of what the rest of the world calls religion. In Dr. Ludwig Philippson's *Israelitische Religionslehre* (Leipzig, 1861), an orthodox Jewish work

* In the essay *Goethe's Works*, towards the end.

† *L'islamisme et la science*, p. 380. Here there is evidently an intellectual want, as Renan elsewhere admits when he writes: “The Semitic people almost totally lack the questioning thirst after knowledge; nothing excites their wonder” (*Langues sémitiques*, p. 10). According to Hume the lack of wonder is the characteristic token of inferior

intellectual power.

‡ Cf. *Religion of the Ancient Hebrews*, p. 160.

§ Pp. 514, 524, 544, and many other places.

414 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

dedicated to the “future of the Israelite religion,” we find, as one of the three “distinguishing features“ of this religion, the sentence, “The Israelite religion has and knows no secrets, no mysteries“ (i. 34). Renan, too, in a moment of reckless honesty, admits that “the Semitic faith (monotheism) is in reality the product of a human race whose religious needs are very few. It signifies a minimum of religion.“ * An important and true remark which has only failed to have effect because Renan did not show in how far and for what compelling reasons the Semite, who is famed for the glow of his faith, yet possesses a minimum of true religion. The explanation is easy for us: where understanding and imagination are under the yoke of blind will, there cannot and must not be any miracle, anything unreachable, any “path into the untrodden, and the not-to-be-trodden,” † nothing which the hand cannot grasp and the moment (even if it be but as a clearly conceivable hope) cannot possess. Even such a great mind as the second Isaiah looks upon religious faith as something which is based on empiric foundation and which can be tested, as it were, by a legal process: “Let the people bring forth their witnesses that they may be justified; or let them hear and say, It is truth“ (xliii. 9). We read exactly the same in the second Sura of the *Koran*: “Call your witnesses if you speak the truth.“ The Jewish teacher Philippson, mentioned above, tells in detail how the Jew “believes solely what he has seen with his eyes,” a “blind faith“ being unknown to him; and in a long note he quotes all the passages in the Bible where “faith in God“ is mentioned, and asserts that this expression occurs without exception only where

* *Nouvelles considérations sur les peuples sémitiques* (*Journal asiatique*, 1859, p. 253). Also Robertson Smith (*The Prophets of Israel*, p. 33) testifies that the genuine Semite has “little religion.“

† Or as the *Brihadâranyaka-Upanishad* renders the same conception, “the path of the universe, which one has to follow, to get from the part into the whole universe“ (1, 4, 7).

415 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

“visible proofs have gone before.“ * It is always, therefore, a question of outward experience, not of inner; the conceptions are always thoroughly concrete, material; as Montefiore assures us, even in the advanced Jewish religion there is nothing which the dullest might not immediately understand and fathom to its uttermost depth; as soon as a man has a feeling of a mystery, as soon as he, for instance, supposes that there can

be anything symbolical in the history of the creation, he is a heretic and a gallows-bird. † Even the utterly materialised history of creation given in the book of *Genesis* is so manifestly alien and borrowed that it remains totally isolated amid the Israelitish tradition and without actual connection with it. ‡ The will in fact gives little rope to the understanding and the imagination. So it is that the Semite who has begun to doubt at once becomes an atheist; there is in any case no secret, no mystery: if Allah is not the creator, then must matter be; as an explanation of the world there is scarcely the shadow of a difference between the two views, for in the case of neither does the Semite feel himself in the presence of an inexplicable riddle, a superhuman mystery.

But if we wish to appreciate the influence of Semiticism upon religion, it will not suffice to speak of understanding and non-understanding, of feeling and non-feeling of the mystery; we must remember also the creative influence of the imagination, that “all-uniting heavenly companion,” as Novalis calls it. Imagination is the handmaid of religion, she is the great mediator; born, as Shakespeare says, of the wedlock of head and heart, she moves on the frontier of the “double kingdom” of

* Philippson: *Israelitische Religionslehre*, i. 35 ff.

† See, for example, in Graetz, *Gnosticismus und Judentum*, the passage on Ben Soma.

‡ Fully discussed by Renan: *Langues sémitiques*, p. 482 ff. See, too, the note on p. 485 and my quotation from Darmesteter, p. 421, note. Cf., too, the [introduction to the 4th ed. of this book](#).

416 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

Goethe and so unites the one half to the other: her forms signify more than what the eye alone can see in them, her words proclaim more than the ear alone can hear. She has not the power to open up that which is closed, but she raises before us the mystery of mysteries and convinces our eyes that its veil cannot be raised. Symbolism, as the necessary language of the unspeakable mystery of the world, is her work. Plato calls this language a swimming-board that bears us down the stream of life; it is as widespread as the feeling of this mystery, its vocabulary as varied as the stages of culture and the climates. Thus the inhabitants of the Samoan Islands have represented symbolically to themselves the inexplicable and yet directly felt mystery of the omnipresence of God in the following manner. They represent the body of their God Saveasiuleo as composed of two separable parts; the upper, humanly shaped part (the real God) dwells in “the home of spirits” among the dead, the under part is an immensely long structure like a sea-serpent that winds itself round all the islands of the great sea, and pays attention to the doings of men. * It is indeed a long way from such a comparatively crude conception to the idea of the omnipresence of God held by Christian theology; and it is still further removed from the transcendental idealism

which is a [Sankara's](#) conception of the same mystery, yet I can find no fundamental difference. Moreover we see from many examples how this occupation of the imagination with religious conceptions everywhere gradually leads to very clear ideas. Tylor, the cautious and reliable scholar, asserts that there is probably on the whole African continent, from the Hottentots to the Berbers, not a single tribe which does not believe in a supreme deity, and he shows how this faith gradually arises out of simple animism. But most of them, as, for example, the negroes of the

* E. B. Tylor: *The Beginnings of Culture*, Germ. ed., 1873, II. 309.

417 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

Gold Coast, think it beneath the dignity of the great spirit of the world to busy himself with the trifling affairs of the world; it is seldom, according to them, that he intervenes. Another tribe, that of the Yorubas (negroes of the Slave coast, at a perceptibly higher stage of civilisation), teaches that “no one can directly approach God, but God has appointed intercessors and mediators between himself and the human rare. Sacrifice is not offered to God, because he needs nothing; on the other hand, the mediators, who are very like men, delight in presents of sheep, pigeons and other things.” * That seems to me a very high kind of “popular metaphysics,” a religion which deserves all respect. On the other hand, we know how the richest mythology in the world, that of the Indian Aryans, in the very oldest hymns (before the immigration to India) teaches that “the many Gods are a single being that is worshipped under different names,” † and how this mythology afterwards led to the sublimest conception of the one God in Brahman, in fact to a wonderfully sublime though at the same time one-sided and consequently inferior religion; we further know how from the same root sprang the ever-blossoming garden of the Hellenic Olympus and the admirable ethical teaching of the Avesta and of Zoroaster; we know, finally, how all these things, together with the metaphysical speculations pertaining thereto and the ever-active necessity of our inborn creative impulse, saved Christianity from the fate of becoming a mere annex of Judaism, how they give it mythical (*i.e.*, inexhaustible) significance and charm, how they quickened it with the deepest symbols of the Indo-European mind, and made it a sacred vessel for the secrets of the human heart and the human brain, a pathway into “the untrodden and the not-to-be-

* Tylor, pp. 348, 349.

† *Rigveda*, i. 164, 46 (quoted from Barth, *Religions de l'Inde*, p. 23).

418 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

trodden," a "pathway of the universe." * There can therefore be no doubt of the importance of the part which imagination plays in religion. Can we say that the Semite possesses no imagination? All such unqualified statements are false; although the necessary brevity of the written thought often forces us to adopt this form, we may well presuppose that the reader automatically supplies the necessary correction. The Semite is a human being like others; it is merely a question of degrees of difference, which, however, in this case, thanks to the extreme character of this human type, come very near to the borderland of Affirmation and Negation, of the To be or the Not to be. All who have any claim at all to speak, testify unanimously that lack — or let us say poverty — of imagination is a fundamental trait of the Semite. I have already given weighty proofs, *e.g.*, the evidence of Lassen, and I could add many more, but the question is not worth further discussion: Mohammedanism and Judaism are sufficient proofs; what we hear of the Bedouins † shows us only the beginning of this poverty. As Renan happily remarks: "*le sémite a l'imagination comprimante*," that is, his imagination narrows, limits, confines; a great thought, a deeply symbolical image returns from his brain small and thin, "flattened," robbed of its far-reaching significance. "In the hands of the Semites the mythologies which they borrowed from strange peoples became flat historical narratives." ‡ Wellhausen says: "The fading of the myths is synonymous with their Hebraising." § And not only did the Semites possess little creative imagination, but they also systematically checked every tendency in that direction. Just as man must not wonder and think, so, too, he must not form any conception of things invisible. Every attempt to conceive the superhuman

* Concerning mythology in Christianity, see [vol. ii. chap. vii.](#)

† See p. 427.

‡ Renan: *Israël*, i. 49, 77, 78.

§ *Prolegomena*, 4th ed. p. 321.

419 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

is idolatry; the Saveasiuleo of the Samoans is an idol, the Sistine Madonna of Raphael is an idol, the symbol of the Cross is an idol. * I shall not repeat what I have said in a former chapter on this subject, but ask the reader to look at it again ([p. 224 f.](#)). I have there tried to make it clear why the Semite had to hold this view, how his zeal and the particular nature of his faith, springing as it did from the Will, forced it upon him; I pointed also to the fact that the Semite, wherever he defied this law of his nature, as in Phoenicia, became himself the most horrible, and perhaps the only genuine idolater humanity has ever known. For while the Indian taught the negation of will, and Christ its "conversion," religion is for the Semite the idolisation of his will, its most glowing, immoderate and fanatical assertion. If he had not this faith, which

makes him the protagonist of fanatical intolerance and at the same time a paragon among sufferers, he would have no religion, or hardly any; hence the ever-repeated warning of his legislators against “molten gods.”

From these details the following conclusions, to begin with, may be drawn: the Semite banishes from religion contemplative wonder, every feeling of a superhuman mystery, and he banishes likewise creative fancy; of these he admits only the indispensable minimum, that “minimum of religion“ of which Renan spoke. Wherever, therefore, Semitic influence makes itself felt, whether by physical crossing (as in the case of the Jews) or by the mere force of ideas (as in Christianity) we shall meet with these two characteristic endeavours. We can express both by one single word — materialism. Schopenhauer, one of the greatest thinkers that ever lived, whose thought, moreover, possessed unexampled symbolical plasticity — unequalled even by Plato — so that his

* That the Cross is to be regarded as the same thing as the idols of Heathendom is said expressly by Professor Graetz: *Volkstümliche Geschichte der Juden*, ii. 218.

420 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

philosophy seems in many ways related to religion, has as metaphysician given this definition: “matter is the mere visibility of will... what in appearance, that is, for the conception, is matter, is in itself will.“ * I shall not enter into metaphysics here, nor shall I champion Schopenhauer's speculative symbolism; but it is striking that in the sphere of purely empiric psychology an analogous relation unavoidably asserts itself. Where the will has enslaved the questioning understanding and the imagination, there can be no other view of life and no other philosophy than the materialistic. I do not use the word in a depreciatory sense. I do not deny the advantages of materialism, I do not dispute that it can be harmonised with morals; I simply state a fact. Pure materialism is the religious doctrine of the Arab Mohammed, as are also the transitory processes of his revelations from God, and his paradise with eating and drinking and beautiful houris; pure materialism is the bargain which Jacob enters into with Jehovah (*Genesis* xxviii. 20-22), in which he makes five conditions, or, as the Jurist would say, stipulations, and then concludes: as thou doest this, so thou shalt be my God. The whole history of creation in *Genesis* — which, it appears, all Hebrews, all Syrian and Babylonian Semites possessed in similar form † — is pure materialism; it was not so originally; it was the mythical and symbolical conception of an imaginative people (probably the Sumero-Accadians), but, as Renan has taught us, the myth becomes in the hands of the Semite an historical chronicle. ‡

* *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, 2 vol., Book II. chap. xxiv. In no connection with this, but nevertheless interesting as a reflection of the same discernment is the doctrine

of the Sâmkhya philosophy (the rationalistic system of the Brahman Indians), according to which willing is not a mental but a physical function. (Cf. Garbe: *Die Sâmkhya-Philosophie*, p. 251.)

† Cf. Gunkel: *Handkommentar zur Genesis*, p. xli. ff.

‡ The pro-eminent imagination of the Sumero-Accadians is obvious from their scientific achievements, moreover their language is said to

421 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

Of all the deep ideas which thoughtful and reflective minds had breathed into this story in their own wonderful way, the Semites perceived nothing, so absolutely nothing that the Jews, for example, first acquired the conception of an evil spirit, opposed to the good, through Zoroaster during the Babylonian captivity; till then they had regarded the serpent of their bible just as a serpent! * Why talk of their ignorance of an evil principle, when in spite of their book of *Genesis*, chaps. i. and ii., the idea even of a God, creator of heaven and earth, was quite unknown to the Israelites till the Babylonian captivity? The thought appears for the first time in the so-called second Isaiah (see chaps. xl. to lvi. of the book of *Isaiah*). The

testify to a special tendency to abstraction, for it is richer in abstract ideas than in *nomina concreta* (see Delitzsch: *Die Entstehung des ältesten Schriftsystems*, 1898, p. 118). A more direct contrast to the Semitic nature cannot be imagined; we can easily fancy what a degradation the Sumerian theories of the creation may have suffered under Israelite hands. But it becomes ever more probable that this whole mythology is permeated with old Aryan conceptions, to which, for example, the tree of life, the flood, the Godhead in water (hence baptism), the stories of the temptation belong. Professor Otto Franke (Königsberg) writes in the *Deutsche Literaturzeitung*, 1901, No. 44, col. 2763: "Such passages in the Semitic tradition always stand isolated and in strange surroundings, but form organic links in whole Aryan systems of thought: they are often bare and artificial in their Semitic setting, whereas in the Aryan they spring forth like foaming streams from full and sparkling springs."

* Cf. Montefiore, p. 453. How deeply rooted in the organism of the Semite this incapacity is we see from the fact that a man like James Darmesteter, one of the most frequently named Orientalists of the nineteenth century, a man of universal knowledge, could in the year of grace 1882 write: "The biblical cosmogony, hastily borrowed from an alien source, and all its stories of apples and serpents, concerning which the generations of Christians have passed sleepless nights, have never caused our Israelite scholars the slightest uneasiness or occupied their thoughts." All his knowledge could not enable this absolutely free thinking Jew — "an honest Jew," as Shakespeare would have said — to understand any more profoundly; and thus we may well smile when he tells us, after he has finished with the apples, that the cross is already "rotten" and Christianity an "abortive" religion. When we behold such utter want of intelligence the yawning gulf reveals itself to our eyes! (See *Coup d'oeil sur l'histoire du peuple juif*, p. 19 f.)

422 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

conception was still strange to the real Isaiah, as also to Jeremiah. * The fantastically scientific idea, in *Genesis* concerning the origin of the

organic world, the profound myth of the fall of man, the theory of the development of man up to the first organisation of society... all that became "history," and thereby it at the same time lost all significance as religious myth; for the myth is elastic, inexhaustible, whereas here a simple chronicle of facts, an enumeration of events, lies before us. † That is materialism. Wherever the Semitic spirit has breathed, we shall meet with this materialism. Elsewhere in the whole world religion is an idealistic impulse; Schopenhauer called it "popular metaphysics"; I should rather call it popular idealism; in the case of the Semites, too, we observe this wistful awakening of a feeling of the superhuman (read the life of Mohammed), but the imperious will immediately lays hold of every symbol, every profound divination of reflective thought, and transforms them into hard empirical facts. And thus it is that with this view of religion only practical ends are pursued, no ideal ones. It is to provide for prosperity in this world, and aims particularly at power and wealth, it is moreover to provide for happiness in the future world (where the idea of immortality is present — an idea introduced into the Israelite faith from the Persian and into the Arabian from Christianity). Downright materialism! as the comparison with the Saveasiuleo of the Samoans and the great world-spirit of the Yorubas has shown.

This then would be a negative influence of Judaism upon all religion: infection with fundamental views of a materialistic kind. Now we must consider the positive influence, which usually is the only one to be taken into

* Even the Jewish scholar Montefiore explicitly admits this: *Religion of the Ancient Hebrews*, p. 269. Further detail on p. 425.

† For further details concerning the Bible as an historical work and its significance as such for the Jewish people, see the chapter on "The Revelation of Christ," [p. 228 f.](#) and further on, p. 486.

423 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

account. I think we may assert without qualification that nowhere in the whole world is there to be found a faith like that of the Semites, so glowing, so unreserved, so unshakeable. Without them we might perhaps not have possessed the idea of religious faith, of *fides*, at all. The German word *Glaube* is very ambiguous; fundamentally it is almost as near doubt as conviction, the original meaning is merely to approve (*gutheissen*). * When we go to the Latin we are no better off, for in truth *fides* means trust and nothing more; † the *bona fides* of legal agreements shows the word in its original significance, the latter *fides salvifica* is a makeshift. Characteristically, in Sanscrit also the word *çraddhâ*, faith, is distinguished from the Semitic "faith" by the colourlessness and uncertainty of its significance; we get the impression, which is strengthened when we carefully survey the events of history, that we

have here to deal with two different things. ‡ It may frequently happen that an increase of the quantity altogether alters the quality; § that seems to be the case here too. The genuinely Semitic faith can be destroyed by nothing, can be injured by nothing; it resists every experience, every evidence. Here Will triumphs, and in fact — this should be noted, for here we have the psychological explanation of this remarkable phenomenon — it triumphs not merely because of its uncommon strength, but at the same time in consequence of the impoverishment of the understanding and the imagination: opposed to a minimum of religion we find a maximum of unconditional, unshakeable capacity of faith, of need of faith that stretches out like

* Kluge: *Etymologisches Wörterbuch*.

† Similarly the Greek πίστις.

‡ *Çraddhâ* denotes “trust, confidence, faith, also fidelity, honesty,” the verb *Çrad-dhâ*, “to trust, to consider true.” But the idea has something vague and colourless about it, and above all we must carefully note the fact that the word *Çraddhâ* plays a very unimportant part in the life of this pre-eminently religious people.

§ See p. [23](#).

424 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

an avaricious hand — a faith that will and must give to the believer the whole world as his own, but to him personally and alone, to the exclusion of all others. It is characteristic of the absolutism of this “faith-will” (if I may coin the phrase) that originally every tribe, every little group of the Semites has its own God. The Semite would never wish to share with another; his will is unconditional, he alone must possess all; and his faith is as boundless as his will: these two expressions are for him almost synonymous. Religion does not appear to be present, so to speak, for its own sake, but as a means to an end, as an instrument, to widen as much as possible the sphere of what can be attained by Will. * The view that the Semite from the first was monotheist, to which Renan's famous phrase “*le désert est monothéiste*” † had contributed a good deal, has long ago been proved erroneous; ‡ we see each little tribe of the Hebrews in possession of its own God, who exercises power only over this tribe and inside this stretch of land. If any one leaves the circle of the family and enters a new region, he comes under the jurisdiction of another God; that is surely not monotheism. § I consider the idea of divine unity

* Many authors testify that even to-day the genuine Bedouins do not in reality acknowledge the cosmopolitical God of the Koran. Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, p. 71, hints that Mohammedanism is in a way a religion of the cities in contrast to the religion of the desert. Similarly Burckhardt: *Beduinen*, p. 156.

† *Langues sémitiques*, éd. 1878, p. 6. These words were originally uttered by Renan in 1855.

‡ Cf. Robertson Smith: *Religion of the Semites*, ed. 1894, p. 75 f. It is well known

what zealous polytheists many pseudo-Semitic nations were; of course, that does not justify one in drawing conclusions in regard to the pure Semites. In the introduction to the first edition of his *Langués sémitiques* Renan has laid great stress on this reservation, which is scarcely ever observed.

§ David, when driven by Saul from Palestine, cannot do otherwise than serve strange gods on strange soil (1 *Samuel* xxvi. 19); cf. with this particularly Robertson Smith, *Prophets of Israel* (ed. 1895, p. 44) and the list of characteristic passages, which reveal the same conception, in Wellhausen, *Prolegomena*, 4th ed. p. 22. The polytheism appears in a particularly simple fashion in Moses' song of praise. "Who is like

425 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

to be altogether un-Semitic — to be, in fact, anti-Semitic, for this reason, that it can only arise from speculation: in the over-plentiful material which the imagination has heaped out, thought brings about order, and thus arrives at the conception of unity; here, on the other hand, there is neither imagination nor speculation but only history and will: from these the one cosmic world-spirit of the Indians, Persians, Hellenes and Christians could never originate, any more than the "one only" God of the Egyptians. * It can be proved that the idea of the one God of the world only entered Judaism at a very late postexilic period, and beyond all doubt under foreign and especially Persian influence; if we wished to be very exact, we should have to say: this idea never really obtained, for to this day, as three thousand years ago, Jehovah is not the God of the cosmic universe but the God of the Jews; he has only destroyed the other Gods, consumed them, as he will one day consume other nations, with the exception of those who shall serve the Jews as slaves. † That is really not monotheism but, as I have already remarked, unvarnished monolatry.

unto Thee, O Lord, among the Gods?" (*Exodus* xv. 11). In the much later *Deuteronomy* a distinction is drawn between Jehovah and the "strange gods" as quite homonymous beings (*xxxii.* 12) and it is only on very solemn occasions that the former is addressed as "God of all Gods" (*x.* 17). Even in the time of the Maccabees (more than five hundred years later) we meet the same expression "God of all Gods" in the book of *Daniel*, *xi.* 36, and find in Jesus Sirach the conception of "subordinate deities" who are appointed by Jehovah to rule over the different peoples (*Jes. Sir.* xvii. 17).

* There is much needless dispute regarding Egyptian monotheism, for it cannot be doubted, when one reads in *The Book of the Dead*: "Thou art the one, the God from the very beginnings of time, the heir of immortality, self-produced and self-born; thou didst create the earth and make men..." (Introductory hymn to Ra; see the complete translation of the *Book of the Dead* from the Theban text by E. A. W. Budge, 1898.) Budge calls attention to the fact (*p.* xcvi.) that the formula in *Deuteronomy* *iv.* 4, "The Lord, our God, is one Lord" is a literal imitation of the Egyptian.

† See, for example, the *Apokalypse of Baruch* (*lxxii.*), a famous Jewish work belonging to the end of the first century after Christ: The men of all nations shall be subject to Israel, but those who have

426 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

On the other hand, this consideration teaches us what peculiar and important truth lay in the over-generalised remarks of Renan; as so often, he had seen rightly, but analysed most superficially. He wrote: "The desert is monotheistic; the sublimity of its immeasurable monotony first revealed to man the conception of the Infinite." How false everything is that follows the semicolon in this sentence is proved by Renan's own remarks in another passage, where he shows that the Semitic languages are "incapable of expressing the feeling of the Infinite" (see p. 299). In the dark primeval woods of India the feeling of the Infinite had attained such an intensity that man felt his own Ego merge into the All, whereas the inhabitant of the sun-parched desert, blinded by the excess of light, lost the power of his eyes and saw nothing but himself; far from feeling the Infinite that reveals itself to us only in the night or in the million voices of thronging life, he felt lonely — lonely and yet endangered, lonely yet hardly capable of finding the barest subsistence, utterly incapable of doing so if a second family should desire to join his own. This life was a struggle, a struggle in which only unfeeling egoism could exist. While the Indian, quite lost in thought, had only to stretch out his hand to the trees to still his hunger, the Bedouin was day and night on the alert, and had

ruled over you shall be destroyed with the sword" (quoted from Stanton, *The Jewish and the Christian Messiah*, p. 316). We see how merely national this supposed creator of Heaven and earth has remained. Montefiore also admits this when he writes, "Jehovah had certainly gradually come to be the one God of the world, but this God remained still Jehovah. Though he had become the absolute ruler of the universe, he did not cease to be the God of Israel" (p. 422). Robertson Smith, one of the first authorities of the day in these questions, interprets *Isaiah* ii. as a prophecy that Jehovah will gradually make himself God of all humanity through the acknowledgment of his virtues as a ruler. Hence we find even in the most sublime phases of the Semitic conception of religion, even where God is spoken of, the predominance of the purely historical, flagrantly anthropomorphic, unconditionally materialistic standpoint.

427 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

something else to do than to think of the Infinite — for which he was, moreover, so absolutely devoid of capacity and gifts that his language did not offer him the least help in that direction. On the other hand, we can understand perfectly well how the monotonous poverty of the surroundings could lead to unexampled poverty of mythological conceptions; for man is quite incapable of feeding his imagination from his own resources; it is, as Shakespeare says, "born in the eye"; where the eye is offered nothing but monotony, the imagination fades and withers. * And we can also easily understand how such surroundings would tend to develop that absolutely egoistic monotheism, where the one God is not the great spirit that presides over the world, as in the case of the poor negroes of the slave-coast, but a hard task-master, who is

there only for me the one — that is, for me and my children — who, when I blindly devote myself to him, gives me lands which I have not planted, full of oil and wine, houses which I have not built, and wells which I have not sunk — all those glorious things which I have seen only occasionally from a distance, when, impelled by hunger, I have left the desert and gone on a foray; and all these men who revel there in work and wealth — and with joyful song and dance and fat offerings worship Gods who give them all these riches, I will sacrifice to my God of the desert and overturn their altars; only my God shall henceforth be God, I alone will be master in the world! This is the monotheism of the desert; it arises not from the idea of the Infinite but from the poverty of ideas of a poor, hungry, greedy man whose range for thought hardly rises above the conception that possession and power would be the highest bliss.

To make quite clear the very profound change of

* Burckhardt, who lived for years in Arabia, testifies that the monotony of the desert life and the lack of all occupation lie like an unbearable burden upon the mind and finally quite paralyse it (*Beduinen und Wahaby*, p. 286).

428 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

sentiment that is wrought in the human mind by this Semitic view of faith, I cannot do better than quote Goethe. His words are cited everywhere: “The real and only and most profound theme in the history of the world and of men, to which all other themes are subordinate, is the conflict between belief and unbelief.” * But more important is the following passage in the fourth book of *Wahrheit und Dichtung*: “The universal, natural religion really requires no faith; for the conviction that a great, creative, ordering and guiding Being is, as it were, concealed behind nature, in order to make itself comprehensible to us, forces itself upon every one, and even should a man occasionally let go the thread of this faith which guides him through life, he will nevertheless be able to pick it up again at any time and place. It is quite a different matter with the particular religion which tells us that this great Being takes under his care, by preference and choice, a single individual, a tribe, a people, a country. This religion is founded on faith, which must be unshakeable if it is not to be destroyed altogether. Every doubt about such a religion is fatal to it. We may return to conviction but not to faith.” This process of reasoning brings us on to the right track; it enables us to say exactly what the Semite has in this case given to the world, or, if we will, forced upon it. An important question, for in this is contained his world-affecting significance as an influence upon others, and in this, too, lies at the present day the particular strength of Judaism, which Herder and so many other great minds felt as “alien.” Goethe has clearly recognised the essential point and also hinted, but unfortunately not in such detail that every one may see it as he does; for he distinguishes between a natural

religion and another which is therefore unnatural. Now according to Goethe's way of thinking, the contrast to the natural is the arbi-

* *Noten zum Westöstlichen Divan* (Israel in the Desert).

429 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

trary, that in which Will is the “arbiter,” that in which Will — not pure understanding, and not the undimmed natural instinct — has decisive influence. And hereby he not only points out to us that there are essential differences between religions, so essential that the same word can mean two different things, but he tells us at the same time how this difference is fundamentally explicable — that the religion which he contrasts with the natural is, in fact, the religion of Will. On the other hand, the use of the word *Glaube* (faith) by him is vague and confusing; he has tried to simplify too much. Goethe says, “The natural religion really needs no faith,” but in the non-Semitic religions there is really more of that which is *believed* than in the Semitic; the material of faith is richer; and *Glaube* is expressly demanded by them. What is the truth in this matter? The nature of faith is in the two cases just as different as the nature of religion; to the word “religion“ Goethe in the passage quoted gives two significations, to the word *Glaube* only one, hence the misunderstanding. In reality we nowhere find religion without faith; certainly without faith in the specifically Semitic sense, but not without faith of some kind. Faith is everywhere the invisible soul, religion the visible body. We must therefore proceed further if we wish to develop Goethe's utterance until it becomes quite clear. I shall take an illustration.

So far as I know, dogmatism and the idea of revelation are nowhere so developed as among the Aryan Brahmans; yet the result in their case is quite other than in that of the Semites. The sacred Vedas of the Indians were looked upon as divine revelation; every word of theirs was for all matters of faith authoritative and indisputable — and in spite of this, from this one complex of scripts, everywhere recognised as infallible, there sprang no fewer than six entirely different systems of philo-

430 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

sophy, * — systems in which (as is characteristic of the Indian spirit) philosophy and religion grow up inseparably connected, so that the view of the nature of the Godhead, of the relation of the individual to it, of the importance of redemption, &c., is very different in the different systems; whereby, of course, not only the philosophy, but above all the religion of the believer is influenced. And all these doctrines, which frequently contradict each other in important points, were, nevertheless, regarded as orthodox, the one as much as the other. They all were based on the

same scripts, originated in other words from the same fundamental mythological images of the hymns, and all gave evidence of the same reverence for the deep speculations in the precepts of the cult and in the Upanishads. That was sufficient. There were no historical dates, no chronicle of the creation and of generations, in which men should blindly believe; for anything of that kind was meant from the first merely as an image, a symbol. Thus, for example, the strictly orthodox commentator of the sacred writings, [Sankara](#), says in regard to various images and speculations applied to the Creation: “The script has no intention to instruct us in regard to the extension of the world which began with Creation, because it is neither visible, nor anywhere said, or even thinkable, that anything that is of importance for man depends upon this.” † In the same way, each one was free to think as he pleased of the relation between spirit and matter. The monist was just as orthodox as the dualist, the idealist as the materialist. One comprehends how, with such a conception of religion and faith, “in India at all times the most absolute

* There were more, but the others can be classified under the six great systems.

† The *Sūtra's des Vedānta*. (Deussens' translation). Who does not here think of the great remark of Goethe: “Animated inquiry into cause does great harm!” (see pp. [230](#) and [267](#)). Carlyle in his essay on Diderot well remarks, “Every religious faith, which goes back to origins, is fruitless, inefficient and impossible.”

431 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

freedom of thought has prevailed“ * — I mean, how it was possible to let orthodoxy and unhampered metaphysical speculation exist side by side. But no! we who to-day live under the influence of the Semitic view of faith, find it very difficult to harmonise these conceptions — the acknowledged infallibility of sacred books of religion and at the same time the most absolute freedom of thought! But we should also note the following carefully, for hereby alone will this illustration be instructive in regard to the nature of faith. Life was much more religious in India than it ever was among us, even in the ecclesiastical age, and the Indian religion as such has borne quite different fruits from Judaism, for example, where religion (as a Jewish author assured us) banished from life science, art, literature, in fact, everything but faith and obedience. † For the enormous intellectual activity of the Indian people, whose poetical literature alone surpasses in extent the whole classical literature of Greece and Italy together, ‡ is rooted in their faith; their most important achievements, even in remote spheres, radiate from their profound religious feeling. An example. Pānini's *Grammar of the Sanscrit Language*, written two thousand five hundred years ago, and as the culmination of a long, scientific development reaching back for centuries, is recognised as the greatest philological achievement of mankind. Regarding it Benfey

writes: “No language of the world can show such a complete grammar; not even the German, in spite of the remarkable works of the Grimms.” Georg von der Gabelentz says in his *Sprachwissenschaft* (2nd ed., 1901,

* Richard Garbe: *Die Sâmkhya-Philosophie*, p. 121.

† See p. 400. Spinoza too, who in each of his thoughts is so thorough a Jew and anti-Aryan, writes, “*Fidei scopus nihil est praeter obedientiam et pietatem*” (*Tract. theol.-pol.* chap. xiv.); that religion can be a creative element of life is a conception which remained quite incomprehensible to this brain.

‡ Max Müller: *Indien in seiner weltgeschichtlichen Bedeutung* (1884) p. 68.

432 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

p. 22), “Pânini's wonderful work is the only really complete grammar which any language possesses”; Pânini still forms the corner-stone of his science. What, we may ask, was it that spurred on the Indian thinkers to these high scientific achievements? The longing to awaken to new life the sacred songs of the *Rigveda*, which in the course of centuries had almost ceased to be understood. It was, as Benfey testifies, no simple aimless enthusiasm for science as science, but deep religious sentiment which gave them strength for the undertaking. * Their eminent achievements in the sphere of mathematics — we know that the Indian Aryans are the inventors of the so-called “Arabian ciphers” — have their origin in religion. The solution of the well-known geometrical problem which gives Pythagoras his title to fame, the Indians had in long past ages discovered, automatically, as a necessary consequence of the measurements prescribed for sacrificial ceremonies; here, in these religious calculations, we have the germs of a clear knowledge of irrational quantities, and later of the higher algebra, the theory of numbers, &c. † In what sense, therefore, can Goethe say of a religion which informed the whole public life, and at the same time had such an influence upon mind and imagination, that it really needed no faith? Am I not right in asserting that in that passage from Goethe the word “Faith” refers to two different things — two things as different as the beings whose souls they reflect? Goethe, in fact, holds the Semitic view, and according to this view (in contrast to the Indian) religious belief refers solely to historical dates and material facts. Here God is known from historically certified manifestations, not postulated from inner experience, not found out from the contemplation of nature, and not created by the power of the imagination; here everything is even simpler than Ernst Haeckel's history of creation. The

* *Geschichte der Sprachwissenschaft* (1869), pp. 77, 55.

† Cf. Schroeder: *Pythagoras und die Inder*, chap. iii.

433 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

one thing that is necessary is blind faith, and in this faith is concentrated the whole power of great leading spirits and of the responsible shepherds of the people: punishments on the one hand, promises on the other; in addition, historical proofs and preternatural miracles. As a contrast to every unadulterated Semitic creed take the so-called apostolic confession of the Christian Church! Half of the clauses refer to mysteries that cannot be represented, and of which the theologians themselves say, "The layman cannot understand them"; but in reality it is so little a question of understanding in the logical and comprehensible meaning of the word, that from this one short creed there have been derived the most diverse and most contradictory doctrines. * And now take the Athanasian symbolism! Here the material of religious faith consists of the most abstract speculations of the human brain. How could faith in the Semitic sense comprehend ideas to which not one man in a million can attach the faintest conception? Jesus Christ Himself said, when children were brought to Him, "Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven," but He nevertheless added in the same passage: "All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it" (*Matthew* xix. 11, 12). † The Semite is quite different, and hence also his form of faith is different. Even the simple sentence, "I believe in God, Creator of Heaven and Earth," forms no part of his creed; this circumstance is only casually mentioned in the Koran, and scarcely thrice mentioned in the whole sacred writings of the Jews. On the other hand, the first commandment of Moses is, "I am the Lord, who have brought thee out of the land of Egypt!" The faith at once attaches itself, as one sees, to historical

* Cf. Harnack: *Dogmengeschichte* (Grundriss, 2nd ed.), p. 63 f.

† In the Syrian translation of the oldest text it runs thus, "Every one who has the power," so that there is no doubt about the meaning. See Adalbert Merx' translation of the palimpsest, 1897.)

434 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

facts, which the people regard as authenticated, and never does it rise above the level of the ordinary eye. As Montefiore has taught us, there are no mysteries in the Jewish religion (see p. 413 f.). When we, therefore, speak of the incomparable power of the Semitic faith, we must not overlook the fact that this faith refers to an extremely scanty and limited material, that it intentionally leaves out of account the great wonder of the world, and that by the imposition of a law (in the juristical sense of the word), it also reduces the inner life of the heart to a minimum — whoever obeys the law is without sin, he need trouble his head no further; regeneration, grace, redemption, &c., do not exist. Thus we begin to see that this strong faith presupposes as counter-condition a minimum of the first condition of faith, a minimum of religion. Moses

Mendelssohn has expressed this truth intelligently and honestly:
“Judaism is not revealed religion, but revealed legislation.” *

“The Semite has really little religion,” Robertson Smith, the greatest authority on the Semitic religion, says with a sigh. “Yes, but much faith,” answers Goethe. And Renan supplies the commentary: “The mind of the Semite can embrace extremely little, but this little it embraces with great power.” † I think, however, that we are beginning to distinguish better between faith and faith, between religion and religion, than did Smith, Goethe and Renan; we shall soon get to the root of the matter. To make the matter thoroughly clear, I must once more contrast the Semite and the Indian.

The Aryan Indian can stand as an example of the extreme contrast to the Semite — a contrast, however, which clearly reveals itself in all peoples that are devoid of Semite blood, even in the Australian negroes, and which

* *Rettung der Juden*, 1872. (I quote from Graetz: *Volks. Gesch.*, iii, 578).

† *Langues sémitiques*, p. 11.

435 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

slumbers in the hearts of all of us. The mind of the Hindoo embraces an extraordinary amount — too much for his earthly happiness; his feelings are tender and full of sympathy, his sense pious, his thought metaphysically the deepest in the world, his imagination as luxuriant as his primeval forests, as bold as the world's loftiest mountain peak, to which his eye is ever drawn upwards. But two things he entirely lacks; he has no historical sense at all. This people has produced everything, but no history of its own career — not the trace of a chronicle. That is the first want. The second is the capacity to regulate his imagination, for want of which the Indian, as hyper-idealist, loses the right sense of proportion for the things of this world, and — although there is no one who fears death less — loses at the same time his position as energetic moulder of the world's history. He is not materialist enough. Far from considering himself, with Semitic pride, the “one man in the real sense of the word,” he looks upon humanity as a phase of life like other phases, and teaches as the basis of all wisdom and religion the *tat tvam asi*: that thou too art, *i.e.*, man shall recognise his own self in everything living. Here we certainly are far removed from the little chosen people, in whose favour the creation of the cosmos was undertaken, for whose advantage alone the rest of humanity lives and suffers; and it is at once clear that the divinity, or divinities, as it may be, of these Indians will not be such as one can carry about in an ark of the covenant, or can imagine as present in a stone. Even the *tat tvam asi* itself points to a cosmic religion, and a cosmic religion again implies — in contrast to a national faith — a direct relation between the individual and the divinely superhuman.

What a difference there must have been in the meaning which religion and faith had for this Aryan Indian and for the Semite. "In reality no faith," says the German sage, and the Frenchman echoes with the superficiality of parody: "The

436 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

Indo-European peoples have never regarded their faith as the absolute truth." * Ah no! this is surely not possible, and it is splendidly contradicted by the life of the Brahmins. For the Indo-Aryans, too, "bring forward their witnesses," though not quite in the same sense as the second Isaiah and Mohammed meant. When the Aryan bids farewell to wife, child and children's children, in order to devote the last years of his life — void of all possessions, living on herbs, naked, in the loneliness of his forests — to pious contemplation and the redemption of his soul; when he digs his grave with his own hands and on the approach of death lays himself down in it to die, with folded hands, resigned and happy; † — can one say then that "in reality he has no faith"? that he "does not look upon his faith as the truth"? It boots not to dispute over words, but at any rate this man possesses religion, and, as it seems to me, a maximum of religion. In his youth he became acquainted with the most luxuriant mythology; all nature was to his childlike eye alive, inspired; in it there dwelt great friendly forms ‡ which constantly gave fresh scope to his fancy, even being urged to further flights by the new hymns which ceaselessly broke upon his ear. As Carlyle said of Goethe, this Hindoo youth saw himself "surrounded by wonders, everything natural in truth

* Renan: *Langues sémitiques*, p. 7.

† Even to-day one comes upon fresh graves of this kind in the depths of the woods. Without convulsion or struggle these holy men pass from time into eternity, so that when one sees their corpses one might think that the hand of love had put their limbs aright and closed their eyes. (According to oral communications and sketches from nature.) One can see how living and unchanged, because springing from an inner soil that always remains the same, old Aryan religion even to-day is, from Max Müller's life-history of a holy man of Brahman family who died as recently as 1886, *Rāmakrishna, his Life and Sayings*, 1898.

‡ Oldenberg (*Religion des Veda*) testifies that the gods of the Aryan Indians, in contrast to others, were bright, true, friendly forms, without malice, cruelty and perfidy (pp. 30, 92, 302, &c.).

437 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

supernatural." The first years of manhood brought something new; his mind was exercised and strengthened by the most difficult problems, and an all-embracing symbolism was taught him by the contemplation that attached to the sacrificial ceremonies — a symbolism which almost goes beyond our modern powers of conception, * the chief features of which we can, however, clearly deduce from their wonderful effect. As his mind

ripened he began more and more to realise, not merely that those mythological forms possessed existence in his brain only, had a meaning only for his special, limited human spirit — in other words, were symbols of a something which the reason could not reach — but also that his whole life, the world that served him as a stage, the actors that moved upon this stage, the thoughts that he thought, the love that intoxicated him, the duties he fulfilled, were to be regarded as mere symbols; he did not deny the reality of these things, but he denied that their significance was exhausted by the empirically perceptible: “On the standpoint of the highest reality, all empirical activity has no existence,” say the sacred writings of the Hindoos † — a fact to which Goethe has given immortal expression when he says:

Alles Vergängliche
Ist nur ein Gleichnis.

And the more deeply this conviction settled in his consciousness, the higher rose the conception of the significance of his individual life; this life at once received a cosmic importance. For the script had taught him that “only unity is in the highest sense real, complexity is but a cleft gaping out of false perception.” The good works,

* Oldenberg, *Religion des Veda*: “The details of sacrifice appealed to the Hindoos as representing analogous facts in the universe which were united to them by a mystical tie.” We find proofs of this on every page of the *Satapatha-Brāhmana*, that remarkable code of sacrificial ceremonies.

† [Sankara](#): *Vedāntasūtra*'s II. 1, 14 (also for the following quotation).

438 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

which formerly appeared to him as part of the divine command had lost all value; henceforth only the inmost purpose, that is to say the inner life, every movement of the mental faculties, every throb of the heart, was regarded as important. If the Semitic law looked to results, not to intention, here we have the other extreme: all idea of result was excluded and moreover a matter of indifference. The important thing was to bring to perfection the highest act of creation in the reformation of man's own soul; not to chastise — that would be petty — but to transform the slightest stirrings of foolish personal longing, till the One was merged in the All. This was “redemption.” But do not fancy that we have to see in this only a philosophical process; it was a deeply religious one, for the strength of the individual was not sufficient. The Sanscrit word for the highest and only God is Brahma, *i.e.*, “prayer”; only by grace could man have a share in redemption, and before he could attain such grace by fervent prayer a man must have proved himself worthy of it by a pious life. This point once reached, then the individual no longer believed that he lived and died for himself alone but for the whole world; hence the

feeling of all-embracing responsibility. The one stood for all: his actions, which the delusion of the past seemed to leave to the almost insignificant decision of his own Will, were now of everlasting importance; for just as the natural is in truth supernatural, so the moment includes eternity and is but its symbol. This was looked upon by the Aryan Indians as religion, this is what they understood by faith.

By this contrast I hope to have made clear the peculiar and distinctive nature of the Semitic view of religion and faith; I think I have shown wherein lay that great power which inspired so many daring deeds, so many self-sacrificing thoughts; also what were its limitations. Nothing more is necessary here; the historical import-

439 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

ance which this power and these limitations attained is well known. One would almost be inclined to risk the paradox: religion and faith mutually exclude each other, or at least, when the one increases the other decreases. But that would be playing with words, since religion and faith manifestly have for the Semite a different meaning from that which they have for other men. The matter becomes especially intricate where we meet not the pure Semite or, as in the case of the Jews, the strong one-sided predominance of the Semitic will, but merely an infiltration of the Semitic spirit as in our own European history since the beginning of the Christian era. That gives rise to an almost inextricable confusion of ideas, and for that reason I have had to discuss the theme in considerable detail; for the entrance of the Jews into Western history derived its chief significance from the fact that the Christian Church was founded on a Semitic basis, and that the ideas of "faith" and "religion" were introduced in their Semitic sense into a religion which was fundamentally and also through the life of Christ the direct unconditional negation of the Semitic view, and which besides by its further mythological and philosophical development became altogether Indo-European and un-Semitic. It is impossible to calculate the influence of Judaism upon our whole history from its beginnings to the present day unless we are quite clear in regard to these fundamental ideas "religion" and "faith." I confess that I have not seen a work, no matter of what kind, which has succeeded in making this even approximately plain; in most cases the problem is not even felt as such. An abstract definition of religion is of little use, it does not clear our judgment; nor are the learned and extremely interesting researches on the origin of religion and its evolution of any value for our present purpose. It is of more importance to see with our eyes what Semitic, especially Jewish, religion is, and what are its

440 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

distinguishing marks; we shall then realise how much of the Semitic has entered our own thought. For the character of this religion at once reveals to us the nature of its influence; and as, on the other hand, force of will is peculiarly characteristic of the Semite, we may expect that this influence will be great. Materialism in philosophy, prominence given to the historical motive power as opposed to the ideal, strong emphasis laid upon “justice“ in the secular sense of the word, that is, of legal and moral conduct and justification by works, in contrast to every attempt at spiritual conversion and to redemption by metaphysical perception or divine grace, * the limitation of the imagination, the forbidding of freedom of thought, deep-rooted intolerance towards other religions, red-hot fanaticism — these are things that we must expect to meet everywhere to a greater or less extent where Semitic blood or Semitic ideas have gained a footing. We shall meet them frequently in the course of this book, even in the most modern and advanced views of the nineteenth century; for instance, in the teaching of Socialism. As far as intolerance in particular is concerned — this absolutely new element in the life of the Indo-European peoples — I shall postpone what I have to say about the “entrance of the Jews“ in this connection to the next chapter but one, where we shall see that the earliest Christians in eloquent language demanded unconditional religious freedom, while those of a later period took from the Old Testament the divine commandment of intolerance.

* Zoroaster gives powerful expression to the Indo-European view in contrast to the Semitic in the following passage: “Secular justice, you miser! you form the whole religion of evil spirits and are the destruction of the religion of God“ (*Dinkard* VII, 4, 14).

441 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

ISRAEL AND JUDAH

And now I again take up the thread where we left off our discussion of the relation of the various types in the blood of the Israelites and the possible influence of these mixtures upon their character (omitting the religious question just discussed). After all that I have said, it is clear that so far as religion was concerned the Semitic element was bound in time to prevail over the Hittite; but this victory was gained slowly and with difficulty, and, in fact, only in the south, *i.e.*, in Judea (Judah and Benjamin), where a frequent influx of fresh Arabian (*i.e.*, pure Semitic) blood may also have been of some influence. * In Israel (*i.e.*, in the north of the land) the old Syrian cult remained in honour till the last — the feasts on the heights, the pilgrimages to sacred places, the images of Baal, &c.; † even Elijah, who as a prophet was so strict in regard to “strange Gods,“ had not the slightest objection to the worship of the golden calves; he defended only the “God in Israel“ against the strange Gods imported by the daughters of Phoenician kings. From Israel itself

Judaism would never have sprung. All the more necessary is it that we should now become acquainted with the Jewish idea — the specifically Jewish in contrast to that of the people of Israel. And so I now pass to the third point, namely, that the real Jew only developed in the course of centuries by gradual physical separation from the rest of the Israelite family, as also by progressive development of some mental qualities and systematic starving of others; he is not the result of a normal national life, but, so to speak, an artificial product — the product of a priestly caste which, with the help of alien priests, forced

* Robertson Smith (*The Prophets of Israel*) lays great stress on this (p. 28); see also Wellhausen: *Prolegomena*.

† For details see Wellhausen and Robertson Smith (e.g., *The Prophets of Israel*, pp. 63, 96).

442 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

upon the people against its will a priestly legislation and a priestly faith as having been given by God (359).

Hurried as my sketch has been, and although for the sake of simplification I have passed over many facts in silence, I think that the reader has received a fairly vivid, and in its essential elements accurate conception of the *mixtum compositum* from which the Israelite people sprang; he has also noticed that the mixed blood in the south of the country, where Judah and Benjamin lay, * was, from the very first moment of the arrival in Palestine, partly subject to exceptional modifying influences, that is to say, the Semitic element in the south was constantly reinforced by new arrivals. Probably this difference was of older standing. From the beginning we see the great strong tribes of the Josephites, Ephraim and Manasseh, round which most of the other tribes grouped themselves like a family, looking upon Judah † with a certain contempt, or even with distrust. The emigration to Egypt and the conquest of Palestine take place under the leadership of the Josephites; Moses belongs to them, not to Judah (if he was not altogether an un-Semitic Egyptian); ‡ Joshua belongs to them,

* The borders of Judah and Judea (to which since David's time Benjamin also belonged) have changed very much in the course of time: the whole southern part was joined to Idumea after the exile; on the other hand, the district was, later, extended somewhat towards the north into the former Ephraimite territory by the annexations of Judas Maccabaeus.

† Even in the Old Testament in the later time there is a clear distinction between Judah and Israel: "Then I cut asunder mine other staff, even Bands, that I might break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel" (*Zechariah* xi. 14; see, too, 1 *Sam.* xviii. 16); frequently Israel (that is, the ten tribes besides Judah and Benjamin) is simply called "the house of Joseph" in contrast to the "house of Judah" (thus *Zechariah* x. 6).

‡ Renan says: "*Il faut considérer Moïse presque comme un Égyptien*" (*Israël* i. 220); his name is said to be of Egyptian and not Hebrew origin (p. 160). So too Kuenen: *National Religions and Universal Religions*, 1882, p. 315. According to Egyptian tradition he is a

renegade priest from Heliopolis, called Osarsyph (see Maspero: *Histoire ancienne* ii. 449). To-day, as a reaction from former exaggerations,

443 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

also Jerubbaal; in fact, all the men of importance, including Samuel. Judah plays in former times so modest a part that this tribe is not mentioned in the triumphal song of Deborah. Like Simeon and Levi, Judah was almost destroyed when it entered Palestine, so that it was hardly taken into account; of the three branches of which it consisted one only remained, and it was only by amalgamation with the settled Hittites and Amorites that Judah gradually received a new lease of life and strength. * With David it steps into the forefront, but only for a time, and that after the Benjaminite Saul, from the closely related tribe of Ephraim, had shifted the centre of influence somewhat towards the south. Immediately after Solomon's death the Kings of Judah fell into a kind of vassal relationship to those of Israel — at least they were their forced and subordinate allies. But here it is a question not merely of political jealousy — that would not deserve our attention — but of a profound difference in talent and in moral nature, a difference which is emphasised in all historical works and which forms the foundation, and a most important one, for the later so peculiar and anti-Israelite development of Judaism. In after times, seven centuries before Christ, Judah was practically isolated and separated from Israel for ever by the carrying off of the latter into captivity; Judah, however, retained from its brother an intellectual legacy — the history of the people, the bases of its political organisation, of its religion, of its cult, of its law, of its poetry. All this, that is to say, every creative element, is

it is fashionable to deny every Egyptian influence on the Israelite cult; this question can only be settled by specialists, particularly in so far as it affects ceremonial, priestly dress, &c.; but we who are not scholars must be struck by the fact that the cardinal virtues of the Egyptian — chastity, pity, justice, humility (see Chantepie de la Saussaye: *Religionsgeschichte* i. 305) — which do not at all agree with those of the Canaanites, are the very virtues to which the Mosaic law attaches most importance.

* Wellhausen: *Die Komposition des Hexateuchs*, 2nd ed. pp. 320, 355.

444 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

essentially Israelite work, not the work of Judah. Now, however, Judah alone remained behind and worked up this material in its own way. From this — this activity of the sons of Judah, hitherto like minors under the care of guardians and now suddenly left to themselves — grew Judaism; and as a natural process from Judaism grew the Jew.

All authors are unanimous in laying stress upon the intellectual superiority of the house of Joseph; I will quote only one. Robertson Smith writes: "It was the northern kingdom that upheld the standard of Israel.

Its whole history is more interesting and richer in heroic elements; its struggles, its calamities, and its glories were cast into a larger mould... if the life of the north was more troubled, it was also larger and more intense. Ephraim took the lead in literature and religion as well as in politics. It was in Ephraim far more than in Judah that the traditions of the past were held sacred, and at the same time it was there that the religious development took place which led the way to new problems and so to the arising of the Prophets. So long as the northern kingdom endured, Judah was content to learn from it for good or for evil. It would be easy to show in detail that every great wave of life and thought in Ephraim awakened an enfeebled echo in the southern kingdom.“ * All the history that the old Testament contains prior to the exile, up to David's time, and much that is later, comes from Israel, not from Judah. In order to prove that, I should have to analyse in some detail the results of Biblical criticism, and this would take me too far; the layman will find the clearest and briefest summary in Renan's *Israël*, Book IV., chaps. ii. and iii.; the critical works of Dillmann, Wellhausen, &c., offer much

* *The Prophets of Israel*, p. 192. Here in a clear manner we have a summary of what the same scholar and others have elsewhere proved in detail.

445 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

more detail and therefore profounder insight, if he will take the trouble to read them. The “Book of the Wars of the Lord,” as it is called in *Numbers* xxi. 14, and other lost sources, from which not only the historical parts of the Hexateuch, but also the books of *Samuel*, of the *Kings*, &c., were later composed, originated in the house of Joseph and celebrate its glory. Wherever the tribe of Judah is mentioned, it is manifestly done with the intention to disparage it; for instance, in *Genesis* xxxvii., where Judah alone hits upon the base idea of selling Joseph for money, and still more in the following chapter, where this tribe from the first is represented as devoid of morality and as the children of incest, the history of the chaste Joseph following as a contrast. This I give merely as an example. The religious law, too, in its great and fundamental features is derived from Israel, not from Judah. There has been much discussion with regard to the Ten Commandments, especially since Goethe's discovery — which Wellhausen has rescued from oblivion and scientifically perfected — that the original Ten Commandments (*Exodus* xxxiv.) had quite a different purport from those which were interpolated at a later time and which referred merely to matters of the cult. * It is sufficient for us to know that the later decalogue in *Exodus* xx., which has found a place in the Christian catechism, is, in the opinion of so learned and orthodox a Rabbi as Solomon Schechter, the work of a priest from the northern kingdom, and not from Judea, a man who may have lived in the ninth century — that is, at least a hundred or a hundred and fifty years after

Solomon, at the time of the great dynasty of the Omrides. † This fact is not merely interesting but even amusing; for the later purely

* Goethe: *Zwo wichtige, bisher unerörterte biblische Fragen, zum ersten Mal gründlich beantwortet. Erste Frage: Was stund auf den Tafeln des Bundes?*

† See Schechter's Appendix to Montefiore: *Religion of the Ancient Hebrews*, p. 557.

446 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

Jewish editors of the sacred books have given themselves all imaginable trouble to represent the Israelite kingdom as apostate and heathen, whereas it now appears that the foundations of the religious law originate from this tabooed kingdom and not from pious Judah. For the accurate definition of what is specifically Jewish it is important to know this: the Jew has never distinguished himself by creative power, even in the limited sphere of religious legislation; indeed, what is most his own is borrowed. For even the great prophetic movement, which, well considered, is the only manifestation of the Hebrew intellect which possesses enduring worth, originated in the north. Elijah, in many respects the most remarkable and most imaginative personality in the whole Israelite history, exercised his influence there only. The accounts of Elijah are so scanty that many look upon him as a mythological personage, * but I agree with Wellhausen in thinking that this is historically impossible, for Elijah is the man who sets the stone rolling, the inventor in a way of the true religion of Jehovah, the great mind which has a vague feeling, though not a clear idea, of the monotheistic essence of that worship. Here a great personality is at work, and to work it must have lived. Of special interest is the one exact piece of information which we possess regarding him; according to it he was not an Israelite, but a "settler with half rights" from the other side of the Jordan, from the farthest boundaries of the land — a man, therefore, in whose veins in all probability almost pure Arabian blood must have flowed. † This is interesting, for it shows the genuine Semitic element at work, trying to save its religious ideal, which in the south by the eclecticism of such half-Amorites as David and Amorite-

* See especially Renan: *Israël* ii. 282 f.

† See especially Graetz: *Geschichte der Juden* i. 113; also Maspero, *Histoire ancienne* ii. 784.

447 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

Hittites as Solomon, and in the north by the secular tolerance of the predominantly Canaanite population, had been seriously threatened. In the north alone, which was favoured by its situation, and the inhabitants of which probably were distinguished by greater industry and talent for commerce, there was already prosperity, and with it luxury and the taste

for art had developed; one of the sins with which Amos reproaches the Israelites is that “they make songs like David.” Against this the anti-civilising spirit of the more genuine Semite rebelled. The noble-minded man felt instinctively and powerfully the incompatibility between the alien culture and the mental qualities of his people; he saw before his feet the pit open, into which in truth all mongrel Semitic kingdoms had quickly sunk and left no trace behind, and, fearless as the Bedouin, he prepared for the struggle. From Elijah onwards this prophetic movement is like a healthy, dry desert wind, which, coming from afar, withers up the blossoms of idleness — but at the same time the buds of beauty and of art. Elisha, too, the successor of Elijah, has his home in Ephraim. Now, however, appears the first great prophet, whose words we still possess. I say “great,” though because of the fewness of his writings he is reckoned among the minor prophets; for Amos is, in point of depth of religious thought and acuteness of political insight, equal to the greatest. This prophet is said to have been born in Judea, but this is doubted by many (*e.g.*, by Graetz); * at any rate, he knows the country of Joseph as well as if it were his home, and his warnings are directed solely to this tribe. The next great “lesser“ prophet, Hosea, likewise a unique personality, is an Ephraimite; he, too, is bound up with the destiny of the one house of Joseph; with all his

* Many modern authorities too (*e.g.*, Cheyne) have since proved that the famous passage “The Lord will roar from Zion“ (*Amos* i. 2) is a late Jewish interpolation.

448 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

heart he devotes himself to his beloved people, and, as is the manner of prophets, he prophesies many things which did not take place — the saving of Israel by almighty Jehovah and the everlasting rule of this people. Here the series closes, here ends the influence of Israel upon Judah; for presumably in the lifetime of Hosea — at any rate soon after his death — the whole northern people was carried off into captivity by the Assyrians and nevermore returned.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE JEW

It was only now — that is, from the year 721 before Christ — that the true Jew could begin to develop; up till then, as we have just seen, Judah had politically, socially, and religiously been forced to follow the lead of the much more talented Israel; now this tribe stood alone, on its own feet. The situation was alarming. With horror and trembling the Jews witnessed the fate of their brothers, who robbed themselves of their only protection; now the circle of enemies closed in around this small land; how could it exist in opposition to world-empires? First it existed as the willing vassal of the Assyrians and enjoyed their protection against its

nearest oppressors the inhabitants of Damascus; then it took advantage of the death-struggle of its mighty protector, in order to make itself free from him; it intrigued with Egypt, but became again reconciled with the Chaldeans, the new lords of Asia Minor, by the payment of heavy indemnity and the ceding of certain lands... in short, the kingdom dragged on its somewhat miserable existence for a hundred and twenty years more, till, at last, on the occasion of a new revolt, Nebuchadnezzar lost all patience and bore off the king and 10,000 of the most distinguished personages in captivity to Babylon. Eleven years later, when they persisted in their intrigues, he destroyed

449 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

Jerusalem and the temple and had the rest of the free-men of Judea with their families carried off to Babylonia; some of them, among whom was Jeremiah, fled to Egypt and founded the Diaspora there. After sixty more years a portion of the exiles returned, but only a portion; the majority of the wealthier preferred to remain in Babylon. It was more than a century before the small colony that returned home — which included a comparatively large number of priests and Levites — organised itself in Jerusalem and the neighbouring very much shrunken Jewish district, and once more built up the temple and the walls of their city; but for the gracious protection of the Persian monarchs and the gifts of those Jews who had quickly grown rich in exile they would never have succeeded in their task. There were thus once more a Jerusalem and a Judea, but from this time onwards there was never again an independent Jewish state. *

Thus the development of the Judean into the real Jew took place under the influence of definite historical conditions. One is wont to say that history repeats itself; it never does. † The Jew is a unique phenomenon, to which no parallel can be offered. Without definite historical conditions he would, however, not have become what he did become; the particular ethnological mixture out of which he arose, and his further history to the isolation from Israel, would not have produced the abnormal phenomenon of Judaism had not a series of remarkable circumstances favoured this special development. These circumstances are easy to enumerate; they are five in number, and, like the wheels of a well-

* It was only with the help of the Syrians that the Maccabees obtained the chief power, and the princes too who sprang from them and belonged to the Hasmonian house have only acquired now and then an appearance of independence amid the confusion which preceded the supremacy of Rome.

† See [p. 145, note.](#)

450 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

made watch, fit into each other — the sudden isolation, the hundred years in which they might develop their individuality, the breaking off of all historical local tradition owing to the exile, the renewing of old associations by a generation born abroad, the condition of political dependence in which the Judeans thenceforth lived. A few remarks on these five influences, which followed each other successively, will make the growth of Judaism absolutely clear to us.

(1) The men of Judah had as *in statu pupillari* been wont to receive all inspiration from the older, stronger and cleverer brother; now all at once they stood alone, in possession of a tradition which was probably only fragmentary, and compelled henceforth to order their intellectual development themselves. It was a sudden powerful movement, which could have but one kind of reaction, a violent and by no means harmonious one.

(2) If the Assyrians had immediately invaded Judah and scattered the inhabitants, these would unquestionably have vanished as completely as the Israelites. But the Judeans were spared for more than a century, and that in a position which actually compelled them to use to the utmost the last suggestion which they had received from Israel, namely, that which their prophets Amos and Hosea had given them — moral conversion, humility before God, confidence in His almighty power. That was in truth their last anchor of hope; victory by force over the world-power that was drawing near was out of the question. But the Judeans took a purely materialistic view of the sublime doctrine of Amos. In their need they even went so far as madly to think that Jerusalem, as the dwelling-place of Jehovah, was impregnable. * Sensible people of course shook their heads sceptically, but when the army of Sennacherib, after laying waste the

* See *Isaiah*, chap. xxxvii., particularly the verses 33-37.

451 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

surrounding land and beginning the siege of Jerusalem, suddenly had to retire, then the Prophets were in the right; a pestilence had broken out in the camp, said the one; inner dissension, said the other, caused the retreat; * it did not matter, on that morning of the year 702 B.C. upon which the inhabitants of Jerusalem no longer saw the host of Sennacherib underneath their walls, the Jew was born, and with him the Jehovah whom we know from the Bible. That day was the turning-point in the history of Judah. Even the foreign peoples saw in the saving of Jerusalem a divine miracle. All at once the Prophets who had hitherto been despised and persecuted — Isaiah and Micah — became the heroes of the day; the king had to join their party and begin to purify the land from strange gods. The faith in the providence of Jehovah, the confident

belief that all prosperity depended upon passive obedience to his commands, that every national calamity came as a trial or punishment, the unshakeable conviction that Judah was the chosen people of God, while the other nations stood far below it — in fact, the whole complex of conceptions which was to form the soul of Judaism — now came into existence, developed rapidly from germs which under normal circumstances would never have produced such results, giving great power of resistance but on the other hand choking much that was sensible, sound and natural until it became a fixed idea. Now for the first time were written the momentous words: “Only the Lord had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and he chose their seed after them, even you above all people, as it is this day“ (*Deut.* x. 15). From the year 701 to the year 586, when Jerusalem was destroyed, the Jews

* Cf. Cheyne: *Introduction to the Book of Isaiah*, p. 231 f. It is interesting to learn from Assyrian accounts that Jerusalem was defended by an army of Arabian mercenaries; Judah had been distinguished from time immemorial for its lack of military capacity.

452 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

had more than a hundred years to develop this idea. The Prophets and Priests, who now had their opportunity, made good use of their time. In spite of the liberal reaction of Manasseh, they succeeded first in banishing the other gods and then in introducing by a stroke of genius the mad idea that Jehovah could be worshipped in Jerusalem alone, for which reason Josiah destroyed the “high places“ and all the other most holy altars of the people, killed most of the Levites of these sanctuaries which were said to have been founded by the Patriarchs and consecrated by divine manifestations, while the rest he made into subordinate servants of the house of God in Jerusalem; now there was but one God, one altar, one High Priest; the world was richer by the idea (though not yet by the word) Church; the foundation of the present Roman church, with its infallible head, was laid. In order to bring this about, they had to have recourse to a clever fraud, the pattern of many later ones. In the year 622, when the Temple was being repaired, a “book of law“ was said to be “found“; * that it was only then written, there can to-day be not the slightest doubt. *Deuteronomy* or the fifth book of Moses (“a quite superfluous expansion of the Ten Commandments,“ as Luther called it) was meant to introduce a rule of the priesthood, such as had never existed in Israel or Judah, and to form the legal (and at the same time, as always with the Hebrews, the historical) foundation of the justification of Jerusalem alone — an idea which, as long as the northern kingdom, Israel, stood, never could have been entertained, and which had been quite strange even to Isaiah, in spite of all his fanatical patriotism and love for Jerusalem. † This

* 2 Kings xxii.

† R. Smith: *Prophets of Israel*, p. 438. In *Deuteronomy* the foundation of real Judaism is laid. It forms the central point of the New Testament in its present form: “and that is the standpoint from which we can and must push our inquiries backwards and forwards if we are to

453 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

was all done, not with an evil intention to deceive, but in order henceforth to keep pure the cult of the Saviour God Jehovah, and at the same time as the beginning of a moral regeneration. There, for example, appears for the first time, shyly and guardedly, the commandment that we should love God the Lord; at the same time this book contained the fanatically dogmatic assertion that the Jews alone were the people of God, and along with this came for the first time the prohibition of mixed marriages, as also the commandment to “destroy“ all “heathens“ wherever Jews dwell, and to stone to death every Jew, man or woman, who is not orthodox (xvii. 5); two witnesses were to be sufficient to justify the death sentence: the world was richer by the idea of religious intolerance. How new this course of thought was to the people, and under what particular circumstance alone it could obtain a hold — namely, amidst hourly danger and after the wonderful saving of Jerusalem from the hands of Sennacherib — is shown by the ever-repeated formula: “The Lord hath commanded that we should fear him, that it may be well with us all the days of our life, as it is to-day.“ Frightful punishments on the one hand, boundless promises on the other and, in addition, the constant enumeration of the wonders which Jehovah had done on behalf of Israel — these are the methods of conviction employed by the book of *Deuteronomy*, the first independent work of the Judeans in the sphere of religion. * Sublime this religious motive is not; this I must assert in spite of all Jewish and Christian commentators; yet when grasped by a fanatical

have any prospect of rightly understanding the rest,“ said Reuss many years ago in his fundamental *Geschichte des Alten Testaments*, § 286.

* Chapter xxviii. (which is certainly postexilic) contains the blessings, “and thou shalt not go aside from any of the words which I command thee this day,“ and then the curses, more than a hundred in number, containing all the horrors which a sickly imagination can picture to itself, “for God will rejoice over you to destroy you.“

454 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

faith it is an incomparably powerful one. And henceforth all efforts are directed towards strengthening this faith, and once more the circumstances are favourable to those efforts.

(3) One would have thought that the destruction of Jerusalem and the Captivity would have shaken their trust in Jehovah; but the finishing

blow did not come all at once, and the inspiring strength of such a faith as Jeremiah's had ample time to attune itself to new conditions. In the meantime, among the great ones of the kingdom, moral regeneration had quickly turned into the opposite; they did evil without fear. But Jeremiah saw the future otherwise; in the Babylonian this prophet saw the scourge of God, sent to punish Judah for its sins; just as salvation had proceeded from the love of Jehovah to his chosen people, so was the present chastisement love; and so Jeremiah, in contradiction to Isaiah, prophesied the destruction of Jerusalem, and for this he was persecuted as a traitor and hireling of the Babylonians. But the Prophet was once more right, the shrewd men of the world wrong; for the latter relied this time upon Jehovah; had they not been taught for a century that Jerusalem was impregnable? And when now destruction came, they said: "Behold the prophet has spoken true; that is the hand of Jehovah." It is easy to understand the great importance of the Captivity for the further development and strengthening of this delusive conception. Without the banishment the true yet so wonderfully artificial Judaism would never have survived. The kings Hezekiah, Josiah and Zedekiah had been able to overturn the altars and cut down the sacred trees, but the people clung to its old sanctuaries; now all at once it was torn away from every tradition. The sixty years' sojourn in the Babylonian kingdom cut, so to speak, the thread of history in two. Not a man who had left the land of his fathers at

455 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

an age when he could form his own judgment, ever came back. When a single individual leaves his fatherland for fifty years — aye, even for twenty — he returns home to relations and friends as a stranger among strangers; he is unable to accommodate himself once more to the special organic law of the individual growth of this particular people, especially if he has left his fatherland in early youth. In this case a whole nation left its historical home; those who returned later had been born and brought up, almost without exception, in the foreign land; there was, perhaps, not one who consciously remembered Judea. And meanwhile, in Babylon, while the blessed connection with the past (the relation of child to mother) was broken off, the embittered zealots among the exiled were brooding over their fate and making resolves which they could never have thought of in the land of their home. * It was in the captivity that specific Judaism had its foundation, and this was brought about by Ezekiel, a priest of the family of the High Priest; hence it is that Judaism has from the very beginning borne the stamp of the Captivity. Its faith is not the faith of a healthy, free people that is fighting for its existence in honest rivalry; it breathes impotence and thirst for vengeance, and seeks to blind men to the misery of the moment by forecasting an impossible future. The book of *Ezekiel* is the most frightful in the Bible; by its

employment of extreme means — horrible threats and the most atrocious promises — this narrow-minded, abstractly formalistic, but noble and patriotic spirit † wished to save the much-

* With regard to the incalculably great influence of Babylon upon all Jewish thought from the first one finds the fullest information in Eberhard Schrader's book, *Die Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament*, 3rd ed., revised by Zimmern and Winckler, 1903; a short summary is found in Winckler's *Die politische Entwicklung Babylonien und Assyriens*, p. 17 f.

† Splendidly described in chap. xii. of Duhm's *Theologie der Propheten*. Eduard Meyer says in the *Entstehung des Judentums*, p. 219, "Ezekiel

456 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

shaken faith of his brothers, and with it the nation. Up to his time in Israel religion had been, as in Rome, Greece, Egypt, a fact among other facts of the national life, and a priesthood a part of the national organisation. Ezekiel said: "No, Israel is not in the world, to toil and wage war like other peoples, to do work and to think, but to be the sanctuary of Jehovah; let it observe Jehovah's law, and all will be given to it." The State was now to be replaced by the rule of the religious law, the so-called nomocracy. Even *Deuteronomy* had admitted that other peoples had other gods; Amos, as an isolated great mind, had had a vague feeling of the existence of a cosmic god, who was something more than the political *deus ex machina* of a special little nation: Ezekiel now united both views and invented therefrom the Jehovah of Judaism, monotheism in a frightful, distorted form. Of a surety Jehovah is the only and almighty God, but He lives merely for His own glory; sympathetically gracious towards the Jews (for through them He will proclaim His glory and show His power under the condition that they devote themselves solely to His service), but to all other peoples of the earth He is a cruel God, who will visit them with "pestilence and blood," in order that "He may become glorious, sacred and known"! All these other peoples are to be destroyed, and Jehovah commands His prophets to call together the birds and the animals of the world "that they may eat the flesh of the strong and drink the blood of princes." Besides this, the book contains the sketch of the organisation of a hierarchy and of a new straight-jacket of worship — just the things in regard to which a prophet living in exile could indulge his imagination,

was manifestly quite an honest nature, but narrow-minded, and moreover he had grown up in the narrow views of the priesthood, not to be named in the same breath with the great figures, with whom he, by the donning of a very threadbare prophet's mantle, ventured to put himself side by side."

457 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

as he could not have done had he stood in the midst of a national life, where every new statute would have had to contend with custom and tradition. But not long after Ezekiel's death the noble Persian king Cyrus conquered the Babylonian Empire. With the simplicity of the inexperienced Indo-European he permitted the return of the Jews and gave them a subsidy for the rebuilding of the temple. Under the protection of Aryan tolerance the hearth was erected from which, for tens of centuries a curse to all that is noblest and an everlasting disgrace to Christianity, Semitic intolerance was to spread like a poison over the whole earth. Whoever wishes to give a clear answer to the question, Who is the Jew? must never forget the one fact, that the Jew, thanks to Ezekiel, is the teacher of all intolerance, of all fanaticism in faith, and of all murder for the sake of religion; that he only appealed to toleration where he felt himself oppressed, that he himself, on the other hand, never practised it nor dared to practise it, for his law forbade it as it forbids it to-day and will forbid it to-morrow.

(4) Ezekiel had dreamt, but by the return from captivity his dream became a reality; his book — not the history of Israel, not the voices of the great prophets — was henceforth the ideal according to which Judaism was organised. And this again could only take place thanks to the circumstance that the historical process began with a new generation, in which even the language of the fathers was forgotten and only the Priests still understood it. * It was simply due to the coincidence

* Soon after this, more than four hundred years before Christ, the Hebrew language died out altogether (Paschal: *Völkerkunde*, 2nd ed. p. 532); its adoption once more many centuries later was artificial and with the object of separating the Jews from their hosts in Europe. In consequence we find such strange things happen, as for instance that the French citizens of "Jewish belief" can only fill their voting papers in Hebrew, an achievement of which Judas Maccabaeus would have been incapable! The absolute lack of feeling for language among

458 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

of such unusual circumstances that something became now possible of which the history of the world gives no second example; that a few clever and determined men could force an absolutely fictitious, artificially thought out, and exceedingly complicated history of religion and culture upon a whole people under the guise of time-hallowed tradition. The process is quite different from that of the Christian councils, where it was decided that man must believe this and that, on the ground that it was eternal truth. Dogma in our sense of the word is foreign to the Jew; for the materialistic view which prevails wherever the Semitic spirit rules even if only, as here, as *spiritus rector*, every conviction must rest on an historical basis. And thus the new Jehovah-faith, the new rules for the temple-cult, the many new religious laws, * were introduced as historical things which had been ordained by God of old and had since then been

constantly observed except by apostate sinners. The beginning was made by *Deuteronomy* before the Captivity; but that had only been a timid attempt, and, in fact, not a very successful one in presence of the still vigorous popular consciousness. Now the situation was quite changed. In the first place the Captivity had, as I have already said, cut the historical thread, and secondly, the exiles who returned consisted chiefly of two classes: on the one hand of the poorest, most ignorant and dependent of the people, on the other of Priests and Levites. † The richer more worldly inclined Jews had preferred to remain in the foreign land; they felt themselves more comfortable there than in

the Jews to-day is explained by the fact that they are at home in no language — for a dead language cannot receive new life by command — and the Hebrew idiom is just as much abused by them as any other.

* Law and religion, one should never forget, are to the Jew synonymous (see Moses Mendelssohn).

† Cf. Wellhausen: *Israelitische und jüdische Geschichte*, p. 159. The same author writes in his *Prolegomena*, p. 28: “From the exile the nation did not return, but a religious sect only.”

459 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

their own community, but they remained (at least the majority remained) Jews — partly, doubtless, because this faith suited them; partly because of the privileges which they knew how to assure to themselves everywhere, among the first of which was exemption from military service. * It is easy to see how the priesthood now had both these elements in its hand — the ignorant

* From the standpoint of the philosophy of history we should certainly explain this peculiar preference of the Jews for a more or less parasitic condition, by their long dependence upon Israel. It is at any rate very noteworthy that the Judeans did not wait for the Captivity (still less for the so-called scattering) to show their preference for this life. In a number of cities on the banks of the Tigris and the Euphrates Israelite seals of older epochs have been found, and already at the time of Sennacherib, *i.e.*, a hundred years before the first destruction of Jerusalem, the greatest banking house in Babylon was Jewish; this firm, “Egibi brothers,” is said to have occupied in the East a position similar to that of the Rothschilds in Europe. (Cf. Sayce: *Assyria, its Princes, Priests and People*, p. 138.) I hope we shall hear no more of the nursery tale that the Jews “by nature” are peasants and only became usurers in spite of themselves during the Middle Ages, because they were cut off from every other occupation; if we read the prophets carefully we shall see how often they complain of usury, which serves the rich as a means of ruining the peasants; we should call to mind the famous passage in the Talmud: “Whoever has 100 Gulden in commerce can eat flesh every day and drink wine; whoever has 100 Gulden in agriculture must eat herbs and vegetables, and also dig, be wakeful and in addition make enemies.... But we are created that we may serve God; is it then not right that we should nourish ourselves without pain?” (Herder, from whom I quote the passage, adds, “Without pain certainly! but not by fraud and cunning,” *Adrastea* v. 7). We should also read *Nehemiah*, chap. v., and see how, when the Jews neglected everything to build the destroyed temple again, the councillors and priests took advantage of the solemn moment to practise usury and to sweep in the “fields,

vineyards, olive-groves and houses“ of their poorer comrades among the people. Nothing in the Aryan Medes is so strange to the Jews as the fact that they do not “regard silver nor delight in gold“ (*Isaiah* xiii., 17); and among the most fearful curses with which Jehovah threatens his people in case of disobedience there is one which says (*Deut.* xxviii): “that the Jew will no longer lend money to the stranger“! We should remember, too, that in the book of *Tobias* (about a hundred years before Christ) an angel is sent from Heaven to enforce the payment of the gold which is invested in the neighbouring countries at compound interest (chaps. v, and ix.). It should be mentioned in this connection that already at the time of Solomon the Jews were the horse-copers of all Syria (Sayce: *Hittites*, p. 13).

460 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

colonists who were bound by no tradition, and the educated members of the Diaspora, who were, however, far removed from the one centre of the cult. And thus the priesthood set up the artificial structure: *Deuteronomy* was completed (especially by the first eleven so effective historical chapters), then the so-called “priestly code“ was made (the whole book of *Leviticus*, three-fourths of *Numbers*, the half of *Exodus* and about eleven chapters of *Genesis*); * besides, the historical books of the Old Testament were collected from various sources and put together in the form in which they have come down to us, naturally only after those sources had been revised, expunged and interpolated in order to push the new hierocracy and the new faith in Jehovah together with the new “law,“ under which the poor Jews were henceforth to groan. This, however, was a work which was beyond the standard of education at the time, so that contradictions burst forth at all corners and we can see pious caprice at work through the gaps that are left. † This Thora (*i.e.*, “Law“) was then gradually completed by selections from the partly very old didactic literature and by carefully worked up collections of the prophetic books, enriched by as many *vaticinia ex eventibus* as possible, but so stupidly edited that it is only with the most unspeakable difficulty that we can find out the intention of the

* Cf. Montefiore: *Ancient Hebrews*, p. 315, and for the detailed analytic enumeration, Driver: *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (1892), p. 150 (printed in Montefiore's book, p. 354).

† The old Christians knew very well that the Old Testament was a late and revised piece of work. Thus, for example, in his answer to the twenty-first question of Heloise, Abelard refers to the Church historian Beda, who at the beginning of the eighth century wrote as follows: „*Ipse Esdras, qui non solum legem, sed etiam, ut communis majorum fama est, omnem sacrae Scripturae seriem, prout sibi videbatur legentibus sufficere, rescripsit...*“ Thus the most modern “Biblical criticism,“ which is so opposed by the Protestant as well as by the Catholic orthodox theologians, has been promoted simply by the scientific confirmation of a fact which a thousand years ago was common property and to which not even the most pious soul took exception.

461 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

Prophets; still later some freely invented didactic poems were added, as *Esther*, *Job*, *Daniel*, also the *Psalms*, &c. Still, long after the time of Ezra, according to Jewish tradition, a collegium of a hundred and twenty scribes, the "great synagogue," worked at the completion and revision of the canon; the two books of *Chronicles*, for instance, were written two hundred years later, "after the fall of the Persian Empire, out of the midst of Judaism." * I shall have to return immediately to this religion of Ezekiel; but first I shall discuss the fifth and last historical condition, without which it would never have been able, in spite of all that had gone before, to obtain a footing.

(5) After the Babylonian captivity the Jews never again formed an independent nation. Herder has rightly dwelt upon one profound influence that this fact must have exercised upon the character of the people: "The Jewish people was spoiled in its education because it never attained to the ripeness of political culture on its own soil, and consequently never to the real feeling of honour and freedom." † It is impossible to assert that at first the Jew was organically wanting in the sense of honour and freedom; his fate, too, would perhaps not have sufficed to produce such a complete atrophy of these precious qualities had not that faith been added which robbed the individual of every freedom and also completely rooted out the "true feeling of honour" by refusing to concede honour to other and higher nations. But the people of the tribe of Judah would never have

* Wellhausen: *Prolegomena*, p. 170. A simple exposition of the growth of the Old Testament, after the manner of Wellhausen's *Israelitische und jüdische Geschichte*, is unknown to me. The fundamental work of Eduard Reuss, *Geschichte der heiligen Schriften Alten Testaments*, is planned and written for scholars, and Zittel, *Die Entstehung der Bibel* in Reclam's series does not at all correspond to the title and does not satisfy even modest claims, however much interesting matter the book otherwise contains.

† *Ideen zur Geschichte der Menschheit*, P. III. Bk. 12, Div. 3.

462 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

allowed this faith to be forced upon them if its political impotence, as a small vassal State endured on sufferance, had not delivered it over bound hand and foot to its religious teachers. Such short episodes of half independence as that under Simon Maccabaeus only suffice to show that on entering into the sphere of practical life this faith, as genuine popular faith, must needs have undergone profound modifications; for the Maccabees originally sprang into prosperity because they (the children of distant Modin, in what was formerly the Ephraimite mountains) broke one of the strictest laws, that of the Sabbath. * How impossible it would have been to enforce this priestly faith, this priestly cult, this priestly law upon an independent people, we see from the fact that it was difficult enough even under the given conditions, and would not have succeeded

but for the vigorous support of the kings of Babylon. For though the Jews had been cut off from all traditions, yet neither their neighbours nor that original and genuinely Canaanite population which had been left behind in considerable numbers in Judea met with the same fate. And thus in the first period after the return they began to form connections again on all sides. The Hittite-Amorite peasants wished, as worshippers of Jehovah, to take part in the sacrifice as before; they did not feel, and would not admit, that Jehovah, the God of their own land, should henceforth be the monopoly of the Jews; on the other hand, the well-to-do among those Israelites who returned contracted marriages with the neighbouring peoples, not minding whether these worshipped Milkom, Moloch or Baal; just as in our days the nobility, however Anti-Semitic, like to marry Jewesses, so the members of the high priestly caste considered marriage with an Ammonite or an Edomite “conformable to their rank,” provided the maiden had sufficient money. How

* *Maccabees* ii. 41.

463 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

under such conditions could the faith, as Ezekiel taught it, have been imparted and the new law with its countless prescriptions have become the rule of life? The unnatural product of an overheated priestly brain would within a generation have been consigned *ad patres*. But the Jews did not form an independent State. They had returned to Jerusalem under the leadership of a half-Persian agent, who undoubtedly had definite instructions to support the priests and on the other hand to put down every movement of political ambition. As soon as the religious party saw the work which had just begun endangered by the events just mentioned, they sent to Babylon for help. In the first place reinforcements consisting of priests and scribes were sent; those were chosen who, with Ezra — “the clever scribe“ — at their head, wished to set up the Thora; they brought with them also kingly edicts and money. * But even this did not suffice; a man of action was needed, and so the cup-bearer of King Artaxerxes, Nehemiah, was despatched to Jerusalem, armed with dictatorial power. Energetic measures were at once taken. Those worshippers of Jehovah who did not belong officially to the Jewish people were rejected “with horror“; not faith but genealogy was henceforth to be the decisive thing; all Jews who had married non-Jewesses must get a divorce or emigrate; in the book of *Leviticus* the law was inserted: “I have severed you from other people that ye should be mine“ (xx. 26). Henceforth no Jew was

* Ezra brought from the king in money alone £250,000! The authenticity, or at least essential authenticity, of the Persian documents quoted by Ezra has in spite of the views of Wellhausen and others finally been proved by Eduard Meyer: *Die Entstehung*

des Judentums (1896), pp. 1-71. This settles one of the most important questions in history. Any one who has read the little but very complete book of Meyer will understand his conclusions: "Judaism originated in the name of the Persian king and by the authority of his Empire, and thus the effects of the Empire of the Achemenides extend with great power, as almost nothing else, directly into our present age."

464 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

to marry outside his people, under penalty of death; every man who married a foreign woman committed "a sin against God." * Nehemiah also built high walls round Jerusalem and put strong gates at the entrances; then he forbade the stranger to enter, that the people "might be purified from everything foreign." Wellhausen rightly says: "Ezra and Nehemiah became, by the grace of King Artaxerxes, the definite constructors of Judaism." † What Ezekiel founded they completed; they forced Judaism on the Jew.

These, then, are in my opinion the five historical motive powers by which Judaism was rendered possible and furthered. I shall summarise them once more, to impress them on the memory; the unexpected, sudden separation from the more gifted Israel; the continuance for a hundred years of the tiny State threatened on all sides, which could hope for help only from a superhuman power; the rending of the historical thread and of all local traditions by the carrying-off of the whole people from their home into a foreign land; the reviving of these associations under a generation which was born abroad and hardly understood the language of their fathers; the condition of political dependence which henceforth existed, and to which the priesthood owed its dominating power.

When Ezra for the first time read to the assembled people from the new law, which was to be the "law of Moses," then "all the people wept when they heard the words of the law"; this is the account of Nehemiah, and we can believe it. But it did not help them, for great Jehovah, "powerful and fearful," had commanded it; ‡ and now the so-called "Old Covenant" was renewed,

* *Nehemiah* xiii. 27. Cf. the beginning of this chapter, p. 333.

† *Israelitische und jüdische Geschichte*, 3rd ed. p. 173.

‡ According to the Talmud, Jehovah occupies himself on Sunday with reading the Thora! (Wellhausen: *Isr. Gesch.*, p. 297; Montefiore, p. 461).

465 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

but this time in writing, like a notary's contract. Every priest, Levite, and influential man in the country put his seal under it, also every scribe; they and all other men, "with their wives, sons and daughters," had to "bind themselves by oath to walk in the law of God that is given by Moses, the servant of God." * This was now the "New Covenant." It is

probably the first and last time that in this way a religion originated in the world! Fortunately, religious instinct still lived among the people, from the midst of which a short time before a Jeremiah and a second Isaiah had arisen. Human nature does not permit itself to be stamped out and distorted without leaving a trace behind, but in this case all that was possible in that way had been done; and if in consequence the Jews became generally unpopular, the reason is solely to be sought in this artificially constructed and mechanically enforced faith, which gradually grew into an ineradicable national idea and destroyed in the Jewish heart the purely human legacy which is common to us all. In the Canaanite-Israelite nature-cult, quickened by Semitic seriousness and Amorite idealism, there must have been many germs promising the finest blossoms; how otherwise should we be able to trace such a development as that which, starting from the orgiastic dance around the image of the calf, still common in all Israel and Judah before the Captivity, leads up to the God of Amos, who “despises feast-days“ and “has no pleasure in burnt-offerings“ (v. 21, 22), and to the second Isaiah, who considered every temple building unworthy of God, to whom sacrifice and incense are “a horror,“ and who writes the almost Hindoo words: “He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man“ (*Isaiah* lxvi. 1-3). But henceforth all development was broken off. And as I must a thousand times repeat — for no one says it, and it is the only thing that has to be said — the only thing that makes

* See *Nehemia*, chaps. viii.-x.

466 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

the position of the Jews among us children of the nineteenth century comprehensible — this so-called reform of Ezra, which in reality signifies the foundation of Judaism, this reform which became only possible through the coincidence of the five historical conditions enumerated, does not betoken a stage in religious development, but is a violent reaction from every development; it leaves the tree standing, but cuts away all roots from below it; now it may stand and wither, supported by the 13,600 neatly cut stakes of the law, that it may not fall. When, therefore, so important a scholar as Delitzsch writes, “The Thora shows how the Mosaic law continued for a thousand years to develop in the consciousness and practice of Israel,“ we must offer the objection that the Thora on the contrary does everything which it can to mask the process of development which had hitherto taken place; that it does not hesitate to utter any lie in order to represent the law as absolutely stationary, and fixed since time immemorial, that it gives even such manifest absurdities as the story of the Tabernacle and its arrangement; and we must assert that the Thora is directed not only against the so-called “idolatry“ (from which the whole Israelite cult proceeded), but just

as much against the free spirit of genuine religion which had begun to stir in the Prophets. Not one of these great men — neither Elijah nor Amos, nor Hosea, nor Micah, nor Isaiah, nor Jeremiah, nor the second Isaiah — would have put his seal on that document of the New Covenant — otherwise he would have had to deny his own words.

THE PROPHETS

I must pause a moment to discuss the Prophets just mentioned. For it is particularly from the contrast between what they aimed at and sought and the teachings of the Jerusalemite hierocrats that it becomes clear to

467 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

what an extent the Jew was made Jew, artificially made (so to speak) by the conscious, calculated religious politics of individual men and individual associations, and in opposition to all organic development. It is necessary to emphasise this in order to judge aright the Israelite character, which in a way was founded in Judaism. In the New Covenant the observances of the cult have the first place; the word “sanctity,” which occurs so often, signifies in the first place absolutely nothing but the strict observance of all ordinances; * purity of heart is hardly considered, † “purity of skin and cleanness of vessels are more important,” as Reuss says with some exaggeration, ‡ and in the midst of these observances stands as the most sacred of all — an extraordinarily complicated sacrificial ritual. § A more flagrant departure from the prophetic teaching is scarcely thinkable. Let us see. Hosea had represented God as saying, “I desired mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings“ (vi. 6). Amos I have just quoted (p. 465). Micah writes: “Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? (vi. 6). He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God?“ (vi. 8). Isaiah expresses exactly the same thing, but in greater detail, and as if by a miracle we have a saying of his preserved, in which he

* Montefiore: *Religion of the Ancient Hebrews*, p. 236.

† Robertson Smith: *Prophets of Israel*, p. 424.

‡ *Geschichte der heiligen Schriften Alten Testaments*, § 379.

§ Whoever wishes to form an idea of this should read, in addition to the books of *Leviticus*, *Numbers*, &c., the eleven tractates of the sacrificial ordinances (Kodaschim) in the *Babylonian Talmud* (the Haggadian portions form the fourth volume of the only reliable translation, that of Wünsche). One cannot assert that the Jews have got rid of this ritual since the destruction of Jerusalem, for they still study it, and certain things, as killing according to their rites, belong to it, for which reason an animal killed by a non-Jew is carrion to the Jew (see *Treatise Chullin*, fol. 13b).

468 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

says, "God wishes not for the Sabbath" and "your new moons and appointed feasts my soul hateth!" The people should rather occupy itself with other things, "learn to do well, seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow" (i. 13-17). Jeremiah, in the impetuous manner characteristic of him, goes still further; he places himself in the doorway of the temple of Jerusalem and cries out to those that enter: "Trust ye not in lying words, saying, Here is the temple of the Lord! Here is the temple of the Lord! But amend your ways and your doings; execute judgment between a man and his neighbour; oppress not the stranger, the fatherless and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place" (*i.e.*, do not sacrifice) (vii. 4-6). Jeremiah even wishes to hear no more of the sacred old ark of the covenant, "neither shall it come to mind; neither shall they remember it; neither shall they visit it; neither shall that be done any more" (iii. 16). In the *Psalms*, too, we read: "For thou desirest not sacrifice; thou delightest not in burnt-offerings. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit! A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise" (li. 18-19). * That all these utterances are followed by fanatical and national ones, as "Jerusalem is God's throne and all other gods are idols," &c., shows a narrowness appropriate to the time, † but does not annul the fact that all these men aimed at a progressive simplification of the cult and, like the Yoruba negroes on the Slave coast (*see p. 417*), declared the sacrifice of food to be senseless, and demanded the abolition, if possible, of every service in the temple, like that great unknown ‡ who represents God as saying, "The Heaven

* *See also xl. 7 and l. 13.*

† It has been proved that almost all these passages are interpolations of a later time.

‡ *See Cheyne's Introduction to the Book of Isaiah (1895), and Duhm's Jesaia (1892), for information about the writer of chaps. xl-lv. of the*

469 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

is my throne and the earth is my footstool; where is the house that ye build unto me? Or what is the place of my rest?... but to this man will I look, even to him who is poor and of a contrite spirit and trembleth at my word" (lxvi. 1, 2). The contrast to the commandments of the Thora which were soon afterwards introduced could hardly be greater. The whole tendency of the Prophets, as we see, is directed to inculcating the piety of the heart; not he who sacrifices, but he who does good, not he who observes the Sabbath, but he who protects the oppressed, is in their opinion good. One must also notice that in the case of the Prophets nationalism nowhere (except in the later interpolations) has the dogmatic and inhuman character of the later official faith. Amos, a noble man

whom the great synagogue has cruelly used, makes perhaps the only humorous remark which the whole literature of the Bible contains: "Are ye not as children of the Ethiopians unto me, O children of Israel? said the Lord" (ix. 7). And he expresses the opinion that just as God led the Israelites out of Egypt, so He brought the Philistines out of Capthor and the Syrians out of Kir. Micah writes with the same tolerance: "For all people will walk, every one, in the name of his God, and we will walk in the name of our God" (iv. 5). The second Isaiah, the only real and conscious monotheist, simply says: "God of the whole earth He shall be called" (liv. 5). Here too, therefore, a direction is clearly marked out, which later was violently departed from. But at the same time that promising tendency, those longings and attempts to find a less historical and more genuine

Book of Isaiah, usually designated the Second Isaiah or Deutero-Isaiah, the only one who now and again reminds one of Christ and whose name the Jews, in characteristic fashion, forgot as soon as he died, though in all other cases they follow genealogy till the hundredth generation. The second Isaiah wrote during the second half of the exile, hence a century and a half later than the historical Isaiah. Cheyne is of opinion that chaps. lvi.-lxvi., which are mostly ascribed to the second Isaiah, were really written by a still later author.

470 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

religion — a religion of the individual soul in contrast to faith in national destinies — were nipped in the bud; naturally this tendency sprang up anew again and again in many individual hearts, but it could not inspire with life the organism which the priestly code had paralysed, there was no longer room for development. And yet Jeremiah had made important steps in this direction; he (or some other in his name) had represented God as saying, "I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give to every man according to his ways" (xvii. 10). Yes, in absolute contrast to the Judaic justification by works, which the Roman Catholic Church adopted from the Jews, we seem to see a faint glimmer of the conception of grace when Jeremiah fervently cries out, "Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed! Save me, and I shall be saved!" (xvii. 14.) And with the second Isaiah's beautiful verse, in which God says, My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," we stand on the threshold of a transcendental mystery where the true religion of the Indian and of Jesus Christ begins. With what justice does the theologian Duhm say that the writers of *Deuteronomy* and *Ezekiel*, and with them Judaism, to the present day, stand "in point of religion and morals far beneath Jeremiah!" *

But it seems to me more than doubtful whether the common Semitic qualities, which reveal themselves in

* Duhm: *Die Theologie des Propheten*, p. 251. Jeremiah's divination of grace

disappeared immediately, never to return again; even the noblest, most talented Jews, like Jesus Sirach, teach that “whoever knows the law is virtuous“; God has created man and then “left him to his own counsel“; from this we can logically draw as conclusion the doctrine of absolute freedom of will, destitute of all divine assistance: “Before man stand life and death, he can choose what he will... if thou wilt, thou canst keep the law“ (see, for example, *Ecclesiasticus* xv. 12-15). The Essenes alone form an exception, for according to Josephus they taught the doctrine of predestination (*Jüd. Altertümer*, 520); this sect, however, was never recognised but persecuted, and presumably counted few real Jews among its number; it is an ephemeral thing without influence.

471 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

these pre-eminent men, would have produced much religion in our sense of the word; for as these quotations (with the exception of the two last) prove, it is always morals that the Prophets oppose to cult, not a new or reformed ideal of religion. * The Israelite prophets (in addition to whom we must reckon some Psalmists) are great by their moral greatness, not by creative power; in this they reveal themselves as essentially Semites — in whom the will is always supreme — and their influence in the purely religious sphere is to a great extent merely a reaction from the Canaanite cult ascribed to Moses, and introduced nothing in its place. But to believe that one can take from the people one cult without replacing it by another shows but little insight into the human character; just as little as it testifies to religious understanding, when the Prophets imagined that faith in a God who had never been conceived and never represented, who revealed himself only in political events, and who must be served with good deeds and humility alone, could satisfy even the most modest demands of the imagination. It was in fact through the sublimity of prophetic feeling, through the passionate glow of prophetic words, that one of those materialistic Syro-Semitic peoples, poor in religious conceptions, first received the revelation of the gulf between God and man, and now this gulf yawned threateningly, and not the slightest attempt was made to bridge it over. And yet what constitutes the essence of religion if not the bridging over of this gulf? All else is philosophy or morals. We are consequently justified in calling the

* This is still truer of such later phenomena as Jesus Sirach, who, generally speaking, are content with giving very wise, noble rules of life: one must not strive after riches, but generosity, not knowledge, but wisdom, &c. (xxix, xxxi., &c.). The only attempt (and it was owing to Greek influence) on the part of the Jewish spirit to attain to the metaphysical, had a poor ending: the so-called “preacher Solomon“ has no better advice to give than that we should think of to-day and enjoy our works — “all is vanity!“

472 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

mythology of Greece a religion, for by furnishing conceptions it brings us nearer the Divine. * Not the thought of a God, who has created heaven and earth, but the paraclete hovering between Him and me, represents

the essential purport of all religion. Mohammed is scarcely less than Allah, and Christ is God himself, descended upon the earth. And here we must admit that Isaiah, who placarded his prophecies at the street corners; Jeremiah, the acutest politician of his time; the second Isaiah, the venerable, lovable figure from the Babylonian captivity; and Amos, the landed proprietor, who saw a national danger in the corruption of the leading grades of society; Hosea, who considered the priests even more dangerous; Micah, the Socialist Democratic peasant, who wishes to wipe out cities (except Jerusalem) from the face of the earth; — these are splendid men, in whom we note with delight how strong in faith and at the same time generous, how noble, how vigorously the Israelite spirit moved before it was bound hand and foot, yet they are by no means religious geniuses. If they had had that power which they did not possess, their people would have been spared their bitter fate; the people would not have needed to weep “when it heard the words of the law.”

THE RABBIS

What the Prophets had failed to accomplish was achieved by the priests and scribes. They arranged the connection between God and man by fixing an invented but exact historical tradition, by the retention and further development of the sacrificial service and above all by the so-called “law,” that is, by hundreds of

* It is not unimportant to note here how much more insight into the essence of religious need is shown by a Socrates, who taught that not the sacrifice and its costliness pleased the gods, but the innermost feelings of the sacrificer, though he at the same time considered the offering of the usual sacrifices as a duty (Xenophon: *Memorabilia* i. 3). Similarly Jesus Christ.

473 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

directions which hedged in every step of a man the whole day long, and continually accompanied him through all seasons — in the field, at home, asleep and awake, eating and drinking. According to the Talmud tradition, in the days of mourning for the death of Moses three thousand such ordinances were forgotten; * that marks the tendency. The manifest purpose was to keep the thought of God continually alive among the people, and at the same time the thought that they were the chosen of God and of faith in their own future. The object was noble enough, as every one who judges impartially must admit, and it may well be that this Draconian rule had a more moral life as its result, and that thousands of good souls lived contented and happy in the fulfilment of the law; and yet what happened here was a stroke of violence against nature. It is contrary to nature to hem in every step of a man; contrary to nature to plague a whole people with priestly subtleties, † and to forbid it

all healthy, free, intellectual nourishment; contrary to nature to teach pride, hatred and isolation as the bases of our moral relations to our fellow-men; contrary to nature to transfer all our efforts from the present to the future. To establish Judaism, a religion was killed, and then mummified.

Ambrosius praises in the religious doctrine of the Jews especially “the victory of reason over feeling.” ‡ The word reason is perhaps not very happily chosen, Will would be nearer the point; but he is quite right in regard to the subjection of the feelings, and he here says in simple form something of so great significance that his

* Treatise *Themura*, fol. 16a (Wünsche).

† According to the testimony of a contemporary Jew, Rubens, *Der alte und der neue Glaube* (Zurich, 1878, p. 79), the Jew who lives according to the ordinances needs “about half the day for religion alone.” God wished, says Rabbi Chanania ben Akasiah, to give Israel opportunity to do good service, therefore he imposed on it a mass of rules and observances.

‡ In his work *Von den Pflichten der Kirchendiener* i. 119.

474 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

words will spare me considerable discussion. But whoever wishes to know to what this subjugation of the feelings leads in the case of a religion should study the history of the Rabbis and attempt to read through some of the fragments of the Talmud. He will meet noble Rabbis and in the Talmud more praiseworthy rules for a man's daily walk and life (especially in the treatise *Pirke Aboth*, i.e., sayings of the fathers) than he perhaps expects, but the whole literature of the world has nothing to show that is so dreary, so childishly wearisome, so composed of the desert sand of absolute sterility, as this collection of the wisest discussions which were held among Jews for centuries concerning the Thora. * And this spiritless

* Examples teach more than differences of opinion. In regard to the belief in God's almightiness: “Rabbi Janai was so afraid of insects that he placed four vessels with water under the feet of his bed. Once he stretched out his hand and found insects in the bed; then he said with reference to *Psalms* cxvi. 6: Lift the bed from the vessels, I rely on divine protection“ (*Terumoth* viii. 3, 30a). In regard to Biblical exegesis: “Rabbi Ismael has taught“ — we find it in *Leviticus* xiv. 9 — “on the seventh day he shall shave all his hair off his head and beard and his eyebrows, even all his hair he shall shave off“; all his hair, that is general; his head, his beard, his eyebrows, that is special, and his hair, that is again general. In the case of general, special and general the rule is that you can only render that which is like to the special, i.e., as the special is a place which embraces in itself such a collection of hairs“ (*Kidduschin* i. 2, 9a). In regard to the law: “Rabbi Pinchas came to a place where the people complained to him that the mice devoured their grain. He accustomed the mice to listen to his call; they assembled before him and began to squeak. Do you understand, said the Rabbi to the people, what they are saying? No, was their answer. They say, in fact, that you do not give a tithe of their grain. Thereupon the people said, we are grateful to you for leading us into better paths. Since then the mice did no more damage“ (*Demai* i. 3, 3b). In regard to

knowledge of nature: "According to Rabbi Judah the thickness of the heavens amounts to a journey of fifty years, and since a man of ordinary strength can go in one day 40 miles and, till the sun breaks through the sky, 4 miles, so one can conclude that the time of the breaking through the sky amounts to the tenth part of a day. But as thick as the sky is also the earth and the abyss. The proof (!) is got from *Isaiah* xl. 22., *Job*. xxii. 14 and *Prov.* viii. 27" (*Berachoth* i. 1, 4b). In regard to daily life: "Rabbi bar Huna did not breakfast till he had brought his child to school" (*Kidduschin* Div. 1). That one finds many a fine saying amid the rubbish of the Talmud must, on the other hand, be

475 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

was held more sacred by later Jews than the Bible! (Treatise *Pea* ii. 5). Indeed, they had the impertinence to say, "The words of the elders are more important than the words of the Prophets"! (Treatise *Bera-*

emphasised, but with the addition that these sayings refer only to morals; these collections do not contain beautiful thoughts, in fact almost nothing that has any family resemblance to a thought. And the fine moral sayings, too, are often like the poems of Heine: the end spoils the beginning. An example: "A man should sow peace with his brothers and relatives and with every one, even with the stranger upon the street" — up to this point no minister in the pulpit could give better advice: but now the reason, that is usually the weak point with the Jews (see p. 453): "that we may be beloved in heaven and liked on earth" (*Berachoth*, fol. 17a). Or again, we read with pleasure, "Let a man take heed of the honour of his wife, for blessing is found in the house of a man only because of his wife" — in truth not quite correct, but these words testify to a sentiment which we gladly hear expressed; but here again the conclusion: "Honour your wives, that you may become rich!" (*Baba Mezia*, fol. 59a). However it must also be mentioned that besides the beautiful moral sayings there are very ugly and abominable ones; as, for example. that a Jew cannot transgress the seventh commandment with a non-Jewess: "For the heathen have no lawfully wedded wife, they are not really their wives" (*Sanhedrin*, fol. 52b and 82a). I give intentionally only one example, in order that the reader may see the tone, that suffices: *ab uno disce omnes*. Of course there are Rabbis who dispute this fearful doctrine; but where the Rabbis contradict each other, the Jew can choose for himself, and no casuistry can annul the fact that this contempt for the non-Jew is one of the bases of the Jewish faith; it follows logically from their insane over-estimation of themselves; they represent Jehovah as calling to them "ye are gods" (*Psalms* lxxxii. 6). Other interpretations, too, of the Ten Commandments show how the idea of morality was only skin-deep in the Semitic Hittites; thus the Rabbis (*Sanhedrin*, fol. 86a) utter the doctrine: "the words of the eighth Commandment, 'thou shalt not steal,' refer according to the script only to man-stealing"! —and as another passage quoted by scribes of greater moral sentiment says, "thou shalt not steal" (*Leviticus* xix. 11), and refers expressly to the Israelites "the one from the other," so in this case, too, the simple moral command leads to an ocean of casuistry; the Talmud does not indeed teach (as far as I could find from the fragments at my disposal) that "thou mayest rob the non-Jew," but it nowhere teaches the opposite. Fearful, too, are the many precepts in the Talmud concerning the persecution and the destruction of the unorthodox Jews: how individuals are to be stoned and the people executed with the sword, and still more frightful are the descriptions of the tortures and executions which this equally dismal and spiritless book expatiates upon with pleasure; here too only one example: "The criminal is placed in dirt up to the

476 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

choth, i. 4). So surely had the new covenant led them on the downward religious path. In the “bottomless sea,” as they themselves call the Babylonian Island, their nobler religious sentiments were drowned for ever. *

knees; a hard cloth is then laid in a soft one and wrapped round his neck; the one witness pulls the one end towards himself and the other the other, till the prisoner opens his mouth. In the meantime the lead is heated and poured into his mouth so that it enters his vitals and burns them up“ (*Sanhedrin*, fol. 52a). Then there are learned discussions about such things in the Talmud, thus the extremely pious Rabbi Jehuda thinks it would be advisable to open the poor man's mouth with pincers and to pour the lead down quickly, otherwise he might die of strangulation and then his soul would not be consumed with his body.

This is what one comes to with “the subjection of the feelings to the reason!”

There is not even yet a complete translation of the Talmud. Many have concluded from this that it must contain things that are fearful and dangerous to the Goyim; it is asserted that it is the Jews who hitherto frustrated every attempt at a complete translation, a suspicion by which they feel themselves greatly flattered. The historian Graetz grows angry with those of his people who “reveal the weaknesses of Judaism to the eyes of Christian readers,” and mutters terrible things about certain writings of Spanish Jews, in which the “weaknesses of the Christian articles of faith and sacraments are so openly represented that one cannot venture to explain the purport wherever Christianity is the prevailing religion“ (iii. 8). Now we are not so delicate and sensitive, such “revelations“ are indifferent to us; if the Jews keep their literary products secret, that is their business; but tragical suspicion is out of place, it is merely a question of a feeling of shame easy to understand. (All the above quoted passages are taken from the only reliable translation, that of Dr. Wünsche, which has been revised by two Rabbis: *Der Jerusalemische Talmud*, Zürich, 1880, and *Der babylonische Talmud*, Leipzig, 1886-1889; only the quotation concerning Rabbi bar Huna is from Seligman Grünwald's collection of Talmudic sayings in the Jewish *Universal-Bibliothek*. Cf., further, Strack, *Einleitung in den Talmud*, No. 2 of the writings of the Jewish Institute in Berlin, where one will find a complete enumeration of all the fragments translated, p. 106 f. Much clearer and less pedantic is the supplement on the Talmud in the excellent little book of William Rubens, *Der alte und der neue Glaube im Judentum*, 1878.

* To this day every orthodox Jew regards the Rabbinical ordinances as divine and holds fast to the Talmudic sentence: “If the Rabbis call left right and right left, you must believe it“ (see the book of the anti-Rabbinical Jew, Dr. William Rubens, p. 79). The close connection with Jesuitism (see next chapter) is here as in many other things very obvious.

477 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

THE MESSIANIC HOPE

All this, however, represents as it were the negative element in the founding of Judaism: of the beautiful legacy — simple and lively memories and popular tales of the Hebrews, impressive religious ordinances belonging to the Canaanites, as also many customs such as the Sabbath which rested on Sumero-Accadian influence and were all common to Western Asiatics — of this legacy the priests had made a rigid

law; by art of magic * they had transformed warm blood into cold metal, and of this they had forged a vice for the soul — an instrument of torture like the iron maid at Nürnberg; they had tied the arteries of spontaneous feeling, or “of the feelings,” as Ambrosius says — the arteries of the instinctive creative activity of a people, by which its faith, its customs, its thoughts, adapt themselves to changing times and by new formations arouse to new life what is eternally true in the old; but their work would have had no permanence if it had halted half-way and been content with this negative element. If in physiological experiments we cut the connection between brain and heart, we have to arrange for artificial breathing or the functions of life cease; this the priestly founders of religion did by the introduction of the Messianic kingdom of the future.

I have frequently demonstrated, † and shall not do so again, that a materialistic philosophy is necessarily based on an historical view of things, and moreover, that history, wherever it serves as the basis of a religion, must necessarily embrace the future as well as the present and the past. It is therefore beyond all doubt that thoughts of

* It is known that Cabal is a Jewish word and a Jewish thing. The impulse common to all men, which in our case leads to mysticism, leads in the case of the Semite to magic. Always and everywhere the rule of blind will!

† Pp. [229](#), [244 note](#), 419, 421 f., 440, &c.

478 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

the future formed a very old element of the Hebraic legacy. But how modest, how natural, how completely within the limits of the possible and actual! Canaan alone presented Jehovah to the Israelites, for he was the God of Canaan alone; apart from many unavoidable feuds, until the captivity, the tribe of Judah lived, just like the other tribes, on the best terms with its neighbours; there are immigrations and emigrations (see the book of *Ruth*); the God of the country where a man settles is adopted as a matter of course (*Ruth* i. 15, 16); the national pride is scarcely greater than in France or Germany to-day. Of course the future is more definite to the Prophets, in harmony with their other ideas and particularly in view of the extremely dangerous political situation (for Prophets arose only in times of political crisis, never in peace); * as a foil to the moral admonitions and threatened punishments, which form almost the whole purport of their proclamations, they required a bright picture of blessings which would fall to a pious, God-fearing people, but in the genuine writings of the Prophets before the exile there is never a word of universal empire. Even Isaiah does not go farther than the idea that Jerusalem is impregnable and that punishment will fall upon his enemies; then, in the “sure dwelling,” “salvation, wisdom, prudence, and fear of the Lord will be the treasure of the inhabitants,” and as an especial blessing the great man seems to foresee that “at that time there

will be no scribes“! † I have the support of the greatest living authority when I assert that the conception of an especial sanctity of the Jewish people — that conception which is the basis of Jewish faith — was quite unknown to Isaiah. ‡ All those passages — as, for instance, chap. iv. 3, “He that is left in Zion shall be called holy“;

* Wellhausen (from Montefiore, p. 154).

† See, for instance, chap. xxxiii.

‡ Cheyne: *Introduction to Isaiah* (ed. 1895), pp. 27 and 53.

479 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

chap. lxii. 12, “And they shall call them the holy people,“ &c. — have been proved to be late interpolations, that is to say, the work of the great synagogues already named; the language of a much later century which no longer freely mastered the Hebrew has betrayed the pious forgers. Invented are also almost all those “consoling additions“ which are found after most of the threats of Amos, Hosea, Micah, Isaiah, &c., * and absolutely forged, from the first to the last word, are such chapters as *Isaiah* lx., that famous Messianic prophecy, according to which all the kings of the world will lie in the dust before the Jews, and the doors of Jerusalem be open day and night in order that the treasures † of all people may be carried in. The genuine Isaiah promised his people “wisdom and prudence“ as their reward, the ideal of the still greater second Isaiah (the one who would have neither sacrifice nor temple) was that Judah should be the servant of God, called to bring consolation everywhere to the weary, the blind, the poor and the heavily laden. But now things had changed; the curse of God is henceforth to smite him who maintains that “the house of Judah is like unto all the heathen“ (*Ezekiel* xxv. 8), for it shall be a “kingdom of priests“ (*Exodus* xix. 6). ‡ The Jews were now promised the possession of all treasures of the world, particularly of all gold and all silver. § “Thy people shall inherit the land for ever“ (*Isaiah* lx. 21); that is henceforth the future which is held out to the Jews. In humility he shall bow before God, but not in that inner humility, of which Christ speaks — he bows the head before Jehovah, because of the promise that by the fulfilment

* Cheyne in his *Introduction to Robertson Smith: Prophets of Israel*, p. xv. f.

† Luther has “might“ by mistake.

‡ Wellhausen, *Composition des Hexateuchs*, pp. 93 and 97, proves that the passage xix. 3-9 is an interpolation of post-Deuteronomic time.

§ *Isaiah*, the whole of chap. xl. See, too, the postexilic Prophet Haggai, who promises to the Jews “the treasures of all Heathens“: “The silver is mine, the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts“ (ii. 8, 9).

480 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

of this condition he will put his foot upon the neck of all the nations of the world and be Lord and possessor of the whole earth. * This one basis of Jewish religion includes, therefore, a direct criminal attempt upon all the peoples of the earth, and the crime cannot be disavowed because hitherto the power has been lacking to carry it out; for it is the hope itself which is criminal and which poisons the heart of the Jew. † To the misunderstanding and intentional falsification of the Prophets were added other dreams of the future, which, however, were no better. From the Persians the Jews had during their captivity for the first time heard vague tales of an immortality and a future life; they had also heard of angels and devils, heaven and hell. ‡ On this basis there was now produced an enormous apocalyptic literature of which the book of *Daniel*, in spite of its senseless mystery-mongering, would give a much too favourable idea, which dealt with the end of the world, the resurrection of the just, &c., without in any way idealising the Messianic hopes; at the best it is a case of a resurrection of the body, which shall give support to the dubious

* The absurdity of the idea, that this religion is the stem of Christianity, Christianity its blossom, must be manifest to the most prejudiced.

‡ The Jewish apologists reply that they obey the law, not “because it is by these means that they are to attain to empire, but because Jehovah commands it; that Jehovah gives the world to the Jews as one sacred people is done to his own honour not theirs.” But this seems to me pure contemptible casuistry. A reliable author, Montefiore, says literally, “Beyond question the argument — ‘obey the law, for it will pay you’ — forms the chief and fundamental motive in *Deuteronomy*” (p. 531). That countless Jews are pious men who fulfil the law and lead a pure noble life, without thinking of reward, only proves that here as elsewhere morals and religion do not go together and that in the whole world there are men who are very much better than their faith. But even to-day fairly free-thinking Jews still write: “The existence of Judaism depends upon the clinging to the Messianic hope” — the definite expectation of world empire thus still forms the soul of Judaism (*cf.* above, p. 334).

‡ In connection with the borrowing of Zoroastrian (half-understood) conceptions by the founders of Judaism, see Montefiore: *Religion of the Ancient Hebrews*, pp. 373, 429, 453, &c.

481 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

assurance “to-day you must obey the law and later you will receive your reward” (Talmud, Treatise *Erubin*, Div. 2), and this Jewish “Kingdom of God” will, as one of the most eminent of Israelite thinkers, Saadia (tenth century), assures us, “be a kingdom on earth.” The quotation from the *Apok. of Baruch*, on p. 425, shows what was the Jewish idea of this future world; it differed from the world of to-day almost solely in the predominant position of the Jewish nation. An interesting trace of this view has by mistake found its way even into the New Testament. According to Matthew the twelve apostles, seated on twelve thrones, will judge the twelve tribes of Israel, which of course assumes that no others

than Jews enter into heaven. *

Thus the invented and utterly falsified past is completed by an equally fictitious, Utopian future, and so the Jew, in spite of the materialism of his religion, hovers between dreams and delusions. The mirage of the desert of their fathers conjures up by magic for these half-Semites sweet consolation for their tragic destiny — an airy, empty and delusive consolation; but by the strength of their will — called faith — it is a sufficiently vigorous living power, and indeed often a dangerous one for others. The power of the idea triumphs here in an alarming fashion; in a people with good capacities but not pre-eminent physically or mentally it produces the delusive idea of a particular selectness, of a special pleasantness in the sight of God, of an incomparable future; it isolates them in an insane pride from all the nations of the earth; forces upon them, as laid

* *Matthew* xix. 28; *Luke* xxii. 30. This utterance put in the mouth of Christ directly contradicts what is said in *Matthew* xx. 23. The clinging to the twelve tribes also, although for more than five hundred years there were only two, is genuinely Rabbinical. The Rabbis, too, expressly teach the doctrine: "The non-Jews are as such precluded from admission to a future world" (*cf.* Laible: *Jesus Christus im Talmud*, p. 53). Concerning the Messianic expectations, see chap. iii. [p. 235 note.](#)

482 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

down by God, a law which is senseless, unreasonable, and impossible in practice; it nourishes them with lying memories and lulls them with criminal hopes; — and, while it thus raises this people in its own conceit to giddy Babel-like heights, it in truth depresses their souls deeply, weighing so heavily upon their best qualities, isolating them from suffering, striving and creating humanity, confirming them hopelessly in the most unfortunate fixed ideas, and making them in every form (from the extremest orthodoxy to outspoken free-thinking) so inevitably the enemy, open or secret, of every other human being, and a danger to every culture, that at all times and places it has inspired the deepest mistrust in the most highly gifted, and horror in the unerring instincts of the common people. I said just now that orthodoxy and free-thinking could be regarded by us as equivalents here, in fact the question to-day is not so much what a Jew believes as what, to use a paradoxical antithesis, he can believe or is capable of believing. Intellectual endowments and morality are individual qualities. The Jew is, like other men, shrewd or stupid, good or bad; whoever denies that is not worth talking to; but there is something which is not individual, namely, *les plis de la pensée*, as the Frenchman says, the inborn tendencies of thought and action, the definite bent, which the mind takes from the habits of generations. * And thus we see to-day Jewish atheists of the most modern type who, by their tendency to regard senseless hypotheses or mere makeshift conceptions of science as material, actual facts, by their total incapacity to rise above

the narrow historical standpoint, by their talent for planning impossible

* If we reckon twenty-four years as a generation, which is not exaggerated considering how soon the Jews are mature, the Jew of to-day belongs on an average to the hundredth generation since the return from Babylon and the founding of Judaism. That holds of the male line of descent; an unbroken female line would be in about the one hundred and fiftieth generation.

483 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

socialistic and economic Messianic empires without inquiring whether they thereby destroy the whole of the civilisation and culture which we have so slowly acquired, by their childish belief that with decrees and laws the souls of the people can be changed from to-day to to-morrow, by their lack of understanding for everything genuinely great outside the narrow limits of their own circle of thought, end by their ridiculous overestimation of every Lilliputian intellectual work which has a Jew for its author — we see, I say, such so-called free-thinkers who prove themselves to be genuine children of the religion of the Thora and the Talmud in a much more thorough and striking fashion than many a pious Rabbi who exercises the lofty virtues of humility and obedience to the law, united with love to neighbour, sympathy with the poor, tolerance towards the Gentile, and lives in such a way that he would be an honour to any nation and a glory to any religion.

THE LAW

Now in spite of all, there is greatness in the specifically Jewish theory of life, and I have already hinted in a former part of the chapter what makes this greatness (see p. 390 f.). Even if, as Robertson Smith assures us, the purely pecuniary interests of the priestly noble caste and their political ambition may have weighed in the momentous decision to centralise the cult in the one city Jerusalem, * yet I am convinced that barren, critical minds always attach far too much importance to such considerations. We cannot, by purely egoistic consideration of interests, found a nation which survives being scattered; such a belief is an error of judgment. †

* *Prophets of Israel*, p. 365.

† A really classical example of this so-called critical but in reality just as uncritical as inappreciative method is seen in Professor Hermann Oldenberg's *Religion des Veda*, where the symbolism and the mysticism of the Hindoos are represented continuously as priestly swindle!

484 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

Neither can we see that Ezekiel, Ezra and Nehemiah, who bore the burden and the danger, had any personal advantage in the matter. In fact idealism was required to leave Babylon for Jerusalem; the more luxurious, worldly-minded men remained in the metropolis on the Euphrates. In aftertimes too the Jew was always better off abroad than at home, and the Rabbi who earned his scanty livelihood by tailoring and cobbling and then devoted all his leisure hours to the study of the script, to teaching and discussion, was anything but a pursuer of pecuniary interests. An egoist certainly, a fanatical egoist, but only for his nation, not for himself personally. Here, therefore, as everywhere the ideal sentiment is the only one which has power to create and to maintain, and even the religion of materialism rests upon it. These men forged; that is beyond question. And forging history is in a sense worse than forging cheques; its consequences may be immeasurable; the many millions who were massacred by or for Christianity, * as well as the many Jews who died for their faith, are all victims of the forgeries of Ezra and the great synagogue. But we cannot suspect the motives of these men, They acted in the greatest despair; they wished to accomplish the impossible — to save their nation from downfall. Certainly a noble goal! They could conquer only by the employment of the most extreme means. It was a delusive but not an ignoble aim, for above all they wished to serve their God. “I shall be sanctified in the sight of the heathen“ (*Ezekiel* xxviii. 25); “this people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise“ (*Isaiah* xliii. 21, postexilic interpolation). If the Jewish people disappeared, Jehovah remained behind unhonoured. That the founders of Judaism

* Voltaire in his article *Dieu et les hommes* gives a detailed calculation, according to which ten million human beings fell victims to the Christian Church doctrine, but everywhere he has reduced the numbers very much, sometimes by half, so as not to be charged with exaggeration.

485 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

thought so purely and unselfishly, that they raised their eyes to a God, was the source of their strength. The idea of isolating the nation by forbidding mixed marriages, and of rearing a noble race from the hopelessly mongrel Israelite, is nothing if not brilliant; equally so the idea of representing the purity of the race as an historical legacy, as the special, characteristic feature of the Jew. In this connection the whole law should be mentioned; for it was by this law that they succeeded in banishing every thought but the thought of Jehovah in making the people really “sacred“ in the Semitic sense. A Jewish writer informs us that “for the Sabbath alone there are thirty-nine chapters of forbidden occupations, and every chapter had sub-divisions *ad infinitum*.“ * Moses is said to have been taught three hundred and sixty-five prohibitions and

two hundred and sixty-four commands on Mount Sinai, † and this only provides the preliminary scaffolding for the detailed “law.” Montefiore asserts also that the obeying of the law had soon become with the Jew the ruling thought to such an extent that it was for him the *summum bonum*, the best, noblest and sweetest occupation in the world. ‡ While memory and taste were thus paralysed, the faculty of judgment was simply broken by the law; a poor woman who on the Sabbath gathered dry wood for her fire committed, by this transgression of the law, as great a

* Montefiore: *Religion of the Ancient Hebrews*, p. 504.

† Talmud, Treatise *Maccoth*, Div. 3 (according to Grünwald).

‡ Montefiore, p. 530. “The huge number of ceremonial prescriptions is the high privilege of Israel,” says the Talmud (Montefiore, p. 535), and in *Lamentations* (falsely ascribed to Jeremiah) we read: “It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth. He putteth his mouth in the dust; if so be there may be hope” (iii. 27, 29). For the opposite view one should read the beautiful remarks in Kant's *Anthropologie*, § 10 a, concerning religious obligations, in which the great thinker expresses the opinion that nothing is more difficult for a sensible man than “the commands of a bustling do-nothingness (*Nichts-thuerei*), such as those which Judaism established.”

486 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

crime as if she had broken her marriage vow. * ... I say, therefore, that the men who founded Judaism were not impelled by evil, selfish motives, but goaded on by a demoniacal power, such as only honest fanatics can possess; for the terrible work which they completed is perfect in every point.

THE THORA

The everlasting monument of this perfection is their Thora, the books of the Old Testament. Here history again shapes history! What scientific work could ever hope to exercise such an influence upon the life of humanity? It has frequently been asserted that the Jew lacks imaginative power; the study of this remarkable book must teach us something different. At least they acquired this power in their direst need and created a true work of art, for in this history of the world, which begins with the erection of heaven and earth, to end with the future kingdom of God upon earth, all perspective relations serve to emphasise especially the one central thing — the Jewish people. And wherein lies the strength of this people — that vigour which so far has successfully defied every destiny — wherein, if not in this book? We have learned that the Israelites in former times were in no way distinguished from the neighbouring Hebrew races; we saw in the Syrian-Hittites an exceedingly hardy but remarkably “anonymous” human type without physiognomy, the nose being more prominent than anything else. And the Judeans?

They were so unwarlike, so unreliable as soldiers, that their king had to entrust the country and his person to the protection of mercenary troops; they had so little enterprise that the mere sight of the sea, on which their kinsmen,

* According to the law (see *Num.* xv. 32-36) she must be punished with death.

487 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

the Phoenicians, had attained such brilliant fortunes, frightened them; so little capacity for industry that for every undertaking artists and overseers, and for the finer pieces of work even artisans, had to be procured from the neighbouring lands; they were so little adapted to agriculture that in this (as is clear from many passages of the Bible and the Talmud) the Canaanites not only remained their teachers but also the labour element in the country. * Indeed, even in purely political matters they were such opponents of all stable, ordered conditions that no sensible form of government could exist among them, and from first to last they were always most comfortable under the yoke of a foreign Power, which did not, however, prevent them from trying to throw it off.... Such a people seems predestined to disappear quickly from the history of the world; and in fact of the other, much more vigorous, half-Semitic races of that time only the names are now known. What saved the small people of the Jews from the same destiny? What kept it together when it was scattered over the world? What made it possible for the new world-principle of Christianity to spring from its midst? This book alone. It would lead us too far if we were to analyse the distinctive features of this book which has played such a part in history. Goethe writes concerning it in one passage: "These writings are so happily grouped that from the most alien elements a delusive whole presents itself to us. They are complete enough to satisfy us, fragmentary enough to stimulate us, sufficiently barbaric to provoke us, sufficiently tender to soothe us." Herder explains the widespread influence of the Old

* Thence it is that one of the worst threats against the Jews, if they did not keep Jehovah's commandments, was that "they would have to do their own work, instead of getting it done by others" (Talmud, Treatise *Berachot*, chap. vi., according to Grünwald). The idea that "the sons of the alien shall be the ploughmen and the vine-dressers" is also found (as a prophecy) in *Isaiah* lxi. 5.

488 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

Testament principally from the fact that "it satisfied the human craving for knowledge by furnishing for such questions as the age and the creation of the world, the origin of evil, &c., popular answers that every one understands and can easily grasp." Thus we see how this book meets the demands of the educated mind and of the man of the people —

of the one, because it admires the daring arbitrariness in the “delusive whole”; of the other, because the mystery of existence is, like Jehovah behind the temple curtain, concealed from his gaze, and he receives to every question “popular answers.” This book marks the triumph of materialistic philosophy. In truth no small achievement! It signifies the victory of will over understanding and every further effort of creative imagination. Such a work could be created only by pious sentiment and demoniacal power.

We cannot understand Judaism and its power, as well as its ineradicable tenacity, we cannot form a just and proper estimate of the Jew among ourselves, his character and way of thinking, until we have recognised his demoniacal genius and can explain its growth. Here it is a struggle of one against all; this one has taken upon himself every sacrifice and every shame, in order at some time, no matter when, to enter into the Messianic empire of supreme power, to the eternal glory of Jehovah. The Talmud thus expresses it: “Just as thy oppression will follow from transgressing the law, so obedience to it will be rewarded by the fact that thou thyself wilt one day command“ (*Aboth* iv. 5; after Montefiore).

JUDAISM

One more word in conclusion. My reply to the question, Who is the Jew? has been, in the first place, to point out whence he came, what was his physical foundation, and secondly, to reveal the leading idea of Judaism in its origin

489 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

and nature. I cannot do more; for the personality belongs to the single individual, and nothing is falser than the widespread procedure of judging a people by individuals. I have brought forward neither the “good“ Jew nor the “bad“ Jew; “no one is good,” said Jesus Christ, and when is a man so utterly despicable that we would be inclined to call him unconditionally bad? Before me are lying several criminal statistics; the one set tries to prove that the Jews are the most pious and lamb-like citizens of Europe, the others assert the opposite. How both conclusions are juggled out of the same figures beats me, but I am still more surprised that people should imagine that this is the way to deal with the psychology of nations. No one steals for the pleasure of it, unless he is a kleptomaniac. Is the man who through need or in consequence of a bad example steals, necessarily a bad man, and he who has not the least occasion to do so a good one? Luther says: “Whoever steals bread from the baker without being forced by hunger is a thief; if he is forced by hunger he acts rightly, for people ought to give to him.“ Give me a statistic which shows how many people who live in direst need,

oppression and abandonment, do not become criminals; from it one might eventually draw some conclusions — yet no very far-reaching ones. Were not the ancestors of our feudal nobility highway robbers? and are their descendants not proud of it? Did the Popes not have kings assassinated by hired murderers? And in our present civilised society are not lying and misleading recognised in high diplomacy? Let us therefore leave morality alone, as also the almost equally slippery question of predisposition; that there are more Jewish than European lawyers in a country only proves that law pays there — nothing more; special ability has nothing to do with it.... In all these things, especially if they are presented statistically, we can prove anything. On the other hand, the two facts of

490 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

race and ideal are fundamental. There are no good and bad men, at least for us, but only before God, for the word “good“ refers to a moral estimation, and this again depends on a knowledge of motive, which can never be revealed. “Who can know the heart?“ was the cry of Jeremiah (xvii. 9). * On the other hand there are certainly good and bad races, for here we have to deal with physical relations, general laws of organic nature, which have been experimentally investigated — relations in which, in contrast to those mentioned above figures provide irrefutable proofs — relations concerning which the history of humanity offers us abundant information. And scarcely less manifest are the leading ideas. In reference to race these must in the first place be looked upon as a consequence; but one should not underestimate this inner, invisible anatomy, this purely spiritual dolichocephaly and brachycephaly, which as cause also has a wide range of influence. Hence it is that every strong nation has so much power of assimilation. The entrance into a new union in the first place changes not a fibre of the physical structure, and only very slowly, in the course of generations, affects the blood; but ideas have a more rapid effect, because they direct the whole personality almost at once into new channels. And the Jewish national idea seems to exercise a particularly strong influence, perhaps for the very reason that in this case the nation exists merely as an idea and never, from the beginning of Judaism, was it a “normal“ nation, but above all, a thought, a hope. It is therefore quite wrong, in the case of the Jews especially, to lay much weight — as Renan for example was fond of doing in his last years — upon the adoption of alien blood which took place from time to time. Renan knew better than anybody else

* As Kant in his *Critique of Pure Reason* says (in explaining the cosmological idea of freedom): “The real morality of actions (merit and guilt) remains quite concealed from us, even in the case of our own conduct.“

491 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

that the conversion of Greeks and Romans to Judaism was an absolutely unimportant phenomenon. What were those "Hellenes" from Antioch, of whom he tells us in his lecture "*Judaïsme, race ou religion*"? and who are said to have been converted in crowds to Judaism, a fact for which we possess only the evidence of a very unreliable Jew, Josephus? They were Hebrew-Syrian mongrels, in whose veins probably not a drop of Greek blood flowed. And those "Romans," for whom Renan quotes the evidence of Juvenal (*Sat.* xvi. 95 f.)? The dregs of the people composed of the freed Asiatic and African slaves. Let him name one single Roman of importance who became a Jew! Such assertions are an intentional misleading of the unlearned public. But even if they were based on truth instead of arising out of bias and falsification, what would that signify? Are we to suppose that the Jewish national idea has not the force of other national ideas? On the contrary, it is more powerful, as I have shown, than any other, and transforms men to its own image. One does not need to have the authentic Hittite nose to be a Jew; the term Jew rather denotes a special way of thinking and feeling. A man can very soon become a Jew without being an Israelite; often it needs only to have frequent intercourse with Jews, to read Jewish newspapers, to accustom himself to Jewish philosophy, literature and art. On the other hand, it is senseless to call an Israelite a "Jew," though his descent is beyond question, if he has succeeded in throwing off the fetters of Ezra and Nehemiah, and if the law of Moses has no place in his brain, and contempt of others no place in his heart. "What a prospect it would be," cries Herder, "to see the Jews purely humanised in their way of thinking!" * But a purely humanised Jew is no longer a Jew because, by renouncing the idea of Judaism, he *ipso facto* has left

* *Adrastea* 7, Stück V., Abschnitt "Fortsetzung."

492 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

that nationality, which is composed and held together by a complex of conceptions, by a "faith." With the apostle Paul we must learn that "he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, but he is a Jew who is one inwardly" (*Rom.* ii. 28-29).

Now such national or religious ideals can exercise their revolutionising influence in two ways, positive or negative. I have shown in the case of the Jews how a handful of men forced a definite national idea upon a people not at all inclined to accept it, and so impressed the stamp of this idea upon it that it would seem impossible for that people to efface it; but consanguinity and congeniality were necessary for the accomplishment of this. In this case, then, the idea exercised a positively creative

influence. Just as remarkable a case is the sudden conversion of the bloodthirsty, wild Mongolians by the adoption of the Buddhist faith to mild, pious men, a third of whom have become monks. * But an idea can also have a purely negative result; it can lead a man out of his own course without opening up another which is suited to his race. A well-known example is the way in which Mohammedanism has affected the Turkomans: by adopting the fatalistic view of the world this wildly energetic people has gradually sunk into complete passivity. If the Jewish influence were to gain the upper hand in Europe in the intellectual and cultural sphere, we should have one more example of negative, destructive power.

I have thus pointed out the method adopted by me and its chief results; I cannot otherwise summarise this chapter. Formulae are mere phrases in respect of organic phenomena. The anecdote *Le voilà, le chameau!* is well known. Such a pretension is ridiculous even in respect of the camel, and it would never occur to me to close this sketch with generalisations and formulae, as

* Cf. Döllinger; *Akademische Vorträge* i. 8.

493 JEWS ENTER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

if I should say, *Le voilà, le juif!* For the theme is inexhaustible and unfathomable; I have scarcely used the twentieth part of my illustrations and notes: But my belief is that every one who reads this chapter will feel qualified to form a sharper and clearer judgment of Judaism and its product, the Jew. From this judgment will follow of itself the answer to the question, What is the significance of the entrance of the Jew into the history of the West? It is not my task to trace this influence century by century. The indirect influence of Judaism on Christianity was and still is immense; its direct influence on the nineteenth century appears for the first time as a new influence in the history of culture: it thus becomes one of the burning subjects of the day, and I have felt bound therefore to lay a sound foundation for its appreciation. Towards this end neither the passionate assertions of the Anti-Semites, nor the dogmatic platitudes of the humanitarians, nor even the many learned books, theological or archaeological, from which I have gathered the materials for this chapter, give us any assistance. In the task imposed upon me by necessity, I hope I have not striven in vain to arrive at a clear understanding. We have to deal here with a question affecting not only the present, but also the future of the world.

494

SIXTH CHAPTER

THE ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE INTO THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD

Mon devoir est mon Dieu suprême. — FREDERICK THE GREAT. (Letter to Voltaire on June 12, 1740.)

THE TERM "GERMANIC"

THE entrance of the Jew into European history had, as Herder said, signified the entrance of an alien element — alien to that which Europe had already achieved, alien to all it was still to accomplish; but it was the very reverse with the Germanic peoples. This barbarian, who would rush naked to battle, this savage, who suddenly sprang out of woods and marshes to inspire into a civilised and cultivated world the terrors of a violent conquest won by the strong hand alone, was nevertheless the lawful heir of the Hellene and the Roman, blood of their blood and spirit of their spirit. It was his own property which he, unwitting, snatched from the alien hand. But for him the sun of the Indo-European must have set. The Asiatic and African slave had by assassination wormed his way to the very throne of the Roman Empire, the Syrian mongrel had made himself master of the law, the Jew was using the library at Alexandria to adapt Hellenic philosophy to the Mosaic law, the Egyptian to embalm and bury for boundless ages the fresh bloom of natural science in the ostentatious pyramids of scientific systematisation; soon, too, the beautiful flowers of old Aryan life — Indian thought, Indian poetry — were to be trodden

495 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

under foot by the savage bloodthirsty Mongolian, and the Bedouin, with his mad delusions bred of the desert, was to reduce to an everlasting wilderness that garden of Eden, Erania, in which for centuries all the symbolism of the world had grown; art had long since vanished; there were nothing but replicas for the rich, and for the poor the circus: accordingly, to use that expression of Schiller which I quoted at the beginning of the first chapter, there were no longer men but only creatures. It was high time for the Saviour to appear. He certainly did not enter into history in the form in which combining, constructive reason, if consulted, would have chosen for the guardian angel, the harbinger of a new day of humanity; but to-day, when a glance back over past centuries teaches us wisdom, we have only one thing to regret, that the Teuton did not destroy with more thoroughness, wherever his victorious arm

penetrated, and that as a consequence of his moderation the so-called “Latinising,” that is, the fusion with the chaos of peoples, once more gradually robbed wide districts of the one quickening influence of pure blood and unbroken youthful vigour, and at the same time deprived them of the rule of those who possessed the highest talents. At any rate it is only shameful indolence of thought, or disgraceful historical falsehood, that can fail to see in the entrance of the Germanic tribes into the history of the world the rescuing of agonising humanity from the clutches of the everlastingly bestial.

If I here use the word “Germanic,” I do so, as I have already remarked in the introduction to this division, for the sake of simplification — a simplification which expresses the truth, which must otherwise remain veiled. But this expression, whether taken in the wide or the narrow sense, seems somewhat elastic, perhaps inadmissible, particularly so because it was late before any people, at any rate we ourselves, became conscious of such

496 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

a thing as the specifically “Germanic” character. There never has been a people that called itself “Germanic,” and never — from their first appearance on the stage of history to the present day — have the whole of the Germanic peoples unitedly opposed themselves to the non-Germanic; on the contrary, from the beginning we find them continually at feud with one another, displaying towards no one such hostility as towards their own blood. During Christ's lifetime Inguiomer betrays his nearest relative, the great Hermann, to the Marcomanni, and thereby hinders the process of union among the northern tribes and the total destruction of the Roman; Tiberius already could recommend no safer policy to adopt with the Germans than to “leave them to their own internal quarrels”; all the great wars of the following age, with the exception of the Crusades, were wars between Germanic princes; the same thing holds in the main for the nineteenth century. But a foreigner had at once recognised the uniformity of the various tribes, and instead of the indistinguishable babel of names, Chatti, Chanki, Cheruski, Gambriuii, Suevi, Vendales, Goti, Marcomanni, Lugii, Langobardi, Sachsi, Frisii, Hermunduri, &c., he had created for the luxuriant offshoots of this strong race the uniform comprehensive term “Germanic,” and that because his eye had at the first glance discerned their common stock. Tacitus, after growing tired of enumerating names, says, “the physical characteristics of all these men are the same”; this was the correct empiric basis for the second and correct judgment, “I am convinced that the various tribes of Germania, unpolluted by marriages with alien peoples, have from time immemorial been a special, unmixed people, resembling itself alone” (*Germania* 4). It is peculiar how much more clearly the stranger, who is not biased by details, sees the great

connection of phenomena, than the man who is directly interested in them!

497 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

But to-day it is not merely bias which prevents us from using the word "Germanic" in its geographical and racial sense with the simplicity of Tacitus: those "various Germanic stems" which he regarded as an unmixed, comparatively uniform people have, since his day, like their predecessors, the Hellenes, entered into all kinds of unions among each other, and only a portion remains "unpolluted by marriages with strange peoples"; moreover in consequence of the great migrations, they have been subjected to particular cultural influences, resulting from geographical position, climatic conditions, the standard of civilisation among the nearest neighbours, and so forth. That alone would have sufficed to break up any unity. But the state of things becomes still more confused when we supplement the teaching of political history, on the one hand by more minute, comparative researches in the department of national psychology, philosophy and the history of art, and on the other by the results of the prehistoric and anthropological investigations of the last fifty years. For then we see that we may and must give a much wider meaning to the word "Germanic" than Tacitus did, but at the same time we notice necessary limitations of which he, with the defective knowledge of his time, could not have dreamt. To understand our past and our present, we must follow the example of Tacitus, and like him, collect material and sift it, but upon the broader basis of our modern knowledge. It is only by the exact definition of a new term "Germanic" that our study of the entrance of these peoples into history acquires practical worth. It is the object of this chapter to give such a descriptive definition as briefly as may be. How far does the stem-relationship extend? Where do we meet "Arya" (*i.e.*, those who belong to the friends)? Where do we first find the alien element, which, according to Goethe, we "must not tolerate"?

498 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

EXTENSION OF THE IDEA

I have said that we must give the expression "Germanic" a wider and at the same time a narrower signification than that of Tacitus. Both the extension and the narrowing are the results of historical and anthropological considerations.

The expression is widened by the knowledge that no clear distinction can be drawn physically and mentally between the "German" of Tacitus and his predecessor in history, the "Celt," or his successor whom we are wont even more audaciously to sum up as the "Slav." In view of their

physical characteristics the scientist would not hesitate to look upon these three races as varieties of a common stock. The Gauls who in the year 389 B.C. conquered Rome answer exactly to the description which Tacitus gives of the Germanic race: "bright blue eyes, reddish hair, tall figures"; and, on the other hand, the skulls which have been found in the graves of the oldest heroic Slavonic ages have shown to the astonishment of the whole scientific world that the Slavs from the time of the migrations were just as distinctly dolichocephalous (*i.e.*, long-skulled) and as tall as the other Germanic tribes of that time and those of pure race to-day. * Moreover, Virchow's comprehensive investigations into the colour of hair and of eyes have revealed the fact that the Slavs were originally and still are in certain districts just as fair as the Germanic races. Quite apart, therefore, from the general conception "Indo-European," which is a mere theoretical and hypothetical term, it appears that we have every reason for considerably extending the idea "Germanic" which we

* Cf. the summary in Ranke: *Der Mensch*, 2nd ed. ii. 297. It is not possible that these excavations revealed facts limited to the Norman Waregians, since the investigations embrace subjects from the most various places, not only in Russia, but also in Germany.

499 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

have got from Tacitus and which we have hitherto for philological reasons been inclined to make narrower and narrower. *

THE CELT

Let us speak first of the Celts.

Misled chiefly by philological considerations, the Celtic languages being supposed to be more nearly related to the Italian and Greek than to the Germanic, we have been used to overlook the very decisive physical, and still more decisive moral influence. † We group the Celt with the Graeco-Italians, with whom he is manifestly only distantly connected, while he is intimately related to the Germanic peoples. Though the completely Romanised Gaul may have presented a direct contrast to his conqueror, the Burgundian or Frank, yet that original conqueror of Rome, indeed even the later Gaul who had been settled for centuries in Northern Italy,

* In consequence the anthropologists of to-day use the expression *homo europaeus* (see p. 373) in a much more definite sense than Linnaeus had done; but such a nomenclature is much too abstract for the historian, who has therefore hitherto taken no notice of it. In order to awaken intelligent interest in wide circles, one must employ the existing, well-known terminology and suit it to new needs. This is here done by widening the idea "Germanic," a procedure which will justify itself step by step in the

course of this work; it is only by this that the history of the last two thousand years and especially of the nineteenth century becomes intelligible. That Celts, Slavs and Teutons are descended from a single pure stock may to-day be regarded as certain in the light of anthropology and ancient history. (Cf. the final summary of Dr. G. Beck; *Der Urmensch*, Basel, 1899, p. 46 f.). In addition we have historical evidence of the mutual mixing of these different stems. Thus, for instance, H. d'Arbois de Jubainville, Professor at the Collège de France, arrives in his book *Les Celtes*, 1904, at the conclusion: *Il y a probablement en Allemagne plus de sang Gaulois qu'en France*.

† Schleicher, for instance, in his famous, universally copied genealogy of the Indo-Germanic languages (cf. *Die Deutsche Sprache*, 1861, p. 82) makes one group of the Italo-Celtic languages, which he thinks branched off in very early times from the "North European mother tongue"; also such divergent views as the well-known "wave-theory" of Johannes Schmidt continue to represent the Celt as if he were the furthest removed of all Indo-Europeans from the Germanic peoples.

500 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

and whom Florus still describes as "superhuman" (*corpora plus quam humana erant*, ii. 4) clearly resembles the Teuton physically; but not only physically, for his love of wandering, his delight in war, which leads him (as the Goths at a later time) even to Asia in the service of any master who gives him an opportunity of fighting, his love of song... all these things are essential features of this same relationship, whereas one would be at a loss to prove the points of connection with the Graeco-Italians. The Germanic peoples in the narrower, Tacitean sense of the word enter history for the first time * mixed with Celts and led by Celts; the word "Germanic" is Celtic. Do we not still meet those tall figures with blue eyes and reddish hair in North-West Scotland, in Wales, &c., and are they not more like a Teuton than a Southern European? Do we not yet see how the Bretons as daring mariners rival the feats of the old Norsemen? But no less an authority than Julius Caesar has told us, in the first chapter of the first book of his Gallic War, how this wild Celto-Germanic mind becomes everywhere gradually effeminate through contact with Roman civilisation. †

More striking and more decisive for my theory is the relationship of Celt and Teuton in the deeper mental qualities. History gives us ample proof of this, of the relationship of those finer features that make up individuality. Are we to believe — to dive deeply into the subject — that it is an accident that St. Paul's epistle on redemption by faith, on the gospel of freedom (in contrast to the

* At the invasion of the Cimbri and Teutons, 114 B.C.

† Regarding the physical identity of Celts and Germanic peoples Professor Gabriel de Mortillet has lately collected such comprehensive material, anthropological facts, as well as the testimonies of old Roman writers, that it is sufficient if I refer to his *Formation de la nation française*, 1897 (p. 114 f.). His final words are "*La caractéristique des deux groupes est donc exactement la même et s'applique aussi bien au groupe qui a reçu le nom de Gaulois (synonymous with Celts, see p. 92) qu'au groupe qui depuis les invasions des Cimbres a pris le nom de Germains*".

501 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

“slavish yoke“ of the Church law), on the importance of religion as not consisting in works but in regeneration “to a new creature“ — was addressed to the Galatians, those “Gallic Greeks“ of Asia Minor who had remained almost pure Celts — an epistle in which we seem to hear a Martin Luther speaking to Germans credulous indeed but yet incomparably gifted for understanding the deepest mysteries? * I for my part do not believe that there is any room for chance in such matters; I believe it all the less in this case, because I notice in what a different way the same man speaks, what endless roundabout paths he chooses when teaching the same truths to a community of Jews and the children of the chaos of peoples, as in the *Epistle to the Romans*. But our judgment does not rest merely on such a hypothetical basis, nor does it rest solely upon the relationship between old Celtic and old Germanic mythical religion, but upon observation of the relationship between the mental qualities generally, to which the whole cultured history of Europe up to the present day testifies — wherever the Celt has kept his blood pure. Thus, for example, we find in the genuinely Celtic parts of Ireland in former times — taking the five hundred years from the Celt Scotus Erigena to the Celt Dons Scotus — splendid theologians with high philosophical gifts, whose independence of thought and keen desire to investigate brought upon them the persecution of the Roman Church; in the heart of Bretagne was born that intellectual pioneer Peter Abelard, and let it be carefully noted that what distinguishes him, like those others, is not merely independent thought and striving after freedom, but above all the holy earnestness of his life, a thoroughly “Germanic quality.“ These Celtic minds of former centuries, teeming

* Mommsen testifies that Galatia was “a Celtic island amidst the floods of the Eastern peoples,“ in which even the Celtic language maintained itself for a long time: *Roman History*, 3rd ed. v. 311 f.

502 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

with strength, are not merely free, and not merely pious, any more than the Breton seaman of to-day, but they are both free and pious, and it is this very combination that expresses what is specifically “Germanic,“ as we observe it from Charlemagne and King Alfred to Cromwell and Queen Louise, from the daring anti-Roman troubadours and the Minnesingers so politically independent, to Schiller and Richard Wagner. And when we see, for example, Abelard contending from profound religious conviction against the sale of indulgences (*Theologia Christiana*), and at the same time putting the Hellenes in every respect far above the Jews, declaring the morals of their philosophers to be superior to the Jewish sanctity of

law, Plato's view of life more sublime than that of Moses — yes, when we actually find him in his *Dialogus inter philosophum, Judaeum et Christianum*, making the recognition of the transcendental ideality of the conception of space the basis of religious thought, so that man stands directly before God's countenance not by entering into an empirical heaven but solely by an inner conversion of mind: are we not forced to recognise that this mind is characteristically Indo-European in contrast to the Semitic and the late Roman, and that, moreover, an individuality here reveals itself, which in every single one of those *plis de la pensée* (of which I spoke in the [previous chapter](#)) betrays the specifically Germanic character? I do not say German but Germanic character, and I am not speaking of to-day, when differentiation has led to the formation of very clearly defined national characters, but of a man who lived almost a thousand years ago; and I assert that so far as the whole tendency of his thought and feeling is concerned this Breton might right well have been born in the heart of Germania. A typical Celt in the gloomy passionateness of his nature, a new Tristan in his love, he is flesh of our flesh and blood of our Teutonic blood; he is Germanic. Just as Germanic

503 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

as these so-called “pure German“ populations of Swabia and the Black Forest, the home of Schiller, Mozart and many others of the greatest of Germany's sons, who owe their peculiar character and uncommon poetical gifts to the strong admixture of Celtic blood. * We recognise this same spirit of Abelard at work wherever it can be proved that the Celts were present in large numbers, as in the home of the unfortunate Albigenes in the South of France, or as they still are in the homeland of the Methodists, Wales. We recognise it also in the so-called typically Catholic country Bretagne, for Catholicism and Protestantism are, after all, mere words; the religiosity of the Breton is genuine, but in its colour it is really “heathen“ rather than Christian; primeval popular religion lived on here under the mask of Catholicism; moreover, who would not see in the ineradicable loyalty of this people to the throne a Germanic characteristic which is just as common as the love of war and loyalty to the flag among the Irish, who in politics agitate against England, but at the same time voluntarily furnish a large proportion of the English Army, and go abroad to die for the same alien king, to whom they are so hostile at home? But the close relationship between Celts and Germanic peoples (in the narrower sense of the word) reveals itself most strikingly in their poetry. From the first Frankish, German and English poetry were closely allied to genuine Celtic, not that the former people did not possess motives of their own, but they adopted the Celtic ones as being originally akin to them, and in these there is a something strange, something not quite understood, because half-forgotten, which lends them increased piquancy and charm. Celtic poetry is incomparably profound,

inexhaustibly rich in symbolical meaning; it was manifestly in its far distant origin intimately connected

* Wilhelm Henke: *Der Typus des germanischen Menschen* (Tübingen, 1895). Similarly Treitschke: *Politik* i. 279.

504 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

with music, the soul of our Germanic poetry. If we examine the works which were written when the poetic impulse once more awoke to life, about the turn of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, in all Germanic lands, but above all in the lands of the Franks — when we on the one hand consider the *Geste de Charlemagne*, the *Rolandslied*, the *Berte aus grans piès*, *Ogier le Danois* &c., all independent efforts of Frankish imaginative power, and on the other hand see Celtic poetry live again in the legends of the *Queste du Graal*, *Artus' Tafelrunde*, *Tristan und Isolde*, *Parzival*, &c., we cannot for a moment doubt where the deeper, richer, more genuine and poetically inexhaustible wealth of imagination and thought is to be found. And this Celtic poetry of the thirteenth century was at a disadvantage, since it appeared not in its own form, but robbed of the wings of song, expanded to romance form, quickened with knightly, Roman and Christian beliefs, its genuine poetical kernel almost as much obscured by alien accretions as the Norse myths in the German *Nibelungenlied*. The further back we go, the more clearly do we recognise — in spite of all individual differences — the intimate relationship between old Celtic and old Germanic poetical tendency; from stage to stage backwards something is lost, so that, for example, although Gottfried's *Tristan* as a poem undoubtedly surpasses the French versions of the same subject, yet several of the deepest and finest traits, upon which this incomparable, poetical, mythical and symbolical legend is based, are lacking in it, while the old French romance possesses them and Chrestien de Troyes had at least given a suggestion of them; the same is true of Wolfram's *Parzival*. * But this relationship reveals itself most convincingly and impressively when we see that in reality it was only

* In this place I have used the results of some of my own studies (*cf. Notes sur Parsifal* and *Notes sur Tristan* in the *Revue Wagnérienne*, 1886 and 1887).

505 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

German music that was able to awaken to new life the old Celtic and old Germanic poetry in their original intention and significance; this we have learnt from the artistic achievements of the nineteenth century, which at the same time revealed the close relationship between both these sources.

THE GERMANIC SLAV

Of the genuine Slav there is less to be said, since we are at a loss where to look for him, and are sure of only one thing, that in his case there has been a transformation of the type, so that the thick-set body, round head, high cheek-bones, dark hair, which we to-day consider to be typically Slavonic, were certainly not characteristics of the Slav at the time when he entered European history. But even to-day the fair type predominates in the north and east of European Russia, and the Pole, too, is distinguished from the southern Slav by the colour of his skin (Virchow). In Bosnia one is struck with the tallness of the men and the prevalence of fair hair. The so-called Slavonic type which merges into the Mongolian I have not once met in a journey of several months across that country, any more than the characteristic "potato-face" of the Czech peasant; the same may be said of the splendid race of the Montenegrins. * In spite, therefore, of the universal prejudice, there are, as we see, enough physical indications that the Germanic man, when he entered history, had, in addition to an elder brother in

* On the other hand the shape of the skull has undergone a gradual change: among the present inhabitants of Bosnia we find not quite 1½ per cent. of long heads, while there are, on the other hand, 84 per cent. of distinctly round heads; the oldest graves show 29 per cent. of long heads and 34 per cent. of round ones, and graves from the time of the Middle Ages 21 per cent. of long heads. (See Weisbach: *Altbosnische Schädel*, in the *Mitteilungen der anthropologischen Gesellschaft in Wien*, 1897.) It is interesting to hear that the formation of the face, in spite of the change of skull, has remained "leptoprosop," i.e., long in shape.

506 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

the west, a younger in the east who was not so very unlike himself. But on the other hand it is exceedingly difficult to unravel the confused skein of what was originally Slavonic, owing to the manifest fact that this branch of the Germanic family was at a very early time almost completely destroyed by other tribes, much earlier and more thoroughly and more mysteriously than the Celts; but this fact should not deter us from recognising and admitting the related features and attempting to sift them out from the mass of what is alien.

But here again our best help will lie in searching the depths of the soul. If I may judge from the one Slavonic language of which I have a slight knowledge, the Servian, I should be inclined to think that a strong family resemblance in poetical gifts to the Celts and Germanic peoples could be proved. The heroic cycle which celebrates the great battle of Kossovopolje (1383), but which beyond doubt goes further back in its poetical motives, reminds one of Celtic and Germanic lyric and epic poetry by the sentiments to which it gives utterance — loyalty unto

death, heroic courage, heroic women, as well as the high respect which these enjoy, the contempt for all possessions in comparison with personal honour. I read in histories of literature that such poems, and heroic figures like Marco Kraljevich are common to all popular poetry; but this is not true, and can only appear so to one whose excess of learning has blinded him to the fine features of individuality. Rama is an essentially different hero from Achilles, and he, again, quite different from Siegfried; while on the other hand the Celtic Tristan betrays in many features direct relationship to the German Siegfried, and that not merely in the external ornaments of the knightly romance (fights with dragons, &c.), which may to some extent be a later addition, but rather in those old, popular creations where Tristan is still a shepherd and Siegfried

507 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

not yet a hero at the Burgundian Court. It is here that we see clearly that, apart from extraordinary strength and the magic charm of invincibility and more such general attributes of heroes, definite ideals form the basis of the poems; and it is in these, not in the former, that the character of a people is reflected. So it is in the case of Tristan and Siegfried: loyalty as the basis of the idea of honour, the significance of maidenhood, victory in downfall (in other words, the true heroism centred in the inner motive, not in the outward success). Such features distinguish a Siegfried, a Tristan, a Parzival not only from a Semitic Samson whose heroism lies in his hair, but equally from the more closely related Achilles. Purity is strange to the Hellenes; faith is not a principle of honour, but only of love (Patroclus); the hero defies death; he does not overcome it, as we can say of the heroes of whom we have spoken. These are just the traits of true relationship which, in spite of all divergences of form, I find in Servian poetry. The fact alone that their heroic cycle groups itself around, not a victory, but a great defeat, the fatal battle of Kossovo, is of great significance; for the Servians have won victories enough and had been under Stephan Duschan a powerful State. Here, then, beyond question we find a special tendency of character, and we may with certainty conclude that the rich store of such poetical motives — all referring to destruction, death, everlasting separation of lovers — did not spring up only after that unfortunate battle and under the brutalising rule of Mohammedanism, but is an old legacy, exactly as the Fate of the Nibelungs, “*aller Leid Ende*,” and not the Fortune of the Nibelungs, was the German legacy, and exactly as Celtic and Frankish poets neglected a hundred famous victors to sing of the obscure conquered Roland, and to let primitive poetical inspiration once more live through him, in a half-historical new youth. Such things tell their tale. And just as decisive

508 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

is the peculiar way in which woman is represented among the Servians — so delicate, brave and chaste — also the very great part which poetry assigns to her. On the other hand, only a specialist can decide whether the two ravens that fly up over Kossovo at the end of the battle, to proclaim to the Servian people its downfall, are related to Wotan's ravens, or whether we have here a general Indo-Germanic motive, a relic of the nature myths, a case of borrowing, a coincidence. And so, too, in reference to a thousand details. But fortunately here, as everywhere, the element that is really important is manifest to every unbiased observer. In Russian poetry we seem to find little but legends, fairy tales and songs of the olden time; but here too the melancholy on the one hand and on the other the intimate relation to nature, particularly to the animal world (Bodenstedt: *Poetische Ukraine*), are unmistakably Germanic.

It is not my intention to carry this investigation further; want of space as well as my plan forbids me. Let criticism put to the test the truth of what unerring feeling will reveal to every one who has the sense of poetry; that is the critic's duty. I must, however, mention the second manifestation of the soul-life by which the Germanic element in the Slav clearly reveals itself — Religion.

In whatever direction we glance, we behold the Slav, especially in early times, distinguished by earnestness and independence in religious matters. And one of the principal features of this religiosity is the fact that it is saturated with patriotic feelings. As early as the ninth century, even before the parting between east and west had taken place for ever, we see the Bulgarians in the interest of questions of dogma maintaining equally friendly relations with Rome and with Constantinople. What they demand is solely the recognition of the independence of their Church; Rome refuses it, Byzantium

509 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

grants it. And thus in the first half of the tenth century is founded the first Christian Church which has an independent constitution. * The immense importance of such an event must be immediately manifest to every one. With Michael of Bulgaria it was no question of divergences of faith; he was a Christian, and ready to believe everything that the priests proclaimed as Christian truth. In his case it was solely a question of constitution; he wanted to see his Bulgarian Church managed by a Bulgarian Patriarch with complete independence; no Prince of the Church in Rome or Byzantium should interfere. This may seem to many to be merely an administrative question, but in reality it is the rising of the Germanic spirit of free individuality against the last incorporation of the imperium which was born of the chaos, and represented the anti-

national, anti-individual and levelling principle. This is not the place to enter more fully into this subject; that can be done only in the two following chapters. But when we encounter the same process everywhere among the Slavs, we cannot deny its significance as a symptom to aid our judgment of their original character. No sooner had the Servians established their kingdom than they made for themselves an autonomous Church; and the great Czar Stephan Duschan defended his patriarch against the suzerain pretensions of the Byzantine Church and forced the latter to recognise him legally. There, too, it was not a matter of faith; for at that time (the middle of the fourteenth century) the schism between Rome and Constantinople was a fact of long standing and the Servians were already as they are to-day, fanatically orthodox members of the Greek Church; but just as the Bulgarians resisted the interference of Rome, so the Servians resisted that of Constantinople. The principle is the same — the maintenance of nationality. The Russian Church certainly took much

* Cf. Hergenröther: *Photius* ii. 614.

510 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

longer to free itself; indeed only long after the destruction of the Byzantine Empire did it do so. But Russia can only in a very qualified and un-Germanic sense be called a Slavonic land, and yet it and England are the only pre-eminent nations of modern Europe that possess an absolutely national Church with a national head. It is, further, a specially striking fact that the Slavs are the only Christians (with the exception of the Czechs, who are subject to German influence) who have never tolerated divine service in any language but their own! The great “Slavonic apostles“ Cyrillus and Methodius had trouble on this account; though persecuted by the German prelates who clung to the “three sacred languages“ (Greek, Latin, Hebrew), though denounced as heretics by the Roman Pope, they yet succeeded in gaining this point as a special right: the strictly Roman Catholic Slavs had also their Slavonic Mass, and even in the last years of the nineteenth century Rome had not succeeded in wresting this privilege from the Dalmatians. But all this forms only one side of Slavonic religion, the external (though hardly external in reality); the other side is still more striking. In Russia, in those parts where we find the greatest percentage of genuine Slavs (that is in Little Russia, the home of that beautiful poetry which I have alluded to above), there manifests itself to-day by the never-ceasing formation of sects an intensive inner religious life similar to that of Würtemberg and Scandinavia. The relationship is striking. Of this in the so-called “Latin“ countries there is no trace. It is in such matters that the inmost nature of the soul is reflected. And here, too, it is a question of a lasting quality, which asserted itself in every century despite all blood-mixtures. The

extreme trouble experienced in converting the Slavs to Christianity is a testimony to their deeply religious nature: Italians and Gauls were the easiest to convert, Saxons could be won only by the power of the sword,

511 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

but it took long years and fearful cruelties to make the Slavs give up the faith of their fathers. * The notorious persecutions of the heathen lasted, in fact, to the century of Gutenberg. Very characteristic is the attitude here also of those genuine, still almost pure Slavs in Bosnia and Herzegovina. At an earlier period the influential part of the nation adopted the doctrines of Bogumil (allied to those of the Catharists or Patariens); that is, they rejected everything Jewish in Christianity and retained besides the New Testament only the Prophets and the Psalms, they recognised no sacraments and above all no priesthood. Though unceasingly opposed, oppressed and crushed from two sides simultaneously — by the orthodox Servians and the Hungarians who obeyed every sign of the Roman Pope — though they were thus the bloody victims of a double and continuous crusade, this little people nevertheless clung to its faith for centuries; the graves of the heroic followers of Bogumil still adorn the peaks of the hills, to which the corpses were borne to avoid the danger of desecration. It was the Mohammedans who, by forcible conversion, first did away with this sect. The same spirit, which animated a brave but ignorant people in a remote corner of the earth, in other places bore richer fruits, whereby the Slavonic branch distinguished itself just as much as the other branches of the Germanic family.

THE REFORMATION

The most important event in the nineteen centuries that have passed is undoubtedly the so-called “Reformation“: at the bottom of it there is a double principle, a national and a religious; common to both is the freeing

* The first division of the sixth book of Neander's *Allgemeine Geschichte der Christlichen Religion und Kirche* shows how difficult it was to convert the Wends and Poles to Christianity.

512 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

from the alien yoke, the shaking off of that “dead hand“ of the extinct Roman Empire, which stretched not only over the goods and money, but also over the thoughts and feelings and faith and hope of humanity. Nowhere does the organic unity of Slavonic Germanicism manifest itself more convincingly than in this revolt against Rome. To understand this

movement from the standpoint of national psychology, one must, to begin with, pay no attention to any dogmatic disputes concerning creed; it is not what people consider the truth in regard to the nature of the Communion that is important, it is a question solely of two directly contradictory principles, freedom and slavery. The greatest of the reformers points out that so far as he is concerned he is not contending for political rights, and he goes on to say, "but in spirit and conscience we are of all men the most independent: here we believe no one, trust no one, fear no one, but Christ alone." This signifies the freeing of the individual as well as of the nation. And when we have thus learned that the "Reformation" should be regarded not as a purely ecclesiastical affair but as a revolt of our whole nature against alien rule, of the Germanic soul against un-Germanic spiritual tyranny, we must at the same time admit that the "reform" began as soon as the Germanic peoples by culture and leisure had awakened to consciousness, and that this revolt still goes on. * Scotus Erigena (in the ninth century) is a reformer, since he refuses to obey the commands of Rome, and prefers to die by the dagger of the assassin than give up an iota of his "freedom of mind and conscience"; Abelard in the eleventh century is a reformer, since with all his orthodoxy he refuses to be deprived of the freedom of his religious conceptions and attacks in addition the administration of the Roman Church, the

* The anthropologist Lapouge says in his purely scientific definition of the *Homo europaeus*: „en religion il est protestant.“ See *Dépopulation de la France*, p. 79.

513 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

sale of indulgences, &c.; and in exactly the same way such lights of the Catholic Church as Döllinger and Reusch in the nineteenth century are reformers; not a single dogmatic question separated them from Rome, except the one question, freedom. In this momentous movement not only the Germanic peoples in the narrower sense of the word, not only the Celts, but also the Slavs distinguished themselves. What I said in the last paragraph about their refusing to permit alien interference in their Church administration, and their regarding the mother tongue as their most sacred legacy, should be repeated here; both signify the denial of the essential principles of Rome. But these endeavours were more deeply rooted; in the depth of their hearts it was a question of religion, not merely of nation. And as soon as the Reformation had gained a strong hold — which happened first in distant England — the Slavonic Catholics crowded to Oxford, drawn thither by the affinity of the most sacred feelings. It is quite certain that without the great Martin Luther the Reformation would never have become what it did — our most modern historians may say what they like, nature knows no greater power than that of one great strong man — but the soil on which this

German could develop his full strength, the atmosphere in which alone his cause could prosper, were primarily the creations of Bohemia and of England. * Even a hundred years before the birth of Luther every third man in England was an anti-Papist, and Wyclif's translation of the Bible was known throughout the whole land. Bohemia did not lag behind; already in the thirteenth century the New Testament was read in the Czech language, and at the beginning of the fifteenth century Hus edited the complete Bible in the language of the people. But the most quickening influence was

* Luther writes to Spalatin, February 1520: „*Vide monstra, quaeso, in quae venimus sine duce et doctore Bohemico.*“

514 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

that of Wyclif; he was the first to open the eyes of the Slavs to evangelic truth, so that Hieronymus of Prague could say of him: “Hitherto we have had only the shell, Wyclif has revealed the kernel.” * We get an altogether false idea of the Slavonic reformation if we direct attention principally to Hus and the Hussite wars; the predominance of political combinations, as well as of the enmity between Czechs and Germans from that time forth confused men's minds and obscured the pure object of their endeavour which at first had been so clear. Even a hundred years before Hus lived Milič, who, though an orthodox Catholic and disinclined by his interest in practical ministry to all speculation concerning dogma, invented the expression Antichrist for the Roman Church; in the prison at Rome he wrote his treatise, *De Antichristo*, in which he shows that the Antichrist will not come in the future, but is already there, he is heaping up “clerical” riches, buying prebends and selling sacraments. Mathias von Janow then expands this thought and thus paves the way for the real theological Reformation; he certainly champions the one sacred Church, but it must be thoroughly purified and built up anew: “It remains for us now only to wish that the Reformation may be made possible by the destruction of the Antichrist; let us raise our heads, for salvation is already near at hand!” (1389). He is followed by Stanislaus von Znaim, who defends before the University of Prague the forty-five theses of Wyclif; Hus, who makes a clear distinction between the “Apostolic” and the “Papal” and declares that he will obey the former, but the latter only in as far as it agrees with the Apostolic; Nikolaus von Welenowič, who denies the position of the priests as privileged intercessors with God; Hieronymus, that splendid knight and martyr, who moved even the indifferent Papal secretary Poggio, who was more interested in Hellenic

* Neander, ix. 314.

515 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

literature than in Christianity and chiefly known as a collector and editor of obscene anecdotes, to utter the words, "O what a man, worthy of immortal fame!" And many others. Clearly we have not the achievement of a single, perhaps erratic mind in all this; on the contrary it is the soul of a nation — at least everything that was genuine and noble in that people — that expresses itself. It is well known what fate overcame this noble section, how it was wiped off the face of the earth. The Pope and the Roman bishops had bribed the army of international mercenaries, and from them it received its death-blow at the White Mountain. * Nor is it a question of a Czech idiosyncrasy; the other Catholic Slavs adopted exactly the same attitude. Thus, for example, the hymns of Wyclif were printed in the first Polish printing-press; Poland sent to the Council of Trent bishops whose sympathies were so distinctly Protestant that the Pope accused them before the king of being rabid heretics. But the Polish Parliament was not intimidated; it demanded from the King a complete reorganisation of the Polish Church upon the one basis of the Holy Scriptures. At the same time it demanded — *mirabile dictu!* — the "equal rights of all sects." The nobility of Poland and all the intellectual aristocracy were Protestant. But the Jesuits profited by the political confusion, which soon arose, to gain a firm footing in the land, and they were supported by France and Austria; the process was not "bloody and speedy," as Canisius had demanded, but the Protestants were nevertheless persecuted more and more cruelly and finally banished; with the downfall of its religion the Polish nation also fell. †

* Döllinger: *Das Haus Wittelsbach*, Akad. Vorträge i. 38.

† Read the exceedingly interesting work of Count Valerian Krasinski: *Geschichte des Ursprungs, Fortschritts und Verfalls der Reformation in Polen*, Leipzig, 1841. Nowhere else, perhaps, is to be found so complete, abundant, convincing and perfectly treated material as in Poland, to see how religious intolerance and especially the influence of the Jesuits completely ruined a land which was advancing

516 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

As these facts are not universally known, I have had to emphasise them in some detail, sufficiently, I hope, to pave the way for the conviction that the genuine Teuton, the genuine Celt, and the genuine Slav are originally and intimately related. At the moment when these races enter history, we do not find three ethnical souls side by side, but one uniform soul. Though the Celts have in many places, but not everywhere as I have shown above, undergone such physical changes by assimilating Virchow's hypothetical "Pre-Celts" and elements from the Latin chaos of peoples, that the so-called Celt of to-day is the very contrary of the original Celtic type; though a like fate may, to a still more

regrettable degree, have overtaken the tall fair Slavs, who remind us of Norsemen, yet throughout the centuries we have seen the working of that distinct and thoroughly individual spirit, which I unhesitatingly call the Germanic, because the genuine Teuton, in the usual, limited sense of the word,

towards a brilliant future in every intellectual and industrial sphere. We can best see the attitude of the Poles to Rome before the time of Luther in the speech delivered by Johann Ostrorog in the assembly of the States in the year 1459, in which he said, "We cannot object to the recommending of this land as a Catholic one to the protection of the Pope, but it is unbecoming to promise him unbounded obedience. The King of Poland is subject to no one, and only God is over him; he is not the vassal of Rome... &c. &c."; then he inveighs against the shameless simony of the Papal stool, the sale of indulgences, the greed of the priests and monks, &c. (see p. 36 ff.). This whole Polish movement is, like the Bohemian, distinguished by a fresh breath of independence and national feeling and at the same time indifference to and depreciation of dogmatic questions (the Poles never were Utraquists); and (just as in Bohemia) it is born Germans who contend for Rome and gain the victory over religious and political freedom. Hosen (Cardinal Hosius) — the man who sends Cardinal de Guise a letter of congratulation on the murder of Admiral Coligny and who "thanks God for the great gift that France has received through the night of St. Bartholomew and prays that God may look upon Poland with equal mercy" — this same Hosen is at the head of the anti-national reaction, he introduces the Jesuits into the land, he forbids the reading of Holy Scripture, he teaches that the subject has absolutely no rights in reference to his prince, &c. If such a man is Germanic, and those champions of freedom are not, then this name is purely and simply a term of reproach.

517 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

in spite of all blood crossings, preserved this spirit in its purest and therefore most powerful form. This is not hair-splitting but a question of historical insight in the widest sense; I have no intention of putting down to the Germanic races, or indeed to the German, achievements which they did not accomplish, or of assigning to them fame which belongs to others. On the contrary, I wish to call to life again the feeling for the great northern brotherhood, and that, too, without binding myself to any racial or prehistoric hypothesis whatever, but solely by relying upon what is clear to every eye. I do not even postulate the blood-relationship; indeed I believe in it, but I am too well aware of the extreme complexity of this problem, I see too clearly that the true progress of science has here chiefly consisted in the discovery of our boundless ignorance and the inadequacy of all hypotheses hitherto formulated, to have any desire on my own part to continue building new castles in the air, when every genuine scientist is beginning to keep silence. "Everything is simpler than we can think, and at the same time more complicated than we can comprehend," as Goethe says. In the meantime we have met with relations in spirit, in sentiment and physical form: that may satisfy us. We have a definite something in hand, and since this something is not a definition, but consists of living men, I refer the reader to the study of the

real Celts, Teutons and Slavs, that he may learn what is the true Germanic character.

LIMITATIONS OF THE NOTION

I think I have now shown what is to be understood by the necessary extension of the idea; but in what does the limitation which I described as equally necessary consist? Here, too, the answer will be twofold, referring to physical qualities on the one hand, to intellectual

518 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

on the other; but fundamentally these two things are really manifestations of the same thing.

The physical consideration must not be undervalued; indeed it would perhaps be difficult to over-estimate it. I have tried to show the reason, in the discussion of the race question in the previous chapter but one; besides this fact is one of those which mere instinct — that thin silken thread of connection with the tissue of nature — lets us directly feel, without learned proof. For just as the dissimilarity of human individuals can be read in their physiognomy, so the dissimilarity of human races can be read in the structure of their bones, the colour of their skin, their muscular system and the formation of their skull; there is perhaps not a single anatomical fact upon which race has not impressed its special distinguishing stamp. As is well known, even our nose, this organ of ours which has grown rigid and frostily motionless and which, according to certain followers of Darwin, is on the way to even greater monumentalisation by complete ossification — even our nose, which in city life to-day is a dispenser of discomforts rather than of joys, a mere burdensome appendage, stands from the cradle to the grave in the centre of our countenance as a witness to our race! We must therefore, in the first place, strongly emphasise the fact that these North Europeans — the Celts, Teutons and Slavs — were physically different from the other Indo-Europeans, distinguished from the Southern Europeans in stature, “and like to themselves only,” * but we must at once make the first limitation here, namely, that whoever does not possess these physical characteristics, no matter though he were born in the very heart of Germania

* During the last years the conviction is growing among the learned that the Germanic peoples did not emigrate from Asia to Europe, but were settled in Europe from earliest times (see Wilser: *Stammbaum der arischen Völker*, 1889 (Naturw. Wochenschr.); Schrader: *Sprachvergleichung und Urgeschichte*, 2. Auflage, 1890; Taylor: *The Origin of the Aryans*, 1890. Beck: *Der Urmensch*, 1899, &c.).

519 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

speaking a Germanic tongue from childhood, cannot be regarded as genuinely Germanic. The importance of this physical motive power is easier to prove in the case of great national phenomena than in individuals, for it may happen that an especially gifted individual assimilates an alien culture and then, just because of his different nature, achieves something new and profitable; on the other hand, the particular value of race becomes clear as soon as it is a question of collective achievements, as I can impress at once upon the German reader when I tell him in the words of a recognised authority that “the privileged great statesmen and military leaders of the time of the founding of the new empire are mostly of the purest Germanic descent,” like the “storm-ried seamen of the North Sea coast and the keen chamois-hunters of the Alps.” * These are facts which should be pondered long and carefully. In their presence the senselessness of the well-known phrases of natural scientists, Parliamentarians, &c., concerning the equality of the human races † becomes so plain that one is almost ashamed of having listened to them even with one ear. They let us also see in what definitely conditional sense the well-known remark of that thorough Teuton, [Paul de Lagarde](#), may claim validity, namely, that “Germanism does not lie in the blood, but in the mind.” In the case of the individual, the mind may indeed rule the blood, and the idea conquer, but it is not so with the great mass. And in order to measure the importance of the physical element, as well as its limitation, one should remember further that that which may be called the Germanic idea is a very delicately constructed, many-jointed organism. One requires only to look at the Jewish idea by way of comparison, this infancy of art, the whole cunning of which lies in binding the human

* Henke: *Der Typus des germanischen Menschen*, p. 33.

† See pp. [259 ff.](#), [392 note 2](#), 531.

520 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

soul as tightly as Chinese ladies do their feet, the only difference being that these ladies can no longer move about, whereas a half-throttled soul is easier to carry and causes the busied body less trouble than a fully developed one, laden with its dreams. In consequence of this it is comparatively easy “to become a Jew,” difficult, on the contrary, almost to the verge of impossibility “to become Germanic”; here as everywhere the power of the idea is supreme; but one should guard against following a true principle so far as to overlook the connection of natural phenomena. The richer the mind, the more closely and manifoldly is it connected with the substructure of a definitely formed blood. It is self-evident that in the unfolding of human qualities, the further their development has advanced, the higher must the differentiation in the

physical substratum of our mental life have become, and the more and more delicate its tissues. Thus we saw in the former chapter how the noble Amorite disappeared from the world: by fusion with unrelated races his physiognomy was, as it were, wiped away, his gigantic form shrunk together, his spirit fled: the simple *homo syriacus* is, on the other hand, the same to-day as he was a thousand years ago and the mongrel Semite has to his perpetual contentment come out of the mixture in the crystallised form of the "Jew." The same has happened everywhere. What a magnificent people the Spaniards were! For centuries the West Goths were strictly forbidden to marry "Romans" (as the rest of the inhabitants were called), whereby a feeling of race nobility was developed, which long prevented mixing even at a time when such a fusion of the population was desired and enforced by the authorities; but gradually ever deeper and deeper breaches were made in the dam, and after mingling with Iberians, with the numerous remnants of the Roman chaos of peoples, with Africans of the most various origin,

521 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

with Arabs and Jews, they lost all that the Germanic people had brought with them: their military superiority, their unconditional loyalty (*see Calderon!*), their high religious ideal, their capacity for organising, their rich artistic creative power; we see to-day what remained over, when the Germanic "blood," as the physical substratum, was destroyed. * Let us therefore not be in too great a hurry to assert that Germanicism does not lie in blood; it does lie in it; not in the sense that this blood guarantees Germanic sentiment and capacity, but that it makes these possible.

This limitation is therefore a very clear one: as a rule that man only is Germanic who is descended from Germanic ancestors.

I must, however, immediately call attention to the necessity of the previous extension of the idea, in order that this limitation may be intelligibly applied. Otherwise we must arrive at such comical conclusions as even Henke is guilty of in the pamphlet already quoted, when he says that Luther was not genuinely Germanic or that the Swabians, who are rightly regarded in the whole world as the finest representatives of pure Germanicism, are likewise not genuinely Germanic! A man whose descent and countenance prove him to be the product of a mixture

* Cf. Savigny's *Geschichte des römischen Rechtes im Mittelalter*, i., chaps. iii. v. This keeping of the Germanic race pure for centuries, in the midst of an inferior population, is seen not only in Spain but also in Northern Italy, where the Teutons lived under separate laws into the fourteenth century. *See details below and in vol. ii. chap. ix.* When criticising this book, Professor Dr. Paul Barth wrote in the *Vierteljahrsschrift für wissenschaftliche Philosophie*, 1901, p. 75, "Chamberlain might have gone further than he does into the influence of Semitic blood in Spain. By the addition of Semitic blood the Spaniards have become fanatical, they have carried every idea to its extreme, so

that it loses all its reason and sense: religious devotion even to “cadaver-obedience“ towards their superiors, politeness which is painful, ceremonious etiquette, honour which has become the most insane sensitiveness, pride which is ridiculous grandezza, so that Spanish in popular speech among us has become almost equivalent to absurd.“

522 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

of genuine German and genuine Slavonic blood, as Henke demonstrates in Luther's case, is genuinely Germanic, the child of a fortunate union; the same can be said of the Swabians, in whose case a close union of Celts and Germans has taken place and laid the foundation of rich poetical powers and remarkable strength of character. I have already spoken of the great advantages of crossing between nearly related peoples (chap. iv., pp. [277-283](#)); this law proved its validity everywhere in the case of the Teutons: among the French, where the most manifold crossings of Germanic types produced a superabundance of rich talents, and where even to-day, in consequence of the existence of many centres of the most diverse pure race cultures, rich life manifests itself, among the English, the Saxons, the Prussians, &c. Treitschke calls attention to the fact that the “State-building power of Germany“ has never lain in the pure German stems. “The true pioneers and promoters of culture in Germany were in the Middle Ages the South Germans, who are mixed with Celtic elements; in modern history it is the North Germans who are mixed with Slavs. * These results are at the same time a proof of the close relationship of the North Europeans, that human type which we can with Lapouge and Linnaeus call the *homo europaeus*, but better and more simply the Teuton. Now and only now we learn how in reference to ourselves we should distinguish between crossing and crossing. By crossing with each other Germanic peoples suffer no harm — rather the reverse; but when they cross with aliens they gradually deteriorate.

FAIR HAIR

But this limitation, which is so clear in the general definition, is unfortunately very difficult to apply in individual cases. For it will be asked: By what physical

* *Politik* i. 279.

523 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

characteristics can one recognise the Teuton? Is, for example, fairness really a characteristic feature of all Germanic peoples? This seems to form a fundamental dogma, not only for the old historians, but also for the most modern anthropologists, and yet certain facts make me doubt it very much. In the first place there is the fact, which naturally is ignored

by Virchow and his colleagues, blinded as they are by political prejudice; I mean the prevalence of dark colour among the members of the most genuine old Germanic nobility. In England this is quite striking. Tall, spare-built figures, long skulls, long countenances, the well-known Moltke type with the large nose and the clean-cut profile (which Henke too considers characteristically “pure Germanic”), genealogies which go back to the Norman period, in short, beyond doubt genuine Teutons in physique and history — but black hair. Eckermann was struck by the brown eyes of Wellington. * In Germany I have noted the same in various families of old hereditary nobility. Moreover it has appeared to me remarkable that poets from the extreme north of Germany pretty frequently speak of dark hair as a characteristic feature not only of the nobility but also of the people; thus, for example, in Theodor Storm's story, *Hans und Heinz Kirch*, those genuine defiant Germanic seamen have both “dark brown hair,” and of another daring figure, Hasselfritz, the poet says that he has brown eyes and brown hair; those genuine Teutons therefore resemble Achilles with his “brown hair.” How often, too, in the folksongs do “dark brown eyes“ occur! Burns, too, the Scottish peasant-poet, loves the “nut-brown maidens“ of his home. † Once while on a voyage in Norway north of the 70th degree I was driven out of my course to a group of islands rarely visited by strangers, and to my astonishment

* *Gespräche mit Goethe*, 16.2.1826.

† Goethe, too, makes “black hair“ and “black eyes“ heroic attributes.

524 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

I found among the fair fishing population individuals who corresponded exactly to that type: remarkably finely built men with noble, imposing Viking physiognomy, and in addition almost raven-black hair. Later I met this type in the south-east of Europe, in the German colonies of Slavonia, which, settled there for centuries, have kept their German race stainlessly pure amid the Slavs: the figure, the Moltke type (or, as the English say, the Wellington type), and the black hair distinguish these people from their neighbours, who are chiefly fair and have more or less expressionless countenances. However, we do not require to go so far; we find this type almost the predominant one in German Tyrol, whose inhabitants Henke says “represent the true type of the primeval Teuton.“ The same scholar explains their having, for the most part, dark and often black hair by the fact that the “sun has burned them black,” and is of opinion that colour is “the quality which changes most easily with time.“ But Virchow's researches had long ago proved the opposite (*see p. 385*) and we might answer this assertion with a question, Why was David fair? Why did the Jews take from the Amorites a certain tendency to auburn hair and nothing more? What sun has darkened the hair of the English

nobility and of the Norwegian in the far north, where the sun is not seen for months? No, certainly we have here to deal with other conditions, which must first be cleared up physiologically, for, so far as I am aware, it has not yet been done. * Just as certain red flowers at certain places or under the influence of conditions which are hidden from human observation grow up blue in colour (sometimes red and blue on the same stem), and black animal species sometimes produce white varieties, so it is not unthinkable that the colour of the hair in a certain

* At least I can find nothing on this point either in the text-books of physiology or in such special works as Waldeyer's.

525 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

human type is as a rule light, but may under certain conditions incline to the opposite extreme of the colour scale. What is decisive in this case is that we find this dark hair in individuals whose genuine Germanic origin is established beyond doubt, not only in the wider but also in the narrower Tacitean sense of the word, and moreover confirmed by their whole outward and inner personality. However, as soon as we look around, we see this very type — tall, spare-built, long-skulled, with Moltke physiognomy, and a “Germanic nature“ — on the southern slopes of the Maritime Alps, for example; we need only go from Cannes and Nice, peopled with the descendants of the chaos, two hours northwards to more remote parts of the mountains: here, too, one finds the black hair. Are they Celts? Are they Goths? Are they Langobardians? I do not know: they are at any rate brothers of the races just named. In the mountains of Northern Italy one finds them also, alternating with the small, round-skulled un-Aryan *homo alpinus*. Regarding the Celts, Virchow has already said that he is “not disinclined to suppose that the original Celtic population was not fair-Aryan but brown-Aryan,“ and armed with this daring “inclination to suppose“ he declares all dark hair to be a sign of an admixture of Celtic blood. But the ancients describe the original Celts as strikingly fair and “red-haired,“ and we can still see them with our own eyes, in Scotland and Wales; this hypothesis stands therefore on but one leg, that the Celts, besides being fair, may also be brown — or rather dark-haired, which is not quite the same thing — and among the pure Celts we can find proofs enough of this. We have therefore here exactly the same phenomenon as in the case of the Germanic peoples. Of the Slavs I can only say one thing, that Virchow declares them to have been “originally fair.“ But not only were they fair, they still are so; we only

526 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

need to let a Bosnian regiment file past to be convinced of it. The map showing the result of Virchow's investigations in the case of school children proves that the whole of Posen, as well as Silesia east of the Elbe, shows the same small percentage of dark people (10-15 per cent.) as the countries that lie farther to the west; the greatest percentage of brown people is found in districts which never a Slav entered, namely, Switzerland, Alsace, and the old German Salzkammergut. Whether or not there are genuine Slavs in whom black hair occurs, I do not know.

From these facts one can draw the irrefutable conclusion that fair hair cannot be arbitrarily assigned to the Teuton, as is so often done; the most genuine sons of this race may be black-haired. The presence of fair hair will certainly always allow us to conjecture Germanic blood (in the wide sense of the term), even though it be a very distant admixture, but the absence of light colour does not justify the opposite conclusion. One must therefore be careful in the application of this limitation; the hair alone is not a sufficient criterion, the other physical characteristics must also be taken into consideration.

THE SHAPE OF THE SKULL

This brings us to the further, equally difficult question: that of the form of skull. Here it appears as if a boundary could and must be drawn. For, however complex matters are to-day, in old times they were very simple: the old Germanic peoples of Tacitus, as well as the Slavs, were for the most part distinctly long-skulled; the long skull and the long face beneath it are such unmistakable marks of race that one may well ask whether he who does not possess them may be regarded as belonging to the race. In the Germanic graves of the time of the Migrations one finds half of the skulls long, that is, with a

527 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

breadth which stands to the length in the relation of 75 (or less) to 100, and with few exceptions the rest of the skulls come near to this artificially chosen proportion; real round skulls (*see p. 374*) hardly occur at all. In the old Slavonic graves the proportion is still more in favour of the extremely long skulls. Little is known regarding the old Celts; but the tendency to long skulls among the Gaels of North Scotland and the Cymbrians of Wales also lends support to the same supposition in their case. * Since then this has changed very much, at least in many countries. It is not so up in the north, in Scandinavia, in Northern Germany (excluding the towns) and in England; on the contrary, the long skulls seem more prevalent in Denmark than among the Germanic peoples of the time of the Migrations: there there are 60 long skulls to the hundred, only six genuine and short ones. But the Slavs of Russia show (according to Kollman) scarcely three long skulls to the hundred, but 72

short skulls and the remainder incline to be short. And the old Bavarians! Johannes Ranke found by measuring the skulls of 1000 living individuals that only one in a hundred possessed the old Germanic skull, while 95 had genuine short skulls! Measurements of the Hellenic skulls of the Classical age and of to-day have produced similar results, but even in the case of the former the middle form of head was predominant; yet a third of them had long skulls, and in their graves fewer genuine short skulls are found than in Germanic graves; to-day, however, more than half are short skulls. That in these phenomena we see the effects of the infiltration of an Un-Germanic race, a race which does not belong at all to the Indo-European circle, but to the raceless chaos, can scarcely be doubted. Much trouble has been taken to sweep aside this conclusion. For instance, Kollmann (Professor in Basle) has sought to emphasise the countenance rather than the skull and to

* Cf. Ranke: *Der Mensch* ii. 298.

528 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

make the distinction one between long faces and short ones; * Johannes Ranke took up the idea and constructed as the specifically Germanic type a long face under a short skull; Henke again would fain believe that there has here been a gradual development, by which the length of the front of the head has increased rather than decreased, while the back has become shorter and shorter; that in consequence the long skull is still present in the case of the Germanic peoples with short skulls, only that it is concealed, &c. But however worthy of consideration all these views may be, the fact still remains that the Germanic peoples, wherever they have not crossed with others or only to a small extent, as in the north, are long-skulled and fair (or, it may be, dark) while this character disappears, first, the nearer one comes to the Alps, secondly, wherever it has been historically proved that there was much crossing with races from the south or with degenerate Celto-Germanic or Slavo-Germanic races.

Naturally the crossings known to history had the quickest influence (Italy, Spain, Southern France, &c., are well-known examples); but besides these mixtures — and where they did not occur this was the sole influence — there was another factor at work, namely, the existence of one or perhaps several prehistoric races, who never (or only indefinitely) appeared in history as races, and who, standing on a lower stage of civilisation, were at an early time conquered and assimilated by the various branches of the Indo-Germanic peoples. This, perhaps, contributes even at the present day to the process of ungermanising. For example, Wilhelm von Humboldt supposed that formerly the Iberians were spread over Europe, and this view has lately been championed by Hommel and others. Even though only a small portion saved itself by

fleeing to the extreme west, the home of

* *Correspondenzblatt der deutschen anthropologischen Gesellschaft*, 1883, No. II.

529 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

the Basques to-day, and though the majority of the men died perhaps by the sword of the enemy, yet one seldom finds complete extinction of the poor and helpless; they are kept as slaves, and the women become the property of the victors. In the Alps the same or perhaps a different race, but at any rate an Un-Germanic and non-Indo-European one had its abode, or at least fled thither as to a last place of security; one is forced to this supposition by the fact that to-day the Alps are the centre of the Un-Germanic, short-skulled, dark type, and that from here they radiate to north and south; the Rhaetian race, which anthropology has shown to be distinct, is perhaps a fairly genuine remnant of those former lake-dwellers and perhaps identical with Virchow's pre-Celts. In the wide districts of Eastern Europe we must also presuppose a special, probably Mongoloid race, to account for the specific deformation which so rapidly transforms the majority of the Germanic Slavs into inferior "Slavonics." How could we then bring ourselves to regard those Europeans who are descended from this altogether Un-Germanic type as "Germanic," simply because they speak an Indo-European language and have assimilated Indo-European culture? I consider it, on the contrary, a most important duty to make a clear distinction here, if we wish to understand past and present history. It is by distinguishing between peoples that we come to recognise the ideas in their special individuality. This is all the more necessary, as we have among us men who are half, a quarter, or perhaps a sixth Germanic, &c., and in consequence we have a mass of ideas and ways of thinking which are Germanic to the extent of a half, a fourth, a sixth, &c., or on the other hand are directly Anti-Germanic. And only by practice in distinguishing between the pure Germanic and the absolutely Un-Germanic can we find our way out of the confusion of this growing chaos. Chaos is everywhere the most dangerous enemy. In

530 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

facing it thought must develop into action; towards this, clearness of conception is the first necessary step; and in the sphere in which we are at present, clearness consists in the recognition that Germanicism to-day contains a large number of Un-Germanic elements, and in the endeavour to separate what is pure from that which contains alien, and in no sense Germanic, ingredients.

Yet, justifiable as it may be to emphasise anatomical research, I am afraid that anatomy alone will not suffice here; on the contrary, it is just on this point that science is at present like a helpless barque tossing to

and fro on a troubled sea; whoever is led away by its illusions is doomed sooner or later to sink. For that which I have just demonstrated concerning the various races who survived in Europe from pre-Aryan times, the Iberians, Rhaetians, &c., although indeed essentially correct, represents only the most elementary simplification of the innumerable hypotheses which, at the present moment, are afloat in the air, and every day the matter becomes more complicated. Thus — to give the layman only one example — long and careful researches have led to the conclusion that in Scotland, in the earliest stone age, there existed a long-skulled race, but that in the stone age there appeared another exceedingly broad-headed race, which after fusion with the former and with mixed forms was typical of the bronze age; all this took place in the remote past, long before the arrival of the Celts; when these appeared as the vanguard of the Germanic peoples, it can scarcely be doubted that they underwent changes through contact with the race settled there before them, since even to-day, after so many and so strong waves of immigration have swept over that land, we find in many individuals characteristics which, an authority tells us, point back directly and unmistakably to that prehistoric race of the bronze age which sprang

531 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

from the mixing of long skulls and short ones! * Now how can we estimate anatomically the craniological influence of such long-settled races upon the Germanic peoples, if they themselves already possessed long skulls, short skulls, and skulls that are between the two? And why is it that to-day only the short skulls tend to increase? But here again come other men of science who sing a different song: some authorities hold that we have no strong reason for believing in the immigration of the Indo-European. It is their opinion that he was already there in the stone age, was even then distinguished by his long skull from another short-skulled race, and struggled with it for the mastery; that this Long-skull of the stone age was no other than the Germanic individual! Virchow's view, based upon anatomical material, is, that even the oldest Troglodytes of Europe might have been of Aryan descent, at least that no one could prove the contrary. † But with the younger school such cautious and hesitating judgments find no favour; under the pretext of strictly scientific simplification they wave aloft the standard of the chaos and degrade the whole history of humanity as lies. These modern theories have been most clearly expressed by Professor Kollmann. He reduces all the peoples living in Europe to four types: long skulls with long faces, long skulls with short faces, short skulls with short faces, and short skulls with long faces; these four races he supposes to have lived with and beside each other for centuries and to do so still. And now comes the devil's hoof: all that history teaches us about the Migrations, nationalities, mental differences, great creative works of art, which were

executed solely by single national individualities and at best merely taken over by others,

* Sir William Turner: *Early Man in Scotland*. Speech delivered before the Royal Institution in London on January 13, 1898.

† Ranke: *Der Mensch* ii. 578.

532 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

and about the war still waged among us between those elements that advance and those that retard culture... all this is put aside as rubbish and we are called upon to believe the following dogma: "The development of culture is manifestly the common achievement of all these types. All European races, so far as we have penetrated into the secret of the nature of race, are equally gifted for every task of culture." * Equally gifted? One can scarcely believe one's eyes! "Equally gifted" for "every" task! I shall have to return to this point soon; I did not wish to leave the question of craniometry without having pointed out, first, how difficult it is here, too, to separate the Germanic from the non-Germanic by formulas, by the compass and the ruler; secondly, upon what a dangerous path these worthies take us, when they suddenly interrupt their discussion of "chameprosopic, platyrrhinous, mesoconchic, prognathic, proophryocephalous, ooidic, brachyklitometopic, hypsistegobregmatic Dolichocephali" in order to link on to it general remarks about history and culture. The layman understands little or nothing of the remainder; he wades hopelessly about in this barbaric jargon of neoscholastic natural science; only the one point is printed in all the newspapers of Europe as the visible result of such a congress: that the most learned gentlemen in Europe have solemnly protocolled the fact that all the races bear an equal share in the development of culture; there never have been Greeks, Romans, Germanic peoples, Jews, but from time immemorial there have lived peacefully side by side or, it may be, devouring each other, leptoprosopic Dolichocephali, chameprosopic Dolichocephali, leptoprosopic Brachycephali and chameprosopic Brachycephali, "all working unitedly at the furtherance of culture" (*sic!*). It provokes a smile! But crimes

* *Allgemeine Versammlung der deutschen anthropologischen Gesellschaft*, 1892.

533 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

against history are really too serious to be punished merely by being laughed at; the sound common sense of all intelligent men must step vigorously in and put a stop to this: we must say to these worthies, "Cobbler, stick to your last!" *

How utterly unscientific such a proceeding as that of Kollmann must

be is quite manifest. Far-reaching simplification is a law of artistic creating, but not a law of nature; the characteristic thing here is rather endless complexity. What should we say of a botanist who wished to class plants in families according to the length and breadth of their leaves, or according to any other one characteristic? Kollmann's method is a retrograde step as compared with old Theophrastus. As long as men attempted artificial classifications, the systematic knowledge of the plant world did not advance one step; but then came men of genius of the nature of Ray, Jussieu, De Candolle, who by observation united to creative intuition established the chief families of plants and only then discovered the characteristics — mostly very concealed ones — which enabled us to demonstrate the relationship anatomically as well. The same is true of the animal world. All other procedure is absolutely artificial and consequently mere fooling. And hence in the case of man we cannot, as Kollmann does, build up at the anatomist's bidding a system into which facts then have to be fitted as well as may be; we must ascertain precisely what groups actually exist as individualised, morally and intellectually distinguishable races, and then see whether there are any anatomical characteristics which will aid us in classification.

* Cf. the splendid satire by M. Buchner on modern craniometry in the supplement to the Munich *Allgemeine Zeitung*, 1899, No. 282-284. — In the meantime J. Deniker has proposed a new division of all Europeans into six chief and four subordinate races. Thus the picture changes every year!

534 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

RATIONAL ANTHROPOLOGY

This digression into the sphere of anatomical science has had the one good result of revealing to us how little sure help and how little useful or practical instruction we may expect from that source. We are either walking upon sandy and shifting ground or in a quagmire, where we sink at the first step and stick fast, or we must spring from point to point on the exceedingly sharp edges of dogma and at any moment fall into the abyss. The digression has moreover positive advantages: it enriches the material of our knowledge and teaches us to see more clearly. Both history and daily observation teach us that the races are not equally gifted, any more than individuals are; and anthropology shows us further (in spite of Professor Kollmann) that in the case of races which have achieved certain results, a definite physical conformation predominates. The mistake lies in operating with haphazard numbers of objects of comparison and in measuring according to arbitrarily chosen relations. Thus, for example, it is considered a fixed rule that as soon as the breadth of a skull bears the relation of 75:100 or less, then it is “dolichocephalous,” with 76 or even 75¼ it is “mesocephalous” and from

80 onwards “brachycephalous.” Who is the authority? Why should there be a special magic in the number 75? Any other magic than that of my own convenience and laziness? I understand quite well that we cannot get on in daily practice without *termini technici* and limitations, but what I cannot understand is that they should be taken for anything but arbitrary limits and arbitrary words. *

* Very remarkable in this connection are the researches of Dr. G. Walcher, which show that the position of the head of the new-born child exercises a definite influence upon the shape of the skull. In the case of twins from one embryo by this means the one was developed into a distinct dolichocephalous, the other to a brachycephalous child. (See *Zentralblatt für Gynäkologie*, 1905, No. 7.)

535 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

This applies to the high and low countenances just as well as to the long and short skulls; everywhere it is a question of relations which merge by degrees into each other. But it is the nature of life to be plastically mutable; the living principle of creation is fundamentally different from the crystalline principle in this, that it does not shape according to unchangeable relations of numbers but that it in a way freely creates, while observing the harmony of parts and retaining the fundamental scheme which is given by the nature of the thing itself. No two individuals are like each other. To survey the physical structure of a race at any given moment, I should require to have before me all the representatives of that race and seek out in this crowd the uniform and uniting idea, the predominant specific tendency of physical conformation, which is peculiar to this race as race; I should see it with my eyes. If I had had, say at the time of Tacitus, all the Germanic peoples before my eyes: the still unmixed Celts, the Teutons and the Germanic Slavs, I should certainly have seen a harmonious whole, in which a certain law of structure predominated, and round it the most manifold and varying conformations would have grouped themselves. Probably there would not have been a single individual who united in himself all the specific characteristics of this plastic idea of race (in the way in which it would have appeared to my thinking brain) in the highest potentiality and in perfect harmony: the great radiant heavenly eyes, the golden hair, the gigantic stature, the symmetrical muscular development, the lengthened skull (which an ever-active brain, tortured by longing, had changed from the round lines of animal contentedness and extended towards the front), the lofty countenance, required by an elevated spiritual life as the seat of its expression — certainly no single individual would have possessed all these features. Were one feature perfect the other would be merely

536 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

indicated. Here and there, too, nature, which is ever experimenting and never repeating itself, would have broken the law of harmony, an overgrown giant would swing his club over dull eyes, under too long a skull would be seen a face proportionately too short, glorious eyes would beam from beneath a fine lofty forehead, but in comparison, the body would be strikingly small, &c. &c., *ad infinitum*. In other groups again secret laws of the correlation of growth must have manifested themselves; here, for example, families with black hair, but at the same time with particularly large daring aquiline noses and more slender build, there red hair with remarkably white freckled skin and countenance somewhat broader in the upper part... for the slightest change in the conformation causes other changes. Still more numerous must those figures have been from which in their average commonplaceness no specific law of structure could have been derived, if they had not appeared as portions of a large whole, in which their place was definitely fixed, so that we could see from the way in which they fitted in that organically they did belong to it. Darwin himself, who worked all his life with compass, ruler and weighing machine, is always in his studies on artificial breeding calling attention to the fact that the eye of the born and experienced breeder discovers things of which figures give not the slightest confirmation, and which the breeder himself can hardly ever express in words; he notices that this and that distinguishes the one organism from the other, and makes his selection for breeding accordingly; this is an intuition born of ceaseless observation. This power of observation we can acquire only by practice; the survey of the Germanic peoples in the time of Tacitus would have served our purpose. We should certainly not have found that in the case of all these men the breadth of the head bore to the length the proportion of 75:100; nature knows

537 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

no such limitations; in the unlimited complexity of all thinkable intermediate forms, as well as of forms of greater development towards this or that extreme, we should probably here and there have encountered distinct brachycephali; discoveries in graves make it probable, and why should the plasticity of creative powers not have brought it about? We should, moreover, not have seen nothing but "giants" and be able to say that he who did not exceed six feet high was not Germanic: on the other hand, we might quite well have made the seemingly paradoxical statement, that the small men of this group are tall, for they belong to a tall race, and for the same reason those short skulls are long; if we look more closely we shall soon see that outwardly and inwardly they have specific characteristics of the Germanic people. The hieroglyphs of nature's language are in fact not so logically

mathematical, so mechanically explicable as many an investigator likes to fancy. Life is needed to understand life. And here a fact occurs to me which I have received from various sources, viz., that very small children, especially girls, frequently have quite a marked instinct for race. It frequently happens that children who have no conception of what "Jew" means, or that there is any such thing in the world, begin to cry as soon as a genuine Jew or Jewess comes near them! The learned can frequently not tell a Jew from a non-Jew; the child that scarcely knows how to speak notices the difference. Is not that something? To me it seems worth as much as a whole anthropological congress or at least a whole speech of Professor Kollmann. There is still something in the world besides compass and yard-measure. Where the learned fails with his artificial constructions, one single unbiased glance can illuminate the truth like a sunbeam.

Und was kein Verstand der Verständigen sieht,
Das übet in Einfalt ein kindlich Gemüt.

538 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

We shall not interfere with the craniologists any longer than is necessary; however, we shall not despise the material collected by their diligence: it will be a valuable addition to our knowledge of what is Germanic and an earnest warning in regard to the intrusion amongst us of that which is non-Germanic.

The very necessary limitation of the name "Germanic" to those who are really Teutons or at least have much Germanic blood in their veins can therefore never be carried out with mathematical exactness, but will always require, as it were, the eye of the breeder and the eye of the child. Much knowledge must, of course, be useful, but seeing and feeling is still more indispensable. And with this we transfer our investigation into the necessary limitation of the word "Germanic" to the mental element, in which history teaches us on every hand to separate the Germanic from the non-Germanic, and at the same time thereby to recognise the physical element and value it at its true worth.

SCIENCE OF PHYSIOGNOMY

The science of physiognomy, which is at once spirit and body, mirror of the soul and anatomical "factum," next claims our attention. Look, for example, at the countenance of Dante Alighieri; we shall learn as much from it as from his poems. * That is a characteristically

* That Dante is Germanic and not a son of the chaos becomes in my opinion so clear from his personality and his work that proof of it is absolutely superfluous. But it is nevertheless interesting to know that the name Alighieri is Gothic, a corruption of Aldiger; it belongs to those German proper names, at the basis of which lies the word "ger" = spear, as in Gerhard, Gertrude, &c. (a fact which in reference to Shake-speare might have given the visionaries much to think about!). This name came into the family

through Dante's grandmother on the father's side, a Goth from Ferrara, whose name was Aldigiero. With regard to the origin of the paternal grandfather and of the poet's mother only the one fact to-day is known, that the attempt to derive him from Roman families is a pure invention of the Italian biographers who thought it more illustrious to belong to Rome than to Germania;

539 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

Germanic countenance! Not a feature in it reminds us of any Hellenic or Roman type, much less of any of the Asiatic or African physiognomies which the Pyramids have faithfully preserved. A new being has entered into the history of the world! Nature in the fulness of her power has produced a new soul: look at it, here she reflects herself in a countenance such as never was seen before! "Above the mental hurricane expressed in the countenance rose nobly the peaceful brow arching like a marble dome." * Yes, yes, Balzac is right. Hurricane and marble dome! If he had only told us that Dante was a leptoprosopic Dolichocephalous, we should not have been much wiser. At



DANTE

any rate we shall never find a second Dante, but a walk through the collection of busts in the Berlin Museum will convince us how firmly established this type was in Northern Italy, which had been thoroughly germanised by Goths, Langobards and Franks.

but since the grandfather was a warrior, knighted by the Emperor Conrad, and Dante himself tells us that he belongs to the petty nobility, then his descent from pure Germanic parentage is as good as proven (*cf.* Franz Xaver Kraus: *Dante*, Berlin, 1897, pp. 21-25). Even to the beginning of the fifteenth century many Italians are described in old documents as Alemanni, Langobardi, &c., *ex alamanorum genere, legibus vivens Langobardorum*, &c. (and that though the majority of them had adopted Roman law, whereby the documentary evidence of their descent usually disappeared); so thoroughly saturated with Germanic blood (and that too its sole creative element) was that people which the so-called "Roman Culture" to-day wishes to regard as its source (*see* Savigny: *Geschichte des römischen Rechtes im Mittelalter*, i., chap. iii.).

* Balzac: *Les Proscrits*.

540 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

To this day we see the closest unmistakable physiognomical relationship in the German Tyrolese mentioned above, as also in Norway, and individual kindred features wherever genuine Teutons are to be found. However, if we look at the greatest Germanic men, we shall not find one but numerous physiognomic conformations; the dazing powerfully curved nose predominates; we find,



LUTHER

however, all thinkable combinations, even to that powerful head which in every particular is the very opposite of Dante's and by this very fact

betrays the intimate relationship: I mean the head of Martin Luther. Here the hurricane, of which Balzac spoke, embraces forehead, eyes and nose, no marble dome is arched above it; but this flaming volcano of energy and thoughtfulness rests upon mouth and chin as upon a rock of granite. Even the smallest feature of the powerful face testifies to energy and thirst for achievement; when one looks at this countenance the words of Dante rise to one's memory:

Colà dove si puote
Ciò che si vuole.

541 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

This man can do what he wills and his whole will is directed to great deeds: in this head there is no studying for mere learning's sake, but to find out truth, truth for life; the man does not sing to charm the ear, but because song elevates and strengthens the heart; he could not, like Dante, have lived proudly apart and unknown, trusting his fame to future generations — what does such a countenance care for fame? “Love is the pulse-beat of our life,” he said. And where love is strong, there too there is strong hatred. It is absolutely false to say, as Henke does, that such a countenance represents the North German Slavonic type. * So mighty a personality towers high above such specifications; it shows us the outward expression of one of the astonishingly rich possibilities of development of the Germanic spirit in its highest and richest form. Luther's countenance, like Dante's, belongs to all Germanic peoples. One finds this type in England, where no Slav ever made his abode; one meets it also among the most active politicians of France. One can picture to oneself this man fifteen hundred years ago, on horseback, swinging his battle-axe to protect his beloved northern home, and then again at his own fireside with his children crowding round him, or at the banquet of the men, draining the horn of mead to the last drop and singing heroic songs in praise of his ancestors. Dante and Luther are the extremes of the rich physiognomical scale of great Germanic men. As Tacitus said: they resemble themselves alone. But every attempt to localise the type, to the north or to the south, to the Celtic west or the Slavonic east, is manifestly futile, futile at least when one looks especially at the more important and therefore more characteristic men, and disregards the chance details of habit, especially of the manner of wearing the beard.

* As above, p. 20. What is here said about Luther has since been verified by the strictly anthropological researches of Dr. Ludwig Woltmann; see the *Politisch-anthropologische Revue*, 1905, p. 683 f.

542 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

Goethe, for example, might be the child of any Germanic stem judging by the cast of his face, as might also Johann Sebastian Bach and Immanuel Kant.

FREEDOM AND LOYALTY

Let us attempt a glance into the depths of the soul. What are the specific intellectual and moral characteristics of this Germanic race? Certain anthropologists would fain teach us that all races are equally gifted; we point to history and answer: that is a lie! The races of mankind are markedly different in the nature and also in the extent of their gifts, and the Germanic races belong to the most highly gifted group, the group usually termed Aryan. Is this human family united and uniform by bonds of blood? Do these stems really all spring from the same root? I do not know and I do not much care; no affinity binds more closely than elective affinity, and in this sense the Indo-European Aryans certainly form a family. In his *Politics* Aristotle writes (i. 5): "If there were men who in physical stature alone were so pre-eminent as the representatives of the Gods, then every one would admit that other men by right must be subject unto them. If this, however, is true in reference to the body, then there is still greater justification for distinguishing between pre-eminent and commonplace souls." Physically and mentally the Aryans are pre-eminent among all peoples; for that reason they are by right, as the Stagirite expresses it, the lords of the world. Aristotle puts the matter still more concisely when he says, "Some men are by nature free, others slaves"; this perfectly expresses the moral aspect. For freedom is by no means an abstract thing, to which every human being has fundamentally a claim; a right to freedom must evidently depend upon capacity for it, and this again presupposes

543 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

physical and intellectual power. One may make the assertion, that even the mere conception of freedom is quite unknown to most men. Do we not see the *homo syriacus* develop just as well and as happily in the position of slave as of master? Do the Chinese not show us another example of the same nature? Do not all historians tell us that the Semites and half-Semites, in spite of their great intelligence, never succeeded in founding a State that lasted, and that because every one always endeavoured to grasp all power for himself, thus showing that their capabilities were limited to despotism and anarchy, the two opposites of freedom? * And here we see at once what great gifts a man must have in order that one may say of him, he is "by nature free," for the first condition of this is the power of creating. Only a State-building race can be free; the gifts which make the individual an artist and philosopher are essentially the same as those which, spread through the

whole mass as instinct, found States and give to the individual that which hitherto had remained unknown to all nature: the idea of freedom. As soon as we understand this, the near affinity of the Germanic peoples to the Greeks and Romans strikes us, and at the same time we recognise what separates them. In the case of the Greeks the individualistic creative character predominates, even in the forming of constitutions; in the case of the Romans it is communistic legislation and military authority that predominate; the Germanic races, on the other hand, have individually and collectively perhaps less creative power, but they possess a harmony of qualities, maintaining the balance between the instinct of individual freedom, which finds its highest expression in creative art, † and the instinct of public freedom which creates the State; and in this way they prove themselves to be the equals of their great predecessors. Art more perfect in its creations,

* Cf. p. [404](#).

† See pp. [14](#), [25](#), [33](#), &c.

544 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

so far as form is concerned, there may have been, but no art has ever been more powerful in its creations than that which includes the whole range of things human between the winged pen of Shakespeare and the etching-tool of Albrecht Dürer, and which in its own special language — music — penetrates deeper into the heart than any previous attempt to create immortality out of that which is mortal — to transform matter into spirit. And in the meantime the European States, founded by Germanic peoples, in spite of their, so to speak, improvised, always provisional and changeable character — or rather perhaps thanks to this character — proved themselves to be the most enduring as well as the most powerful in the world. In spite of all storms of war, in spite of the deceptions of that ancestral enemy, the chaos of peoples, which carried its poison into the very heart of our nation, Freedom and its correlative, the State, remained, through all the ages the creating and saving ideal, even though the balance between the two often seemed to be upset: we recognise that more clearly to-day than ever.

In order that this might be so, that fundamental and common “Aryan” capacity of free creative power had to be supplemented by another quality, the incomparable and altogether peculiar Germanic loyalty (*Treue*). If that intellectual and physical development which leads to the idea of freedom and which produces on the one hand art, philosophy, science, on the other constitutions (as well as all the phenomena of culture which this word implies), is common to the Hellenes and Romans as well as to the Germanic peoples, so also is the extravagant conception of loyalty a specific characteristic of the Teuton. As the venerable Johann Fischart sings:

Standhaft und treu, und treu und standhaft,
Die machen ein recht deutsch Verwandtschaft!
Julius Caesar at once recognised not only the military prowess but also
the unexampled loyalty of the Teutons

545 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

and hired from among them as many cavalrymen as he could possibly get. In the battle of Pharsalus, which was so decisive for the history of the world, they fought for him; the Romanised Gauls had abandoned their commander in the hour of need, the Germanic troops proved themselves as faithful as they were brave. This loyalty to a master chosen of their own free will is the most prominent feature in the Germanic character; from it we can tell whether pure Germanic blood flows in the veins or not. The German mercenary troops have often been made the object of ridicule, but it is in them that the genuine costly metal of this race reveals itself. The very first autocratic Emperor, Augustus, formed his personal bodyguard of Teutons; where else could he have found unconditional loyalty? During the whole time that the Roman Empire in the east and the west lasted, this same post of honour was filled by the same people, but they were always brought from farther and farther north, because with the so-called "Latin culture" the plague of disloyalty had crept more deeply into the country; finally, a thousand years after Augustus, we find Anglo-Saxons and Normans in this post, standing on guard around the throne of Byzantium. Hapless Germanic Lifeguardsman! Of the political principles, which forcibly held together the chaotic world in a semblance of order, he understood just as little as he did of the quarrels concerning the nature of the Trinity, which cost him many a drop of blood: but one thing he understood: to be loyal to the master he had himself chosen. When in the time of Nero the Frisian delegates left the back seats which had been assigned to them in the Circus and proudly sat down on the front benches of the senators among the richly adorned foreign delegates, what was it that gave these poor men, who came to Rome to beg for land to cultivate, such a bold spirit of independence? Of what alone could they boast?

546 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

"That no one in the world surpassed the Teuton in loyalty." * Karl Lamprecht has written so beautifully about this great fundamental characteristic of loyalty in its historical significance that I should reproach myself if I did not quote him here. He has just spoken of the "retainers" who in the old German State pledge themselves to their chief to be true unto death and prove so, and then he adds: "In the formation of this body of retainers we see one of the most magnificent features of the specifically Germanic view of life, the feature of loyalty. Not

understood by the Roman but indispensable to the Teuton, the need of loyalty existed even at that time, that ever-recurring German need of closest personal attachment, of complete devotion to each other, perfect community of hopes, efforts and destinies. Loyalty never was to our ancestors a special virtue, it was the breath of life of everything good and great; upon it rested the feudal State of the Early and the co-operative system of the Later Middle Ages, and who could conceive the military monarchy of the present day without loyalty?... Not only were songs sung about loyalty, men lived in it. The retinue of the King of the Franks, the courtiers of the great Karolingians, the civil and military ministers of our mediaeval Emperors, the officials of the centres of administration under our Princes since the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries are merely new forms of the old Germanic conception. For the wonderful vitality of such institutions consisted in this, that they were not rooted in changing political or even moral conditions, but in the primary source of Germanicism itself, the need of loyalty.“ †

However true and beautiful every word that Lamprecht has here written, I do not think that he has made quite clear the “primary source.“ Loyalty, though distinguish-

* Tacitus: *Annals* xiii. 54.

† Lamprecht: *Deut. Gesch.*, 2nd ed. i. 136.

547 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

ing the Teutons from mongrel races, is not altogether a specific Germanic trait. One finds it in almost all purely bred races, nowhere more than among the negroes, for example, and — I would ask — what man could be more faithful than the noble dog? No, in order to reveal that “primary source of Germanicism,“ we must show what is the nature of this Germanic loyalty, and we can only succeed in doing so if we have grasped the fact that freedom is the intellectual basis of the whole Germanic nature. For the characteristic feature of this loyalty is its free self-determination. The human character resembles the nature of God as the theologians represent it: complex and yet indiscernible, an inseparable unity. This loyalty and this freedom do not grow the one out of the other, they are two manifestations of the same character which reveals itself to us on one occasion more from the intellectual on another more from the moral side. The negro and the dog serve their masters, whoever they maybe: that is the morality of the weak, or, as Aristotle says, of the man who is born to be a slave; the Teuton chooses his master, and his loyalty is therefore loyalty to himself: that is the morality of the man who is born free. But loyalty as displayed by the Teuton was unexampled. The disloyalty of the extravagantly gifted proclaimer of poetical and political freedom, *i.e.*, of the Hellene, was proverbial from time immemorial; the Roman was loyal only in the defence of his own,

German loyalty remained, Lamprecht says, “incomprehensible to him“; here, as everywhere in the sphere of morals, we see an affinity with the Indo-Aryans; but these latter people so markedly lacked the artistic sense which urges men on to adventure and to the establishment of a free life, that their loyalty never reached that creative importance in the world's history which the same quality attained under the influence of the Germanic races. Here again, as before, in the consideration of the feeling of freedom, we find a higher

548 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

harmony of character in the Teuton; hence we may say that no one in the world, not even the greatest, has surpassed him. One thing is certain: if we wish to sum up in a single word the historic greatness of the Teuton — always a perilous undertaking, since everything living is of Protean nature — we must name his loyalty. That is the central point from which we can survey his whole character, or better, his personality. But we must remember that this loyalty is not the primary source, as Lamprecht thinks, not the root but the blossom — the fruit by which we recognise the tree. Hence it is that this loyalty is the finest touchstone for distinguishing between genuine and false Germanicism; for it is not by the roots but by the fruit that we distinguish the species; we should not forget that with unfavourable weather many a tree has no blossoms or only poor ones, and this often happens in the case of hard-pressed Teutons. The root of their particular character is beyond all doubt that power of imagination which is common to all Aryans and peculiar to them alone and which appeared in greatest luxuriance among the Hellenes. I spoke of this in the beginning of the chapter on Hellenic art and philosophy (see p. [14 f.](#)); from that root everything springs, art, philosophy, politics, science; hence, too, comes the peculiar sap which tinges the flower of loyalty. The stem then is formed by the positive strength — the physical and the intellectual, which can never be separated; in the case of the Romans, to whom we owe the firm bases of family and State, this stem was powerfully developed. But the real blossoms of such a tree are those which mind and sentiment bring to maturity. Freedom is an expansive power which scatters men, Germanic loyalty is the bond which by its inner power binds men more closely than the fear of the tyrant's sword: freedom signifies thirst after direct self-discovered truth, loyalty the reverence for that which has appeared to our an-

549 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

cestors to be true; freedom decides its own destiny and loyalty holds that decision unswervingly and for ever. Loyalty to the loved one, to friend, parents, and fatherland we find in many places; but here, in the case of

the Teuton, something is added, which makes the great instinct become a profoundly deep spiritual power, a principle of life. Shakespeare represents the father giving his son as the best advice for his path through life, as the one admonition which includes all others, these words:

This above all: to thine own self be true!

The principle of Germanic loyalty is evidently not the necessity of attachment, as Lamprecht thinks, but on the contrary the necessity of constancy within a man's own autonomous circle; self-determination testifies to it; in it freedom proves itself; by it the vassal, the member of the guild, the official, the officer asserts his independence. For the free man, to serve means to command himself. "It was the Germanic races who first introduced into the world the idea of personal freedom," says Goethe. What in the case of the Hindoos was metaphysics and in so far necessarily negative, seclusive, has been here transferred to life as an ideal of mind, it is the "breath of life of everything great and good," a star in the night, to the weary a spur, to the storm-tossed an anchor of safety. * In the construction of the Germanic character loyalty is the necessary perfection of the personality, which without it falls to pieces. Immanuel Kant has given a daring, genuinely Germanic definition of personality: it is, he says, "freedom and independence of the mechanism of all nature"; and what it achieves he has summed up as follows: "That which elevates man above himself (as part of the world of sense), attaches him to an order of things which only the understanding can conceive,

* But quite analogous to Indian sentiment, in so far as here the regulative principle is transferred to our inmost hearts.

550 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

and which has the whole world of sense subject to it, is Personality." But without loyalty this elevation would be fatal: thanks to it alone the impulse of freedom can develop and bring blessing instead of a curse. Loyalty in this Germanic sense cannot originate without freedom, but it is impossible to see how an unlimited, creative impulse to freedom could exist without loyalty. Childish attachment to nature is a proof of loyalty: it enables man to raise himself above nature, without falling shattered to the ground, like the Hellenic Phaethon. Therefore it is that Goethe writes: "Loyalty preserves personality!" Germanic loyalty is the girdle that gives immortal beauty to the ephemeral individual, it is the sun without which no knowledge can ripen to wisdom, the charm which alone bestows upon the free individual's passionate action the blessing of permanent achievement.

IDEAL AND PRACTICE

These few simplified remarks should, I think, enable us to understand the essential characteristics, intellectual and moral, of the Germanic races. Simplification might easily fill a whole book and it would only be amplification. If we wish clearly to distinguish the Teuton from his nearest kinsmen we should study the inmost being of both and compare a Kant as an ethical teacher with an Aristotle. For Kant “the autonomy of the will is the highest principle of morality”; a “moral personality” exists for him only from the moment when “a man is subject to no other laws than those which he gives to himself.” And according to what principles shall this autonomous personality give itself laws? We must suppose that there is an unprovable “realm of impulses — certainly only an ideal!” An ideal is therefore to determine life! And in a note to the same book (*Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*) Kant in a

551 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

few words contrasts this new, specifically Germanic philosophy with the Hellenic: “There the realm of impulses is a theoretical idea, to explain that which is; here (in the case of the Teutons) it is a practical idea to bring about by our active and passive attitude that which is not, but yet may be.” What daring, to create by our will a moral realm which is not, to cause it “actually” to come into existence! What a dangerous piece of daring if loyalty were not at work, which is so thoroughly characteristic of Kant's own mental physiognomy! And we should carefully note this contrast: here (in the case of the Teuton) Ideal and at the same time Practice, there (in the case of the Hellene) sober Reality and, as its associate, Theory. The great captain of the powers of the chaos laughed at the German “ideologists,” as he called them: a proof of ignorance, for they were more practical men than he himself. It is not the ideal that is in the clouds but theory. The Ideal is, as Kant here wishes it to be understood, a practical idea as distinguished from a theoretical one. And that which we see here, on the heights of metaphysics, in clear-cut outlines, we find again everywhere: the Teuton is the most ideal, but at the same time the most practical, man in the world, and that because here we have not dissimilarity, but on the contrary identity. A Teuton writes a *Critique of Pure Reason*, but at the same time a Teuton invents the railway; the century of Bessemer and of Edison is at the same time the century of Beethoven and of Richard Wagner. Whoever does not feel the unity of the impulse here, whoever considers it a riddle that the astronomer Newton should interrupt his mathematical investigations to write a commentary to the Revelation of St. John, that Crompton invented the spinning machine merely to give himself more leisure for his beloved music, and that Bismarck, the statesman of blood and iron, caused Beethoven's sonatas to be played

552 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

to him in the decisive moments of his life, understands nothing at all of the nature of the Teuton, and cannot in consequence rightly judge the part he plays in the history of the world in the past and at the present time.

TEUTON AND ANTI-TEUTON

So much for this important subject. We have seen who the Teuton is; * let us now see how he entered into history.

I am not qualified and do not wish in this work to give a history of the Germanic races; but we cannot understand and value the nineteenth century either in so far as it is a product of the preceding ones nor in its own gigantic expansive power, if we do not possess clear conceptions, not only concerning the nature of the Teuton, but also concerning the conflict which has been raging between him and the non-Teuton for fifteen hundred years. To-day is the child of yesterday: what we have is partly the legacy of pre-Germanic antiquity, what we are is altogether the work of the early Teuton, who is wont to be represented to us as a "barbarian," as if barbarism were a question of relative civilisation and did not simply denote a rudeness of mind. One hundred and fifty years ago Montesquieu brilliantly cleared up this confusion of ideas. After showing that all the States that make up Europe to-day (America, Africa and Australia were then out of the question) were the work of Germanic barbarians who suddenly appeared from unknown wilds, he continues, "But in reality these peoples were not barbarians, since they were free: they became barbarians later when, dominated by the absolute power, they lost their liberty." † In these words we read not only the character

* The whole ninth chapter, which tries to describe Germanic civilisation and culture in its principal lines, forms a supplement to what is as briefly as possible sketched here.

† *Lettres persanes*, chap. cxxxvi.

553 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

of the Teutons, but also the fate against which they were destined continually to struggle. For it is not possible to say what uniform and independent culture might have arisen on a purely Germanic soil; instead of this the Teuton entered into a history which was already perfectly shaped, a history with which he had hitherto not come in contact. As soon as the bare struggle for existence gave him leisure, he grasped with the fervour of passion the two constructive ideas which the "old world" now tumbling to pieces had tried in its last agony to develop: imperialism and Christianity. Was this a piece of luck? Who will venture to affirm it? He received no great thoughts of antiquity in pure form, all

were transmitted by the sterile, shallow spirits of the chaos that shunned the light and hated freedom. But the Teuton had no choice. In order to live, he had in the first place to assimilate alien customs and thoughts as they were presented to him; he had to be apprenticed to a civilisation which in truth was no longer worthy to loosen the latchet of his shoes; the Hellenic creative impulse, Roman legislation, the sublime simple doctrine of Christ, which would have had the greatest affinity to his nature, were completely removed from his eyes, to be dug up centuries later by his own diligence. In his adoption of the alien he was greatly aided by his perilous power of assimilation, and also by that “modesty” which Luther praises as “the sure sign of a pious god-fearing heart,” but which in its extravagant estimation of the merit of others leads to many a foolish delusion. Hence it is that a sharp critical eye is needed to separate in the motives and thoughts of those old heroic generations what is genuinely Germanic from that which has been deflected from its natural course, sometimes for ever. Take, for example, the absolute religious toleration of the Goths, when they had become masters of that Roman empire where the principle of intolerance had long

554 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

been predominant: it is just as characteristic of Germanic sentiment as the protection which they gave to the monuments of art. * We see here at once these two features, freedom and loyalty. Characteristic, too, is the constancy with which the Goths clung to Arianism. Dahn is certainly right in saying that it is a chance that the Goths were induced to join the sect of the Arians and not of the Athanasians; but chance ceases where loyalty begins. Thanks to the great Wulfila, the Goths possessed the whole Bible in their mother tongue, and Dahn's mockery of the incapacity of these rough men for theological disputes is somewhat out of place in view of the fact that this living book was the source of their religious faith — a thing that not every Christian of the nineteenth century could say of himself. † And now comes the really important matter — not the dreary quarrel about Homo-ousian and Homoi-ousian, which even the Emperor Constantine declared to be idle — but the loyal clinging to what has once been chosen, the emphasising of Germanic individuality, and the right of free-agency in dealing with the foreigner. If the Teutons had been as Dahn represents them, mere barbarians with no will, as ready to adopt the cult of Osiris as any other faith, how does it come that all of them (Longobardians, Goths, Vandals, Burgundians, &c.) in the fourth century adopted Arianism and that, while elsewhere it scarcely survived fifty years,

* See above, [p. 322](#), and cf. Gibbon: *Roman Empire*, chap. xxxix., and Clarac: *Manuel de l'histoire de l'art chez les Anciens jusqu'à la fin du 6me siècle de notre ère*, ii, 857 f. The mongrel races destroyed the monuments, partly from religious fanaticism, partly

because the statues provided the best lime for building and the temples furnished splendid dressed stones. Where are the true barbarians?

† We can see in Neander's *Kirchengeschichte*, 4th ed. iii. 199, how characteristic of the Goths was the reading of the Bible. Neander quotes a letter in which Hieronymus expresses his astonishment at the manner in which “the barbaric tongue of the Goths seeks after the pure sense of the Hebraic original,” while in the south “no one troubles about the matter.” That was already in the year 403!

555 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

they remained true to it for centuries? I see nothing theological in this and I do not attach the slightest importance to those subtleties which can be twisted out of every little trifle to prove a preconceived thesis; I direct my attention solely to the great facts of character and here again I see loyalty and independence. I see the Germanic peoples instinctively carrying out the emancipation from Rome a thousand years before Wyclif, at a time when the religious idea of Rome had not been clearly separated from the Roman imperialism, and in such a phenomenon I can see nothing accidental. * It is clear from Karl Müller's account in his *Kirchengeschichte* (1892, i. 263) how far from unimportant this phenomenon was; he says of the Arian Teutons: “Each Empire has its own Church. There are no Church unions in the manner of the Catholic Church ... the new priests ... have been component parts of the organisation of the race and the people. The standard of culture in the ministry is naturally quite different from that among the Catholics: purely national and Germanic, without being influenced by the ecclesiastical and profane culture of the old world. On the other hand, according to all Christian testimony the customs and morals of the Teutons are immeasurably higher than those of the Catholic Romance peoples. It is the moral purity of a still uncorrupted people as opposed to an absolutely rotten culture.” Tolerant, evangelical, morally pure: that is what the Teutons were before they came under the influence of Rome.

Now it is peculiar that the Teutons at a later period allowed themselves to be ensnared and created knights of the Anti-Germanic powers; I am afraid that this too is a genuinely Germanic feature, for everything living bears in itself the germ of its own ruin and death. Certainly Charlemagne never even in his dreams thought of serving

* Dahn, 2te Auflage von Wietersheim's *Völkerwanderung* ii. 60.

556 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

the Bishop of Rome; on the contrary, he wanted to make the Bishop's power subordinate to his own; he treats the Pope as a master treats his subject, * he is called by his contemporaries a “reformer“ of the Church and carries his point against Rome even in matters of dogma, as in the worship of images, to which he as genuine Teuton objected. But all this

did not hinder him from strengthening the Papacy by bestowing on the head of the Roman Church power and dignity, and furthering the amalgamation of the German monarchy with a Roman Christianity, hitherto unheard of, but which thenceforth weighed like a nightmare upon Germany. Imagine how matters would have developed if the Franks, too, had become Arians or if they as Catholics had early renounced Rome, say under Charlemagne, and had founded nationally organised churches like most of the Slavs! When the Popes urgently appealed to Charlemagne's predecessors, Charles Martel and Pépin, for help, Rome's position as a world-power was lost; the decisive rejection of her pretensions would have destroyed her influence for ever. Indeed, if Charlemagne's efforts to get the Imperial Crown conferred by Byzantium and not by Rome had been successful, the ecclesiastical independence of the Teutons would never have been endangered. Charlemagne's whole activity testifies to such distinctly German nationalism that we see that Germanisation was his object, and not only his object but also his life-work, in spite of all appearances and many consequences which seem to point to the contrary; for he is the founder of Germany, the man who, as the venerable Widukind said, made *quasi una gens* of the Germans, and in so far he is the originator of the no longer "Holy Roman" but "Holy German" empire of to-day. The Roman Church, on the

* That the Pope was actually the subject of the Emperor is proved by civil and by public law, so that the passionate dissertations for and against are aimless. (See Savigny; *Geschichte des römischen Rechtes im Mittelalter* i. chap. v.).

557 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

other hand, was unavoidably the shield- and armour-bearer of all Anti-Germanic movements; this was the part which it played from the beginning — more and more openly as time went on, so that it never was more Anti-Germanic than at the present day. And yet it owes its existence to the Teutons! I am not speaking of matters of faith at all, but of the Papacy as an ideal, secular power; orthodox Catholics, whom I honour in my heart, have understood and admitted this. To give only one example, which is linked with what I have written above: we have seen that religious toleration is natural to the Teuton as a man who has sentiments of freedom and to whom religion is an inner experience; before the Roman Empire was seized by the Goths persecution had been the order of the day, but then it ceased for a long time, for the Teutons put an end to it. It was only after the doctrines and passions of the races had estranged the Teuton from himself that the Frank began to preach Christianity to the Saxon sword in hand. It was the *De Civitate Dei* which impressed upon Charlemagne the duty of conversion by force, * and to this the Pope, who bestowed on him the title of *Christianissimus Rex* unceasingly urged him; hence it was that the first Thirty Years War raged

among Germanic brothers, laying waste, destroying, sowing undying hatred, not because they, but because Rome so wished it. It was exactly the same nine hundred years later in the second Thirty Years War, which in some parts of Germany only a fiftieth part of the population survived — certainly a practical way for getting rid of the Teutons, to make them destroy each other. And in the meantime the doctrine of Augustine, the African half-breed, the dogma of systematic intolerance and of the punishment by death of heterodoxy had entered the Church; and, as soon as the Germanic element had been sufficiently weakened and the Anti-Germanic

* Hodgkin: *Charles the Great*, 1897, pp. 107, 248.

558 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

element sufficiently strengthened, that dogma solemnly declared to be law and to the everlasting disgrace of humanity was put in practice for five hundred years, in the midst of a civilisation which otherwise was advancing everywhere. How does one of the most eminent Catholics of the nineteenth century judge this remarkable event, this brutalisation of men, who had formerly shown themselves so humane, in the days when they were supposed to be barbarians? “It was,” he says, “a victory which the old Roman Imperial law gained over the Germanic spirit.” *

If we wish to carry out the necessary limitation of the expression “Germanic,” that is, separate the Germanic from the Un-Germanic, we must in the first place endeavour, as I did in the beginning of this chapter, to realise the fundamental qualities of mind and character of the Teutons, and then, as has just been shown by an example, we must with a critical eye follow the course of history. Such “victories over the Germanic spirit” were frequently won, many of them with only temporary success, many so thorough that noble races falling into a progressive degeneracy disappeared for ever from the German family. For this Teuton who entered into history under such complex, contradictory and absolutely obsolete conditions had become estranged from himself. Every power was set in motion to delude him: not only the passions, the greed, the lust of power, all the evil vices, which he had in common with others, even his better qualities were played upon to serve this purpose: his mystical tendencies, his thirst for knowledge, his force of faith, his impulse to create, his high organising abilities, his noble ambition, his need of ideals — everything possible was used against himself. The Teuton had entered history not as a barbarian but as a child — as a

* Döllinger: *Die Geschichte der religiösen Freiheit* (in his *Academic Lectures*, iii. 278).

559 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

child that falls into the hands of old experienced libertines, Hence it is that we find Un-Germanic qualities nestling in the heart of the best Teutons, where, thanks to Germanic earnestness and loyalty, they often took firmer root than anywhere else; hence, too, the great difficulty of solving the riddle of our history. Montesquieu told us that the Teuton had become barbarian through the loss of his freedom: but who robbed him of it? The chaos of races in conjunction with himself. Dietrich of Berne had rejected the title and the crown of Emperor; he was too proud to wish to be more than King of the East Goths. Later Teutons, on the other hand, imbued as they were by Un-Germanic ideas, were dazzled by the Imperial purple with the power of a magic talisman. For in the meantime the Jurisconsults of the late degenerate Roman law had come and whispered in the ear of the German Princes wonders concerning the kingly prerogatives; and the Roman Church, which was the most powerful disseminator of Justinian law, * taught that this law was sacred and given by God; † and down came the Pope declaring himself to be lord and master of all crowns; he alone, as Christ's representative on earth, could grant or remove, ‡ and the emperor as mere *rex regum* was subject to the *servus servorum*. But if the Pope bestowed or ratified regal power, every King was King by the grace of God, and when the legal authorities declared that the bearer of the crown was the rightful owner of the whole land, and had unlimited authority over his subjects, the transformation was complete, and in place of a nation of free men there now stood a nation of slaves. This is what Montesquieu rightly calls barbarism. The Germanic Princes, who had made this

* Savigny: *Geschichte des römischen Rechts* i. chap. iii.

† "The Middle Ages put Roman Law as revealed reason in matters of justice (*ratio scripta*) side by side with Christianity as revealed religion" (Jhering: *Vorgeschichte der Indo-europäer*, p. 302).

‡ Phillips: *Lehrbuch des Kirchenrechtes*, 1881 (!), § 102, &c.

560 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

contract not merely from lust of power and wealth, but also out of misunderstanding, had unconsciously sold themselves to the hostile powers; thenceforth they became the pillars of Anti-Germanicism. One more victory had been gained over the Germanic spirit!

I leave to the reader's own study other examples of the way in which the Teuton was estranged from himself. Once he had lost the freedom to act and the freedom to believe, the basis of his particular, incomparable nature was undermined in such a way that only the most violent revolt could save him from complete downfall. How free and daring had been the religious speculation of the first Norse schoolmen, full of personality and life; how enslaved and gagged such speculation appeared

subsequently to Thomas Aquinas, who to the present day stands as law to all Catholic schools! * How touching it is to think of the Goths in possession of their Gothic Bible, listening awestruck to the words of Christ which they but imperfectly understood and which seemed to them the words of some ancestral almost forgotten tale, or perhaps a distant voice penetrating to their ear, and calling them to a beautiful inconceivable future; so that we find them sinking on their knees in the simply hewn house of God or in the tent that served the same purpose, † and praying with childlike simplicity for all that is nearest and dearest to them! But now all that had disappeared: the Bible was to be read solely in the Latin vulgate — that is, only by scholars — and was soon so little known to even priests and monks that even Charlemagne had to admonish the bishops to pay more earnest heed to

* We must also remember that Thomas Aquinas was descended on his mother's side from the house of Stauffen and early came under the influence of German knowledge and thought (Albertus Magnus). Where would the chaos have achieved anything great — and the achievements of Aquinas deserve our admiration for their strength and greatness — without the help of the Teutons?

† See Hieronymus: *Epistola ad Laetam*.

561 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

the study of the sacred writings; * the sacred worship could henceforth be held only in a language which no layman understood. † How brilliantly clear, on the

* Döllinger: *Das Kaisertum Karls des Grossen*, Acad. Lectures, iii. 102.

† It is interesting in this connection to call attention to the fact that Pope Leo XIII., by the constitution *officiorum numerum* of January 25, 1897, has “not inconsiderably intensified the strictness” of the Index of forbidden books (so says the orthodox-Roman commentator Professor Hollweck in his book *Das kirchliche Bücherverbot*, 2nd ed., 1897, p. 15). The old Germanic spirit of freedom had in fact begun to assert itself in France and Germany in the nineteenth century; ecclesiastical teachers asserted that the Index was not valid for those countries, bishops demanded great changes in the direction of freedom, laymen (Coblentz. 1869) united in sending addresses, in which they demanded the complete abolition of the Index (*see pp. 13, 14*); Rome's answer was to make it stricter than ever, as every layman can find from the book quoted above, which has the episcopal sanction. According to this law the orthodox Roman Catholic is forbidden to read practically all the literature of the world, and even such authors as Dante he can read only in drastically expurgated, “episcopally approved” editions. It is an interesting fact in connection with the strictness of the new Index constitution that henceforth not merely books which touch upon theological questions must be episcopally approved but also that, according to pp. 42 and 43, such as treat of natural science and art may not be read by orthodox Catholics *absque praevia Ordinariorum venia*. But it is specially noteworthy that the reading of the Bible in a faithful complete edition, even when this has been edited by Catholics, is forbidden as “grievous sin”! Only those editions may be read which have been specially revised, provided with notes and approved by the Papal stool (p. 29). This care, however, is exercised only for minds already wavering, for during religious instruction as well as at other times the young are warned so strongly against reading the Scriptures that I have lived for twenty years in

Catholic countries without encountering a single Catholic layman who ever had had the complete Bible even in his hand; in other cases the *Index librorum prohibitorum* finds little or no application in practical life; with unerring instinct Rome has felt that the one really dangerous book for it is that in which we find the simple figure of Christ. Before the Council of Trent, *i.e.*, at a time when the later "Protestant" had not yet visibly separated from the later "Catholics," this was not so in Germany; by means of that pioneer of the Reformation, the "German art" of book-printing, in a short time (and in spite of the then existing ecclesiastical prohibition), the Bible in "right common German" had become the most popular book in the land (Janssen: *Geschichte des deutschen Volkes* i. 20). But the Council of Trent for ever put an end to this state of affairs by its *Decretum de editione et usu sacrorum librorum*. Immanuel Kant admired, however, the strong consistency of the Roman Church and looked upon the prohibition to read the

562 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

other hand, does the idea of pure science appear in Roger Bacon at the beginning of the thirteenth century — observation of nature, philology to be studied scientifically, mathematics! But his works are condemned by Rome and destroyed, he himself in the prime of his life is imprisoned in a cloister, so that all earnest investigation of nature was held back for centuries and then opposed at every step. That such lights of science as Copernicus and Galilei were good Catholics, and such pioneers of new cosmological and philosophical conceptions as Krebs (Nicolaus of Cusa), Bruno, Campanella and Gassendi, actually Cardinals, monks and priests, only proves that in the case of all these men it is not a question of difference of faith but of the struggle between two philosophies, or better still, between two human natures, the Germanic and the Anti-Germanic, which also was proved by the fact that most of these men were persecuted, or that at least their writings were condemned, * Cardinal Nicolaus of Cusa, the confidant of Popes, who was fortunate enough to live before the retrograde movement introduced by the Council of Trent, proved his genuinely Germanic nature by the fact that he was the first to reveal the forgery of the Decretalia of Isidor and the would-be donation of Constantine, and that he as an active reformer of the Church untiringly, though unsuccessfully, strove to bring about what had later to be obtained by force. The man who exposes forgeries cannot possibly be morally identical with him who commits them. And

Bible as its "corner-stone" (Hasse: *Letzte Aüusserungen Kant's*, 1804, p. 29). At the same time he was wont to laugh at the Protestants, "who say: study the Scriptures diligently, but you must not find anything there but what we find" (Reicke: *Lose Blätter aus Kant's Nachlass* ii. 34).

* It is very remarkable that such original and free-thinking philosophers as Bruno and Campanella belong to the extreme south of Italy, where even to-day, according to anthropological verifications, the Indo-Germanic, distinct dolichocephalous type is most strongly represented in the Peninsula (see Ranke; *Der Mensch* ii. 299).

563 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

so we cannot make religious denominations any more than nationalities the test by which to distinguish between that which is genuinely Germanic and that which is Anti-Germanic. Not only is it difficult before the Council of Trent to distinguish between the Roman Christians and others, inasmuch as many of the great teachers of the Church like Origenes and many Catholic doctors had gone much further than a Luther or a Hus in accepting tenets and views which from that time forth were reckoned to be heretical — but in later times and down to the present day we see pre-eminently German minds remain obedient to Rome from deep conviction and loyal attachment to the great idea of a universal Church, and yet prove themselves most genuine Teutons; while on the other hand the man in whom the revolt against the Anti-Germanic powers was most powerfully expressed, Martin Luther, quotes the testimony of Augustine, to urge the Princes to rebellion, and Calvin burns the great doctor Michel Lervet because of his dogmatic views, receiving for this the approval of the humane Melancthon. We cannot therefore put down individual men as representatives of the Teutons; but as soon as they have become subject to the Non-Germanic influence in education, surroundings, &c. — and who was not so influenced during at least a thousand years? — we must learn to distinguish carefully between that which grows out of the genuine pure Germanic nature, be it for good or for evil, as a living component of the personality, and that which is forcibly grafted on or bound up with it.

It is clear that, in a certain sense, we may regard the intellectual and moral history of Europe from the moment of the entry of the Teuton to the present day as a struggle between Teuton and non-Teuton, between Germanic sentiment and Anti-Germanic disposition, as a struggle which is waged partly externally, philosophy against philosophy, partly internally, in the breast of the Teuton

564 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

himself. But here I am trespassing upon the following division. What has been said here I shall summarise by referring to the perfect type of the Anti-Germanic; this is, I think, the most valuable supplement to the positive picture.

IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA

The struggle against the Germanic spirit has in a way embodied itself in one of the most extraordinary men of history; here as elsewhere a single great personality has, by its example and by the sum of living power which it brought into the world, been able to do more than all the councils and all the solemn resolutions of great societies. And it is a good thing to see our enemy before us in a form which deserves respect,

otherwise hatred or contempt is apt to dim our judgment. I do not know who would be justified in refusing honest admiration to Ignatius of Loyola. He bears physical pain like a hero, * is just as fearless morally, his will is of iron, his action direct, his powers of thinking spoiled by no pedantry and artificiality; he is an acute, practical man, who never stumbles over trifles and yet assures to his influence a far-reaching future, by seizing the needs of the moment and making them the basis of his activity; he is in addition unassuming, an enemy of phrases, and no comedian; a soldier and a nobleman; the priesthood is rather his instrument than his natural vocation. Now this man was a Basque; not only was he born in the pure Basque part of Spain, but his biographers assure us that he was of genuine unmixed Basque descent, that is, he belonged to a race which was not only Un-Germanic but absolutely distinct from the whole Indo-European

* His leg had been shattered in battle and after it was completely healed he had it broken again because it had become shorter than the other and so rendered him unsuitable for military service.

565 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

group. * In Spain since the time of the Celtic immigration the mixed Celtiberians formed a considerable portion of the population, but in certain northern parts the Iberian Basques have remained unmixed to the present day and Ignatius, really Iñigo, is said to be a “genuine son of the enigmatical, taciturn, energetic and fantastic stem of the Basques.” † It is, by the way (as an illustration of the incomparable importance of race), exceedingly remarkable that the man, to whom principally must be ascribed the maintenance of the specifically Romish, Anti-Germanic influence for centuries to come, was not himself a child of the chaos but a man of pure descent. Hence the simplicity and power which strike us as so wonderful when in the midst of the Babel of the sixteenth century, just as the Germanic spirit of independence is being reawakened (the true Renaissance!) and all voices mingle in the hoarse and confused din of fear, we see this one man, who, standing apart, calm and unconcerned about what others decide and endeavour to attain (except in so far as it affects his plans), goes his own way and without precipitation, in full control of his natural passionate temperament, forms the plan of campaign, fixes the tactics to be employed, drills the troops to the most carefully conceived and therefore most dangerous attack that was ever made against Germanicism — or rather against Aryanism as a whole. Whoever considers it a coincidence that this personality was a Basque, whoever considers it a coincidence that this Basque, although he soon found capable and perfectly devoted assistants from all nationalities, yet at the summit of his power made an intimate, indeed almost inseparable friend of one sole man, consulted with him, and proclaimed his will

through him, and that this one man was by race

* See Bastian: *Das Beständige in den Menschenrassen*, p. 110; Peschel: *Völkerkunde*, 7th ed. p. 539.

† Gothein: *Ignatius von Loyola und die Gegenreformation*, 1895, p. 209.

566 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

a pure Jew (Polanco) who had been converted to Christianity at a later period of his life — whoever, I say, passes such phenomena by unheeded, has no feeling for the majesty of facts. * If we gain access to the innermost mental life of this remarkable man, as we can easily do by his *Exercitia spiritualia* (a fundamental text-book of the Jesuits to the present day) we seem to be entering an absolutely strange world. At first I felt myself in a Mohammedan atmosphere set out with Christian decorations: † the absolute materialism of the conceptions — for example, that we can feel the stench of hell and the glow of its flames, the idea that sins are transgressions of a “paragraphic” law, so that we can keep an account of them and should do so according to a definitely prescribed scheme, and so on — reminds us of Semitic religions; but we should be doing the latter an injustice if we identified them with the thinly varnished Fetishism of Loyola. The fundamental principle of the religion of Ignatius is opposition to every kind of symbolism. He has been called a mystic and an attempt has been made to prove the influence of mysticism upon his thought, but this intellect is quite incapable of even grasping the idea of mysticism in the Indo-European sense; for all mysticism from Yājñavalkya to Jacob Böhme signifies the attempt to discard the dross of empiricism and surrender to a transcendental, empirically inconceivable untruth, ‡ while Loyola's whole endeavour is to represent all mysteries of religion as concrete manifest

* It also deserves mention that the first two men who joined Ignatius and helped to found his Order were likewise not Indo-Europeans: Franz Xavier was a genuine Basque, Faber a genuine, superstitious Savoyard (see p. [373](#) note 2).

† Since the above was written, a book by Hermann Müller has appeared, *Les Origines de la compagnie de Jésus*, in which it is proved that Ignatius had studied very carefully the organisation of the Mohammedan secret leagues and in his *Exercices* in many ways followed Mohammedan views. In truth this man is the personification of all that is Un-Germanic.

‡ See chap. [ix.](#), [Division “Philosophy.”](#)

567 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

facts in direct contrast to mysticism. We are to see, hear, taste, smell and touch them! His *Exercitia* are not an introduction to mystical contemplation, but rather the systematic development of the hysterical tendencies present in us all. The purely sensuous element of imagination is developed at the expense of reason and judgment and brought to the

point of its greatest capacity; in this way the animal nature proves victorious over the will and henceforth the will is not broken, as is generally asserted, but fettered. In a normal human being, understanding forms the counterpoise of will; Loyola's idea directs itself, therefore, first against understanding, as the source of freedom and the creative impulse; in one of his latest proclamations he expresses it concisely: he characterises the “renunciation of will and the negation of our own judgment“ as the “source of the virtues.“ * In the *Exercitia* also, the first rule of orthodoxy is “the destruction of every judgment of our own“ (see the *Regulae ad sentiendum vere cum ecclesia*, reg. i.). †

* See the last writing to the Portuguese, analysed and quoted by Gothian, p. 450.

† The Jesuit father Bernhard Duhr has devoted a paragraph of the fourth edition of his well-known book *Jesuiten-Fabeln* to my “Foundations.“ As the expression of a different point of view is always suggestive and instructive, I would gladly recommend this criticism to my readers, just as I have taken every opportunity to refer to the pamphlet of the Catholic theologian Professor Dr. Albert Ehrhard against these “Foundations“ (*Heft 4. der Vorträge der Leogesellschaft*). But I must unfortunately point out that my Jesuit opponent does not hesitate at an untruth, whereby he makes his task indeed easier, but spoils its effect on sensible independently thinking readers. As a refutation point for point would lead me too far, I choose two examples; they will suffice. On page 936 Duhr says (in reference to what I asserted on p. 566): *Nowhere* in the *Exercitia* is any attempt made to *destroy* the judgment of the individual, on the contrary, a number of directions are given for extending our knowledge and so forming our judgment rightly. In the rule quoted by Chamberlain also all that is said is: “Putting aside our own judgment we must be prepared to obey in everything the true bride of Christ, the Church.“ Now this interpretation is a frivolous sophism; for when I “put aside“ my own opinion to obey “in everything“ the judgment of the Church, then I no longer have an opinion of my own. But in the literal trans-

568 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

By this the will is not broken, but only freed from obedience to its natural master, the individual; but what now controls him is the whip of the *Exercitia*. By these, exactly as in the case of the Fakirs, only in much more carefully planned and therefore more successful manner, a pathological condition of the whole individual is produced (and by yearly repetitions and still more frequent ones in the case of persons whose capacity of resistance is greater, it is always strengthened anew), and this condition has exactly the same effect as every other form of hysteria. Modern medicine sums up these psycho-pathological conditions in the term “forced neurosis“ and well knows that the person affected does not indeed lose his will, but certainly within the circle of the forced conceptions all free control of it! Naturally I cannot here enter more fully into this highly complex matter,

lation of the Spanish original, published by the Jesuits themselves, *versio literalis ex autographo hispanico*, we read as follows: “*Primo, deposito omni iudicio proprio, debemus tenere animum paratum et promptum ad obediendum in omnibus verae sponsae Christi*

domini nostri, quae est nostra sancta mater ecclesia hierarchica, quae romana est.“ And in the other passage adduced by me, Loyola's epistle to the Portuguese, the words are (S. 21): “[*vos ego per Christum dominum nostrum obtestor ut...*] *voluntatem dico atque iudicium expugnare et subijcere studeatis.*“ Are these words not clear enough? Do “deponere,” “expugnare” and “subijcere” really only mean “to put aside”? The second instance is still worse. On page [157](#) of the second volume I have quoted a sentence of the Jesuit Jouvancy concerning and against occupation with the mother tongue; Duhr boldly answers, “So foolish an assertion Jouvancy has nowhere made.” In refutation of this I beg the reader to take up the following book: *Bibliothek der katholischen Pädagogik*, founded with the assistance of P. C. Dr. L. Kellner, Suffragan Bishop Dr. Knecht, Spiritual Councillor Dr. Hermann Rolfus and published by F. X. Kunz, vol. x., *Der Jesuiten Sacchini, Juvencius und Kropf Erläuterungsschriften zur Studienordnung der Gesellschaft Jesu*, trans. by J. Stier, R. Schwickerath, F. Zorell, members of the same society, Freiburg i. B., Herder, 1898. Pages 209 to 322 contain the translation into German of Jouvancy's Lern- und Lehrmethode. And here we read on p. 229, “We must take this opportunity of calling attention to a cliff which is especially dangerous to young teachers, namely, too much reading of works in the mother tongue, especially poetical ones. This is not only a waste of time but may very easily cause shipwreck to the soul.”

569 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

which, especially in the second half of the nineteenth century, has been in so far cleared up by the experiments of Charcot and others as well as by scientific psychology that the problem is now clearly grasped and the fearful power of Physis over Psyche recognised; * it is sufficient if I have proved the destruction of the physical basis of freedom to have been Loyola's first purpose. This direct attack upon the body of the individual, not for the purpose of subjecting the body to the spirit, but to seize and conquer the spirit by means of the body, reveals a sentiment which is the negation of all that we Indo-Europeans have ever called religion. For Loyola's system has nothing in common with asceticism; on the contrary, he hates asceticism and forbids it, and rightly so from his standpoint: for asceticism increases the intellectual capacities and culminates, when carried out with absolute consistency, in the complete conquest of the senses; these may then continue, so to speak, as material for the imagination, to serve the mystical devotion of a Saint Theresa or the mystical metaphysics of the author of Chândogya; from that time forth they are senses rendered subject to will, elevated and purified by the power of the mind, and this the Hindoo teacher expresses when he writes: “the man of understanding is already in his lifetime bodiless.” † On the other hand, as I have said, Loyola's method actually prescribes a gymnastic course for the sensitive faculty, by which, as he himself describes his aim, the will and the judgment may be enslaved. While true asceticism is possible only

* To the most interesting summaries of late years belong the essays of Dr. Siegmund Freud: *Über die Ätiologie der Hysterie* and *Die Sexualität in der Ätiologie der Neurosen*, in the Vienna *Klinische Rundschau* in 1896 and 1898. I am convinced that every strong

stimulus of the outward activity of sense from purely inner excitement, even when it does not occur in sexual form, is an exacerbation of the sense-life, the seat of which is the brain, and from it results a corresponding paralysis.

† [Cankara](#): *Die Sûtra's des Vedânta* i, I, 4.

570 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

to a few chosen individuals, since moral determination must obviously form the basis and constantly hold the reins in this matter, these so-called “mental exercises“ of Loyola, which must never last more than four weeks (but may be shortened or adapted by the teacher to each individual) will find an impressionable subject in almost every one, especially in younger years. The suggestive power of such a grossly mechanical method planned with supreme art for exciting the whole individual is so great that no one can get quite out of it. I too feel my senses tremble when I give myself up to these *Exercitia*; but it is not the anatomically cut out heart of Jesus that I see (as if the muscular apparatus called “heart“ had anything in common with divine love!), I see the ravenous *ursus spelaeus* lying in wait for its prey; and when Loyola speaks of the fear of God and teaches that it is not “childlike fear“ that should satisfy us, but that we should tremble with “that other fear, called *timor servilis*,” that is, the tottering fear of helpless slaves, then I hear that mighty bear of the cave roar, and I shudder as did the men of the diluvial age, when poor, naked and defenceless, surrounded by danger day and night, they trembled at that voice. * The whole mental disposition of this Basque points backwards thousands of years; of the intellectual culture acquired by humanity he has adopted some externals but the inner

* *Regulae ad sentiendum cum ecclesia*, No. 18. It is very remarkable in connection with this fundamental doctrine of Ignatius (and all Jesuitism) that the Church father Augustine considered the *timor servilis* a proof that the man who felt it did not know God! Of such people he says: “They fear God with that slavish fear which proves the absence of love, for complete love knows no fear“ — “*Quoniam timent quidem Deum, sed illo timore servili, qui non est in charitate, quia perfecta charitas foras mittit timorem*“ (*De civitate Dei* xxi. 24). Goethe has clearly expressed in his *Wanderjahre* (Bk. ii. chap. i.) what should be the sacred rule of every Teuton in this matter: “no religion which is based on fear, is respected among us.“ Diderot makes the fine remark: “*Il y a des gens dont il ne faut pas dire qu'ils craignent Dieu, mais bien qu'ils en ont peur*“ (*Pensées philosophiques*, viii.).

571 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

growing and strengthening, that great emancipation of man from fear, that gradual tearing down of the tyranny of sense, which was formerly a condition of existence and hindered the development of every other quality, that “entrance of mankind into the daylight of life“ with the awakening of his freely creative power, that tendency to seek ideals,

which one does not first smell and taste in order to believe in them, but which one “really allows to grow up,” because man, who has become a moral being, so wills it, that divine doctrine that the kingdom of Heaven comes not with outward signs but is within us like a hidden treasure * — all this left absolutely no impression upon this man; standing apart from the restlessly hurrying waters which flow together to the great stream of Aryanism, his forefathers have lived since time immemorial, proud of their individuality, organically incapable of ever attaining to an intimate knowledge of that other nature. And do not imagine that Ignatius is in this respect a unique phenomenon! There are hundreds of thousands of people in Europe who speak our Indo-European tongues, wear the same clothes, take part in our life, and are excellent people in their way, but are just as far removed from us Teutons as if they lived on another planet; here it is not a question of a cleft such as separates us in many respects from the Jew, and which may be bridged at this point and that, but of a wall which is insurmountable and separates the one land from the other. The exceptional importance of Loyola lies in his pre-eminent greatness of character; in such a man therefore we see the Un-Germanic and the necessarily Anti-Germanic in a clear and great form, whereas at other times, whether it be owing to apparent unimportance or the indefiniteness of the half-breed character, it is easily overlooked or at least difficult to analyse. I said “greatness of character,” for as a matter of

* See pp. [187, 188](#).

572 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

fact other greatness is here out of the question: we note in the case of Loyola neither philosophical nor artistic thoughts and just as little real inventive power; even his *Exercitia* are in their outlines borrowed from former cloister exercises * and merely “materialised” by him, and his great fundamental principle of uncompromising obedience is an old soldier's thoughtlessly brutal transference of a military virtue of necessity to the domain of mind. His activity as an organiser and agitator bespeaks the subtlest cunning and a precise knowledge of mediocrities (very important or original people he systematically excluded from the Order), but nowhere is there evidence of depth. To prevent misunderstandings and misinterpretations I must add that I do not ascribe to him as an intention what has come to pass as the result of his action. Loyola did not call his order into existence with the object of opposing the Reformation — so at least the Jesuits assure us — much less can the word “Germanic” have been associated in his mind with any definite conception, nor can he have viewed his struggle against Germanicism as a life-purpose. We might just as well assert that that race of the Basques which had been pursued, driven and persecuted ever further and further by the encroachment of the Indo-Europeans had wished to avenge itself

on the victor through him. But in this book, where we are occupying ourselves not with chronicles but with the discovery of fundamental facts of history, we should emphasise the amount of truth that lies concealed behind these utterances which are untenable from the point of view of chronology. For it is not in what he wished to do but in what he had to do that the greatness of this extraordinary man lies. Father Bernhard Duhr may assure us in his most excited tone † that the founding of the Order of

* See, too, the above note about the influence of Mohammedanism upon the composition of the *Exercitia*.

† See *Jesuitenfabeln*, 2nd ed. pp. 1-11.

573 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

the Jesuits had nothing to do with opposition to Protestantism; its activity culminated from the very first so manifestly and so successfully in the prosecution of this one aim that even the earliest biographers of Loyola bestow on him the title of honour “Anti-Luther.” And whoever says “Anti-Luther” says Anti-Germanic — whether he is conscious of this or not. But with regard to the question of race-revenge, the fact that those physically strong but mentally inferior and Anti-Germanic races, which were never quite destroyed but withdrew into the mountains, are reviving and increasing, is engaging more and more the attention not of visionaries but of the most earnest natural scientists. *

With Ignatius of Loyola I place the type of the Anti-Germanic spirit before the reader and I think I have thereby illustrated the necessary limitation of the Germanic idea which at the beginning of the chapter was taken in as comprehensive a sense as possible. I cannot imagine a definition of the Teuton put down in paragraphs — as we have seen that is not even possible with physical man — but rather as something vividly conceived, which qualifies us to give an independent judgment. Here more than anywhere else we must guard against letting the conception stiffen in the definition. † Such living definitions of ideas are not like mathematical ones: it is not sufficient to say that this or that is so and so, it is only by means of the negative supplement, not so and not

* I should perhaps have pointed out more emphatically that from the first the activity of the Jesuits has been exercised chiefly in opposition to the Reformation. Thus, for example, two of the direct pupils and friends of Ignatius, Salmeron and Lainez, took care to arrogate to themselves the decisive positions at the Council of Trent, the one as opener of each debate, the other as the last speaker in each case. Little wonder that the “freedom of the Christian,” concerning which Luther had written such beautiful words, was fettered once for all at this Council! The great Catholic Church already entered upon that course which was gradually to lower it to a Jesuit sect.

† Cf. Goethe: *Geschichte der Farbenlehre*, under Scaliger.

574 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

so, that the positive representation is put in relief and the idea freed from the fetters of words.

BACKWARD GLANCE

Freedom and loyalty then are the two roots of the Germanic nature, or, if you will, the two pinions that bear it heavenwards. These are not meaningless words, each one of them embraces a wide complex of vivid conceptions, experiences and historical facts. Such a simplification has outwardly only been justified by the fact that we have proved that rich endowments were the inevitable basis of these two things: physical health and strength, great intelligence, luxuriant imagination, untiring impulse to create. And like all true powers of nature, freedom and loyalty flowed into each other: the specifically Germanic loyalty was a manifestation of the most elevated freedom — the maintenance of that freedom, loyalty to our own nature. Here too the specifically Germanic significance of the idea of duty becomes clear. Goethe says in one passage — he is speaking of taste in art, but the remark holds for all spheres: “to maintain courageously our position on the height of our barbarian advantages is our duty.” * This is Shakespeare's “to thine own self be true!” This is Nelson's signal on the morning of the Battle of Trafalgar “England expects every man to do his duty!” His duty? Loyalty to himself, the maintenance of his barbarian advantages, *i.e.* (as Montesquieu teaches us), of the freedom that is born in him. In contrast to this we behold a man who proclaims as the highest law the destruction of freedom, *i.e.*, of freedom of will, of understanding, of creative work — and who replaces loyalty (which would be meaningless without freedom) by obedience. The individual shall become — as Loyola says word for word in the constitutions of

* *Anmerkungen zu Rameau's Nefte.*

575 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

his Order — “as it were a corpse which lets itself be turned on any side and never resists the hand laid upon it, or like the staff of an old man which everywhere helps him who holds it, no matter how and where he wishes to employ it.” * I think it would be impossible to make the contrast to all Aryan thought and feeling more clear than it is in these words: on the one hand sunny, proud, mad delight in creating, men who fearlessly grasp the right hand of the God to whom they pray ([p. 243](#)); on the other a corpse, upon which the “destruction of all independent judgment” is impressed as the first rule in life and for which “cowering slavish fear” is the basis of all religion.

FORWARD GLANCE

I sometimes regret that, in a book like this, moralising would be so out of place as to be almost an offence against good taste. When we see those splendid “barbarians“ glowing with youth, free, making their entry into history endowed with all those qualities which fit them for the very highest place; when next we realise how they, the conquerors, the true “Freeborn“ of Aristotle, contaminate their pure blood by mixture with the impure races of the slave-born; how they accept their schooling from the unworthy descendants of noble progenitors, and force their way with untold toil out of the night of this Chaos towards a new dawn; — then we have to acknowledge the further fact that every day adds new enemies and new dangers to those which already exist — that these new enemies, like the former ones, are received by the Teutons with open arms, that the voice of warning is carelessly laughed at, and that while every enemy of our race, with full consciousness and the

* *“Perinde ac si cadaver essent, quod quoquo versus ferri, et quacunque ratione tractare se sinit: vel similiter atque senis baculus, qui obicumque et quacumque in re velit eo uti, qui cum manu tenet, ei inservit.“*

576 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

perfection of cunning, follows his own designs, we — still great, innocent barbarians — concentrate ourselves upon earthly and heavenly ideals, upon property, discoveries, inventions, brewing, art, metaphysics, love, and heaven knows what else! and with it all there is ever a tinge of the impossible, of that which cannot be brought to perfection, of the world beyond, otherwise we should remain lying idle on our bear-skins! Who could help moralising when he sees how we, without weapons, without defence, unconscious of any danger, go on our way, constantly befooled, ever ready to set a high price on what is foreign and to set small store by what is our own — we, the most learned of all men, and yet ignorant beyond all others of the world around us, the greatest discoverers and yet stricken with chronic blindness! Who could help crying with Ulrich von Hutten: “Oh! unhappy Germany, unhappy by thine own choice! thou that with eyes to see seest not, and with clear understanding understandest not!“ But I will not do it. I feel that this is not my business, and to tell the truth this haughty pococurantism is so characteristic a feature that I should regret its loss. The Teuton is no pessimist like the Hindoo, he is no good critic; he really thinks little in comparison with other Aryans; his gifts impel him to act and to feel. To call the Germans a “nation of thinkers“ is bitter irony; a nation of soldiers and shopkeepers would certainly be more correct, or of scholars and artists — but of thinkers? — these are thinly sown. * Hence it was that Luther went so far as to call the Germans “blind people“; the rest of

the Germanic races are the same in scarcely less degree; for analytical thought belongs to seeing, and to that again capacity, time, practice. The Teuton is occupied with other things; he has not yet completed his “entrance into the history

* Herder says (*Journal*, 1769, near the end: “The Germans think much and nothing.”

577 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

of the world“; he must first have taken possession of the whole earth, investigated nature on all sides, made its powers subject to him; he must first have developed the expression of art to a perfection yet unknown, and have collected an enormous store of historical knowledge — then perhaps he will have time to ask himself what is going on immediately around him. Till then he will continue to walk on the edge of the precipice with the same calmness as on a flowering meadow. That cannot be changed, for this pococurantism is, as I said above, characteristic of the Teuton. The Greeks and the Romans were not unlike this: the former continued to think and invent artistically, the latter to add conquest to conquest without ever becoming conscious of themselves like the Jews, without ever noticing in the least how the course of events was gradually wiping them from off the face of the earth; they did not fall dead like other nations; they descended slowly into Hades full of life to the last, vigorous to the last, in the proud consciousness of victory. *

And I, a modest historian, who can neither influence the course of events nor possess the power of looking clearly into the future, must be satisfied if in fulfilling the purpose of this book I have succeeded in showing the distinction between the Germanic and the Non-Germanic. That the Teuton is one of the greatest, perhaps the very greatest power in the history of mankind, no one will wish to deny, but in order to arrive at a correct appreciation of the present time, it behoved us to settle once for all who could and who could not be regarded as Teuton. In the nineteenth century, as in all former centuries, but of course with widely different grouping and with con-

* This reminds us of what Goethe called “after all the most magnificent symbol“: a setting sun on a sea, with the legend “even when setting it remains the same“ (*Unterhaltungen mit dem Kanzler von Müller*, March 24, 1824.)

578 ENTRANCE OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

stantly changing relative power, there stood side by side in Europe these “Heirs“ — the chaos of half-breeds, relics of the former Roman Empire, the Germanising of which is falling off — the Jews — and the Germans, whose contamination by mixture with the half-breeds and the descendants of other Non-Aryan races is on the increase. No arguing

about “humanity“ can alter the fact that this means a struggle. Where the struggle is not waged with cannon-balls, it goes on silently in the heart of society by marriages, by the annihilation of distances which furthers intercourse, by the varying powers of resistance in the different types of mankind, by the shifting of wealth, by the birth of new influences and the disappearance of others, and by many other motive powers. But this struggle, silent though it be, is above all others a struggle for life and death.

END OF VOL. I

i

FOUNDATIONS OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY
VOL. II

ii

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iii

**FOUNDATIONS OF THE
NINETEENTH CENTURY**

BY HOUSTON STEWART CHAMBERLAIN
A TRANSLATION FROM THE GERMAN
BY JOHN LEES, M.A., D.LIT. (EDIN.)
WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY LORD REDESDALE, G.C.V.O., K.C.B., ETC.
IN TWO VOLUMES: VOLUME II

LONDON: JOHN LANE, THE BODLEY HEAD
NEW YORK: JOHN LANE COMPANY: MCMXII

iv

Printed by BALLANTYNE & CO. LIMITED
Tavistock Street, Covent Garden, London

v-vii CONTENTS

(Contents of the second volume are moved to [volume 1](#) for convenience's sake.)

viii

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ix

FOUNDATIONS OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

x

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1

DIVISION III

THE STRUGGLE

2

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3

DIVISION III

THE STRUGGLE

Your high-engender'd battles. — SHAKESPEARE.

INTRODUCTORY

LEADING PRINCIPLES

WITH this division we enter a new field — the purely historical. Although the legacy of antiquity and its heirs were manifestations of history, it was possible to free these manifestations from their surroundings and so to consider them under the light of history, and yet not quite as history. Henceforth we have to deal with a succession of events and processes of development, that is to say, with history pure and simple. But there will be a certain sameness in the method, because, just as we formerly noted what remains constant in the stream of time, we shall now choose out only individual points in the incalculable crowd of events that hurry past our mental eye, points which have permanent significance and are, so to speak, “constant.” The philosopher might offer the objection that every impulse, even the smallest, exercises perpetual influence; the answer is that in history almost every individual force very soon loses its separate importance and possesses only the value of one component among countless others which are only

4 INTRODUCTORY

present as ideas, while one single great “resultant” remains behind as the perceptible issue of many manifestations of contradictory powers. But now — to maintain the mechanical comparison — these resulting lines unite again to form new parallelograms of forces and produce new, greater, more evident events, which have a deeper influence upon history and more enduring importance — and that goes on until certain heights of power-manifestation are reached, which cannot be surpassed. Only the highest of these must be dealt with here. I shall take it for granted that the historical facts are known; and my task consists merely in properly emphasising and grouping what appears indispensable for an intelligent judgment of the nineteenth century with its contrary currents, its crossing resultants and its leading ideas.

I intended originally to call this third and last division of the first part “The Time of Wild Ferment.” I felt, however, that this wild ferment continued long after the year 1200. In fact, even at the present day in

many places there seems to be quite enough and to spare. I had also to give up the plan of three chapters — the Struggle in the State, the Struggle in the Church, the Struggle between State and Church — since this would have led me much deeper into history than I could have reconciled with the purpose of my work. But I thought it proper in these introductory words to mention my original plan and the studies that it involved, in order that the far simpler method which I have adopted with the division into two chapters “Religion“ and “State“ may be accepted as the final result of my studies, while some criticism may be disarmed. At the same time it will be understood how far the idea of “The Struggle“ has been the leading motive of my exposition.

5 INTRODUCTORY

ANARCHY

Goethe in one passage describes the Middle Ages as a conflict between powers which to some extent already possessed, and to some extent endeavoured to gain, considerable independence, and calls the whole an “aristocratic anarchy.“ * I do not like the expression “aristocratic,“ for it always implies — even when viewed as aristocracy of intellect — rights of birth; in contradiction to which that mighty power, the Church, denies all hereditary rights: even the right of succession, recognised by a whole people, does not confer legitimacy on a monarch unless the Church of its own free will ratifies it; that was and still is the Roman theory of the legal powers of the Church, and history offers many examples of Popes freeing nations from their oath of allegiance and inciting them to rebel against their lawful king. In its own midst the Church recognises no individual rights of any kind; neither nobility of birth nor of mind is of any moment. And though we certainly cannot call it a democratic power, yet still less is it aristocratic; all logocracies have been essentially anti-aristocratic and at the same time anti-democratic. Moreover, other powers, genuinely democratic, were beginning to assert themselves in the period which Goethe calls aristocratic. The Teutonic races had entered history as free men, and for many centuries their kings possessed much less power over them than over the subjects whom they had conquered in the various countries of the Roman Empire. The double influence of Rome — as Church and Law — sufficed to weaken and soon to abolish these rights. † But the impulse towards freedom

* *Annalen*, 1794.

† This can be followed more clearly in Savigny's *Geschichte des römischen Rechtes im Mittelalter* than in general works of history,

6 INTRODUCTORY

could never be entirely checked; we see it assert itself in every century, now in the north, now in the south, at one time as freedom of thought and faith, at another as a struggle for city privileges, such as commerce, the defence of rights of class, or a revolt against them, occasionally too in the form of inroads of rude, unconquered tribes into the half-organised mass of the post-Roman Empire. But we must agree with Goethe when he says that this prevailing state of warfare is anarchy. Individual great men had scarcely time to think of justice; moreover every power fought unscrupulously for its own ends, regardless of the rights of others: that was a necessity of existence. We must not let moral scruples bias us: the more unscrupulously a power asserted itself, the greater was its capacity of life. Beethoven says in one passage, "Power is the morality of men who excel others"; and power was the morality of that epoch of the first wild ferment. It was only when nations began to take shape, when in art, science and philosophy man became once more conscious of himself, when, through organisation for the purpose of work, the exercise of his inventive gifts, and the grasping of ideal aims, he entered once more into the magic circle of genuine culture, into "the daylight of life," that anarchy began to give way, or rather to be gradually dammed up in the interests of a new world and a new culture which were assuming final form. This process is still going on, for we are living in all respects in a "Middle Age," * but the contrast between the pure anarchy of former times and the moderate anarchy of to-day is so striking that the fundamental difference must be very obvious. Political anarchy probably reached its height in the ninth century; compare the nineteenth with it and we shall be forced

because he gives a fuller and more vivid account: see especially in the fourth chapter of the first volume the division dealing with "The Freemen" and "the Counts."

* See [vol. i. p. lxix.](#)

7 INTRODUCTORY

to admit that in spite of our revolutions and bloody reactions, in spite of tyranny and regicide, in spite of the uninterrupted ferment here and there, in spite of the shiftings of property, the nineteenth century is to the ninth as day is to night.

In this section I have to deal with a time when there was hardly anything but conflict. In a later age, as soon in fact as the dawn of culture began to appear, there was a shifting of the centre of gravity; the

outward conflict still continued and many an honest historian sees even in this age only Popes and Kings, Princes and Bishops, nobility and corporations, battles and treaties; but henceforth there is side by side with these a new invisible power, remodelling the spirit of humanity, and yet making no use of the anarchical morality of force. However slowly this may reveal itself, the sum of intellectual work, which led to the discovery of the heliocentric system of the world, * has entirely undermined the foundations on which Church theology and Church power rested. The introduction of paper and the invention of printing have raised thought to a world power; out of the lap of pure science have come those discoveries which, like steam and electricity, completely transform the life of humanity as well as the purely material relations of power; † the influence of art and of philosophy — *e.g.*, of such personalities as Goethe and

* Augustine comprehended quite well and admitted expressly (*De Civitate Dei* xvi. 9) that if the world is round and men live at the Antipodes, “whose feet are opposite our feet, separated from us by Oceans, their development going on apart from us,” then the sacred writings have “lied.” Augustine in fact must admit as an honest man that in such an event the plan of salvation, as the Church represents it, is inadequate, and so he hastens to the conclusion that the idea of such antipodes and unknown human races is absurd, *nimis absurdum est*. What would he have said if he had lived to see the heliocentric system established as well as the fact that untold millions of worlds move in space?

† Thus poor Switzerland is on the point of becoming one of the richest industrial States, since it can transform its huge water-supply into electricity at almost no cost.

8 INTRODUCTORY

Kant — is incalculably great. But I return to this in the [second part](#) of these “Foundations,” which discusses the rise of a new Germanic world; this section has to deal solely with the struggle of the great powers for possession and supremacy.

RELIGION AND THE STATE

If I were to follow the usual custom and, as I had originally planned, contrast State and Church, not State and Religion, we should be in danger of dealing with mere forms. For the Roman Church is first and foremost a political, *i.e.*, a national power; it inherited the Roman idea of imperium, and, in league with the Emperor it represented the rights of an absolute universal empire, supposed to be established by God. It thus conflicted with Germanic tradition and the Germanic impulse to form a nation. Religion it regarded as a means of closely uniting all peoples.

Since earliest times the *Pontifex maximus* in Rome was the chief official in the hierarchy, *judex atque arbiter rerum divinarum humanarumque*, to whom (according to the legal theory) the King and later the Consuls were subordinate. * Of course the remarkably developed political sense of the old Romans had prevented the *Pontifex maximus* from ever abusing his theoretical power as judge of all things divine and human, just in the same way as the unlimited power (according to the legal fiction) of the paterfamilias over the life and death of his family never gave rise to excesses; † the Romans in fact had been the very reverse of anarchists. But now, in the unfettered human chaos, the title and its legal claims were revived; never before or since has such weight been attached to theoretical “law“; vested legal rights were never so much flaunted

* See especially Leist: *Graeco-italische Rechtsgeschichte*, § 69.

† See [vol. i. p. 162.](#)

9 INTRODUCTORY

and insisted upon as at this time, when violence and malice were the sole ruling forces. Pericles had expressed the opinion that the unwritten law stood higher than the written; now only the written word was valid; a commentary of Ulpian, a gloss of Tribonian — intended for quite different conditions — was *ratio scripta* and decided the rights of whole peoples; a parchment with a seal on it legalised every crime. The heiress, administrator and advocate of this view of political law was the city of Rome with her *Pontifex maximus*, and it stands to reason that she employed these principles to her own advantage. But at the same time the Church inherited the Jewish hierocratic idea of State, with the High Priest as supreme power; the writings of the Church fathers from the third century onwards are full of Old Testament utterances and ideas; and there cannot be the shadow of a doubt that the Roman ideal was the establishment of a universal State with the Jewish priestly rule as a foundation. * Here, therefore, the Roman Church must be viewed as a purely political power: here it is not Church that is opposed to State, but one State to another, one political ideal to another.

But apart from the political struggle, which never raged so bitterly and irreconcilably as when the Roman imperial idea came in conflict with Germanic national aspirations, and the Jewish theocracy with Christ's pronouncement, “Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's,” there broke out another very important battle, that about religion itself. And in the nineteenth century this struggle is no more at an end than the other. In our secular States at the beginning of the century the religious contrasts seemed to have lost all acuteness, the nineteenth century had the appearance of an epoch of unconditional tolerance;

* Naturally the oldest are to be excepted, who, like Origenes, Tertullian, &c., had no idea of the possible predominant position of Christianity.

10 INTRODUCTORY

but during the last thirty years the Church agitators have been once more zealously at work, and the night of the Middle Ages still lies so black around us that in this field every weapon is considered good, and actually proves itself good, though it may be lying, falsification of history, political pressure or social compulsion. It is no mere trifle that lies at the root of this religious strife. Underneath a dogmatic strife, so subtle that it seems to the layman senseless and indifferent, there slumbers not seldom one of those fundamental spiritual questions which decide the whole tendency of a nation's life. How many laymen, for instance, are there in Europe who are capable of understanding the conflict concerning the nature of communion? And yet it was the dogma of transubstantiation (issued in the year 1215, exactly at the moment when the English forced the *Magna Charta* from their king), which inevitably broke up Europe into several hostile camps. Race differences are at the bottom of this. But race is, as we have seen, plastic, inconstant and composed of manifold elements almost always striving with each other for the mastery ; frequently the victory of a religious dogma has given one element preponderance over the others and thus determined the whole further development of a race or nation. Perhaps even the greatest thinker of the time has not quite understood the dogma in question: for dogma deals with the Inexpressible and Unthinkable; but in such cases the direction is the important matter — the orientation of the will, if I may so express it. Thus we can easily understand how State and Religion can and must affect each other, and that not only in the sense of a tussle between universal Church and national Government: there is also the troublous fact that the State possesses the means (and till lately possessed almost unlimited means) of checking a moral and intellectual movement revealing itself in religion; friction may also

11 INTRODUCTORY

arise through the complete victory of some religious view directing the State itself into an entirely new course. Any one who glances impartially at the map of Europe cannot doubt that religion was and is a powerful factor in the growth of States and the development of culture. * It not only reveals, but makes, character.

I think that I shall be doing justice to the object which I have in view

if, when dealing with this epoch, I choose for special treatment the two great objects of contention — State and Religion, the struggle in Religion and for Religion, the struggle in the State and for the State. But I must defend myself from the appearance of postulating two separate entities, which became a unity only by their capability of influencing each other; I am rather of the opinion that the complete separation of religious from civic life, which is so popular to-day, rests upon a dangerous error of judgment. It is in reality impossible. In former centuries it was the custom to call Religion the soul and the State the body; † but to-day, when the intimate connection of soul and body in the individual becomes more and more present to us, so that we scarcely know where we are to assume the boundary-line to be, such a distinction should make us pause. We know that behind a dispute about justification by faith and justification by works, which is apparently carried on entirely and exclusively in the forum of the soul, very “corporeal” things may be concealed; the course of history has shown us this; and on the other hand we see the moulding and the mechanism of the corporate State having a great and decisive influence upon the nature of the soul (*e.g.*, France since the night of St. Bartholomew and the Dragonades). In decisive moments the ideas State and Religion coalesce

* Very beautifully shown by Schiller at the beginning of the first part of his *Thirty Years War*.

† *E.g.*, Gregory II. in his frequently mentioned letter to Emperor Leo the Isaurian.

12 INTRODUCTORY

completely; we can without figure of speech assert that for the ancient Roman his State was his Religion, and that for the Jew his Religion was his State; and even to-day, when a soldier rushes to battle with the cry: for God, King and Fatherland! that is at the same time Religion and State. Nevertheless in spite of the importance of this caveat, the maintenance of a distinction between the two ideas is a practical necessity; practical for a rapid survey of the summits of history, and practical for a later attempt to connect them with the phenomena and currents of our century.

13

SEVENTH CHAPTER

RELIGION

Rightly understand the driving power of religion, do what it behoves you to further it, and seek to fulfil your duty in this. — ZOROASTER.

CHRIST AND CHRISTIANITY

ON a former occasion ([vol. i. p. 249](#)) I expressed my personal conviction that the earthly life of Jesus Christ forms the origin and source, the strength and — fundamentally — the significance of everything that has ever called itself Christian religion. I shall not repeat myself, but refer once for all to the chapter on Christ. In that chapter I completely separated the sublime figure of Christ from all historical Christianity, here I purpose to deal with the complementary aspect, and to speak of the rise and growth of the Christian religion. It will be my endeavour to bring out certain leading ideas without even touching the inviolable Figure on the Cross. This separation is not only possible but necessary; it would show a blasphemous lack of critical insight to try to identify with the rock itself the strange structures that have been built upon it by human profundity, acuteness, shortsightedness, confusion, stupidity, by tradition and piety, superstition, malice, senselessness, convention, philosophic speculation and devotion to mysticism — amid the never-ceasing clatter of tongues and swords and the crackling of flames. The whole superstructure of the Christian Churches has hitherto been outside of the

14 RELIGION

personality of Christ. Jewish will, united to Aryan mythical thought, has formed its principal part; much was derived from Syria, Egypt, &c.; the appearance of Christ upon earth was, to begin with, only the incitement to the constitution of religion, its driving power — as when the lightning breaks through the clouds and there follows a downpour of rain, or when sunbeams suddenly fall upon certain substances which have nothing in common, and they, at once transformed, burst the boundaries that formerly separated them and unite to form a new compound. It would certainly be unwise to try to estimate the power of the sunbeam and the lightning from these effects. All honour to those who built upon Christ, but we must not permit our vision or our judgment to be dimmed. There is not only a past and a present, there is also a future; for it we must maintain our full freedom. I doubt whether we can rightly judge the past in its relation to the present unless a living divination of the needs of the future carries the mind aloft. Taking the standpoint of the present alone the eye is too much earthbound to be able to see all the possible

sequences. It was a Christian, and a Christian in sympathy with the Roman Church, who at the beginning of the nineteenth century said: "The New Testament is still a book with seven seals. Christianity must be studied by man for eternities. In the gospels lie the outlines of future gospels." * Whoever studies carefully the history of Christianity sees that it is always and everywhere in a state of flux, always and everywhere waging an inward struggle. Whoever, on the other hand, cherishes the foolish delusion that Christianity has now received its various final forms, overlooks the fact that even the Romish Church, which is considered particularly conservative, has created new dogmas in every century, while older ones (certainly with

* Novalis: *Fragmente*.

15 RELIGION

less noise) were being borne to their grave; he forgets that, even in the nineteenth century, that firmly established church has experienced more movements, struggles and schisms than almost any other. Such a man imagines that, as the process of development is at an end, he now holds the sum of Christianity in his hands and from this monstrous supposition he constructs in the piety of his heart not only the present and the future but also the past. Still more monstrous is the supposition that Christianity is exhausted and spent, sustained in its boundless course only by the law of inertia; and yet more than one moral philosopher of recent times has written the obituary notice of Christianity, speaking of it as of an historical experiment now over, the beginning, middle and conclusion of which are capable of analytical demonstration. The error of judgment, which lies at the bottom of these opposite views is, it is obvious, practically the same, it leads moreover to equally false conclusions. This error we avoid when we distinguish the personality of Christ — that ever-gushing constant spring of the loftiest religiosity — from the structures which the changing religious needs, the changing mental claims of men, and — what is more important — the fundamentally different natures of dissimilar human races have erected as the law and temple of their worship.

RELIGIOUS DELIRIUM

The Christian religion took its rise at a very peculiar time, under as unfavourable circumstances as could be imagined for the establishment of a uniform, worthy and solid structure. In those very districts where its cradle stood, namely, in Western Asia, Northern Africa and Eastern

Europe, there had been a peculiar fusion of the most diverse superstitions, myths, mysteries and philosophical theorems, whereby, as was inevitable, all had

16 RELIGION

lost something of their individuality and value. Think for a moment of the political and social condition of those countries at that time. What Alexander had begun, Rome had completed in a more thorough fashion: in those districts there prevailed an internationalism of which we can hardly form an idea to-day. In the leading cities on the Mediterranean and in Asia Minor there was absolutely no uniformity of race. There were to be found in heterogeneous groups Hellenes, Syrians, Jews, Semites, Armenians, Egyptians, Persians, Roman military colonies, &c. &c., surrounded by countless hybrids, in whose veins all individual characteristics had been confounded and lost. The feeling of patriotism had quite disappeared, because it lacked all meaning; there existed neither nation nor race; Rome was for these men practically what the police are for our mob. On this state of affairs, which I have characterised as “the chaos of peoples,” I have endeavoured to throw some light in [chapter four](#) of my book. From it resulted free interchange of ideas and customs; national custom and character were gone, and men sought to find a substitute in a capricious confusion of alien practices and alien views of life. There was now practically no real faith. Even in the case of the Jews — otherwise a splendid exception in the midst of this Witches' Sabbath — faith was uncertain amid so many varying sects. And yet never before was there such an intoxication of religious feeling as spread at that time from the banks of the Euphrates to Rome. Indian mysticism, which in all manner of corrupt forms had penetrated as far as Asia Minor, Chaldaic star-worship, Zoroastrian worship of Ormuzd and the fire-worship of the magicians, Egyptian asceticism and the doctrine of immortality, Syrian and Phoenician orgiastic and the delusion of the sacrament, Samothracian, Eleusinian and all other kinds of Hellenic mysteries, curiously disguised outcrops of Pythagorean,

17 RELIGION

Empedoclean and Platonic metaphysics, Mosaic propaganda, Stoical ethics — were all circling in a mad whirl. Men no longer knew what religion meant, but they gave everything a trial, in the dim consciousness they had been robbed of something which was as necessary to them as

the sun to the earth. * Into this world came the word of Christ; and it was by these fever-stricken men that the visible structure of the Christian religion was erected; no one could quite free it from the traces of delirium.

THE TWO MAIN PILLARS

The history of the rise of Christian theology is one of the most complicated and difficult that exist. The man who approaches it earnestly and frankly will receive profound and stimulating instruction, but he will at the same time be forced to admit that very much is still exceedingly dark and uncertain, as soon as we leave theorising and try to demonstrate historically the real origin of an idea. A complete history, not of the dogmas within Christianity, but of the way in which from the most diverse circles of ideas articles of faith, conceptions, rules of life entered Christianity and made their home there, cannot yet be written; but enough has happened to convince every one that here an alloy (as the chemists say) of the most diverse metals has been formed. It is not within the scope of my work to submit this complicated state of matters to a thorough analysis, even were I competent for the task; † in the meantime it

* Herder says regarding the man of this time: “He had strength for nothing but believing. Troubled about his wretched life, trembling for the future and in dread of invisible powers, timid and powerless to investigate the course of nature, he lent his ear to stories and prophecies and let himself be inspired, initiated, flattered, betrayed“ (*Complete Works*, Inghan's ed. xix. 290).

† It is scarcely right for me to name special works; the literature even in as far as it is available to us laymen is extensive; the important

18 RELIGION

will be sufficient to consider the two chief pillars — Judaism and Indo-Europeanism — on which almost the whole structure has been built and which explains the hybridism of the Christian religion from the beginning. Of course much that was Jewish and Indo-European was afterwards so falsified by the influence of the Chaos and especially of Egypt that it became no longer recognisable. Take, for example, the introduction of the cult of Isis (mother of God) and the magic transformation of matter, though here, too, a knowledge of the fundamental structure is indispensable. Everything else is proportionately unimportant; thus — to give only one example — the official introduction into practical Christianity of Stoic doctrines of virtue and bliss by Ambrosius, whose book *De Officiis Ministrorum* was merely a

pale imitation of Cicero's *De Officiis*, which he in turn had compiled from the Greek Panaetius. * Such a thing is certainly not without significance; Hatch shows, for example, in his

thing is to get instruction from various sources and not to be satisfied with a knowledge of generalities. Thus the short text-books of Harnack, Müller, Holtzmann, &c., in the *Grundriss der theologischen Wissenschaften* (Freiburg, Mohr) are invaluable, I have used them diligently; but the layman will get much more out of larger works, such as Neander's *Kirchengeschichte* or Renan's *Origines du Christianisme*, &c. Still more instructive, because more vivid and clear, are the works of the specialists, as Ramsay: *The Church in the Roman Empire before A.D. 170* (1895); Hatch: *The influence of Greek Ideas and Usages upon the Christian Church* (1897); Hergenröther's great work: *Photius, sein Leben, seine Schriften und das griechische Schisma*, which begins with the founding of Constantinople and thus traces in great detail the development of the Greek Church from the beginning; Hefele: *Konziliengeschichte*, &c. &c. We laymen can naturally acquire detailed knowledge of only a portion of this literature; but, I repeat, it is only from detailed accounts and not from summaries that we can get vivid conceptions and knowledge. (An important new work is Adolf Harnack's *Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten*, 1902; 2nd ed. 1906.)

* Ambrosius admits this implicitly; see i. 24. Much is indeed an almost literal translation. How much more important, however, are his independent writings, as the speech on the death of the Emperor Theodosius with the beautiful ever-recurring refrain: "*Dilexi!* I loved him!"

19 RELIGION

lecture on "Greek and Christian ethics," that the moral code which obtains to-day is made up of far more Stoical than Christian elements. * But we have already seen that morality and religion may be independent of each other (see vol. i. pp. [215](#) and [489](#)), at least wherever the "conversion" taught by Christ has not taken place; and while it is interesting to see a Church father recommending the practical and cosmopolitan, not to say legal, morality of a Cicero as model to the priests of his diocese, yet such a thing does not reach to the foundations of the religious structure. The same might be said of many another element which will occupy our attention later.

Now those two principal pillars, upon which the Christian theologians of the first centuries erected the new religion, are Jewish historical and chronological faith and Indo-European symbolical and metaphysical mythology. As I have already demonstrated in detail, we have here to deal with two fundamentally different "views of life." † These two views now became amalgamated. Indo-Europeans — men nurtured on Hellenic poetry and philosophy thirsting after ideas — transformed Jewish historical religion according to the fancy of their richly imaginative spirit; Jews, on the other hand, even before the rise of Christianity seized hold on the mythology and physics of the Greeks, saturated them with the historical superstition of their people and out of the whole spun an

abstract dogmatical web which was just as incomprehensible as the most sublime speculations of a Plato, materialising into empirical forms everything that was transcendental and allegorical; on both sides therefore irremediable

* *Influence of Greek Ideas*, pp. 139-170. In this lecture Hatch refers to Ambrosius' work and is of opinion that it is essentially Stoical not only in conception but also in detail. The Christian element is indeed there, but merely as an adjunct. Its fundamental doctrine of wisdom, virtue, justice, temperance, is pure Graeco-Roman doctrine of pre-Christian times.

† See especially vol. i. [p. 213 f.](#) and [p. 411 f.](#)

20 RELIGION

misapprehension and non-comprehension — the inevitable consequence of deviation from the natural course! It was the work of the first centuries to weld together in Christianity these alien elements, and this work could naturally only succeed amid unceasing strife. Reduced to its simplest expression, this strife was a struggle for mastery between Indo-European and Jewish religious instincts. It broke out immediately after the death of Christ between the Jewish Gentiles and the heathen Christians, for centuries it raged most violently between gnosis and antignosis, between Arians and Athanasians, it woke up again in the Reformation and to-day it goes on as fiercely as ever, not indeed in the clouds of theory or on battlefields, but as an underground current in our life. We can make this process clear by a comparison. It is as though we were to take two trees of different genera, cut off their heads and without uprooting them bend them together and tie them in such a fashion that each should become a graft of the other. Upward growth would at once become an impossibility for both; deterioration, not improvement, would be the result, for, as every botanist knows, an organic union is in such a case impossible, and the trees, if they survived the operation, would continue to bear each its own leaves and flowers, and in the confusion of foliage alien would everywhere be driving against alien. * Exactly the same has happened with the Christian structure of religion. Jewish religious chronicle and Jewish Messianic faith stand unreconciled beside the mystic mythology of the Hellenic decadence. Not only do they not fuse, in essential points they contradict each other. Take, for example, the conception of the Godhead: here Jehovah,

* As I afterwards found, Hamann has suggested this comparison: "Go into any community of Christians you like, their language in the sacred precincts, their Fatherland and their genealogy betray the fact that they are Gentile branches, artificially grafted upon a Jewish stem." (Cf. *Romans* xi. 24.)

21 RELIGION

there the old Aryan Trinity. Take again the conception of the Messiah: here the expectation of a hero of the tribe of David, who will win for the Jews the empire of the world, there the Logos become flesh, fastened on to metaphysical speculations, which had occupied the Greek philosophers for five hundred years before the birth of Christ. * Christ, the undeniably historical personality, is forced into both systems; for the Jewish historical myth he had to supply the Messiah, although no one was less suitable; in the neo-Platonic myth he is the fleeting incomprehensible manifestation of an abstract scheme of thought — he, the moral genius in its highest potentiality, the greatest religious individuality that ever lived!

Nevertheless even admitting the necessary untrustworthiness and defects of such a hybrid representation, we can hardly imagine how a universal religion could have arisen in that chaos of peoples without the cooperation of these two elements. Of course, if Christ had preached to Indian or Germanic peoples his words would have had quite a different influence. There has never been a less Christian age — if I am allowed the paradox — than the centuries in which the Christian Church originated. A real understanding of Christ's words was at that time out of the question. But when through him the stimulus to religious elevation was given to that chaotic and deluded mass of human beings, how could a temple have been built for them without basing everything upon the Jewish chronicle and the Jewish tendency to view things from a concrete historical standpoint? One could only keep these slavish souls, who had nothing to lean upon either in themselves or in the national life around them, by giving them something tangible, something material and dogmatically certain; it was a religious law, not philosophical speculations about duty and

* I said five hundred years, for see Harnack on the identity of Logos and Nous: *Dogmengeschichte*, § 22.

22 RELIGION

virtue, that they required; for that reason indeed many had already adopted Judaism. But Judaism — invaluable as a power of will — possesses only a very small and, being Semitic, a very limited creative capacity; the architect had therefore to be sought elsewhere. Without the wealth of form and the creative power of the Hellenic spirit, or let us say simply, without Homer, Plato and Aristotle, and in the further

background Persia and India — the outward cosmogonic and mythological structure of the Christian Church could never have become the temple of a universal faith. The early teachers of the Church all link themselves with Plato, the later ones with Aristotle as well. Any Church history will testify to the extensive literary poetical and philosophical culture of the earliest, that is the Greek, fathers, and from that we may form a high estimate of the value of this culture for the fundamental dogmas of Christianity. The Indo-European mythology could not of course receive colour and life under such strange auspices; it was Christian art which at a later time helped as far as possible to make good this want; yet, thanks to the influence of the Hellenic eye, this mythology at least received a geometric and in so far visible shape: the ancient Aryan conception of the Trinity supplied the skilfully built cosmic temple, in which were erected the altars of an entirely new religion.

We must now become quite clear about the nature of these two most important constructive elements of the Christian religion, otherwise it will be impossible to understand the very complicated strife about articles of faith, which has been raging from the first century of our era to the present day — but especially during the first centuries. The various leading spirits confuse in the most varying proportions the most contradictory views, doctrines and instincts of Jew and Indo-European. Let us therefore consider first the mythologically moulding

23 RELIGION

influence of the Indo-European philosophy upon the growing Christian religion, and afterwards the mighty impulse which it received from the positive, materialistic spirit of Judaism.

In chapter five I have given a detailed exposition of the difference between historical and mythical religion; * I assume it now to be known. Mythology is a metaphysical view of the world *sub specie oculorum*. Its peculiarity, its special character — its limitation also — consists in this, that what has not been seen is by it reduced to something seen. The myth explains nothing; it is not a seeking after the whence and whither; nor is it a moral doctrine; least of all is it history. From this one reflection it is clear that the mythology of the Christian Church has primarily nothing to do with Old Testament chronology and the historical advent of Christ; it is an old Aryan legacy transformed in many respects for the worse by alien hands and adapted well or badly to new conditions. † In order to form a clear idea of the mythological portions of Christianity, we shall do well to distinguish between inner and outer mythology, that is, between the mythological moulding of outer and of inner experience. Phoebus driving his car through the sky is the figurative expression of an outward phenomenon; the Erinnyes pursuing the criminal symbolise a

fact of man's inner experience. In both spheres Christian and mythological symbolism have penetrated deep, and as Wolfgang Menzel, a man of Catholic leanings, says, "Symbolism is not merely the mirror, it is also the source of dogma." ‡ Symbolism as the source of dogma is manifestly identical with mythology.

* See vol. i. pp. [411 to 440](#).

† It is easy to understand how the pious Tertullian, who grew up in Heathenism, could say of the conceptions of the Hellenic poets and philosophers, that they were *tam consimilia* to the Christian ones! (*Apol.* xlvi).

‡ *Christliche Symbolik* (1854), i, p. viii.

24 RELIGION

THE MYTHOLOGY OF OUTER EXPERIENCE

As an excellent example of mythology which grows from external experience I should like to mention especially the conception of the Trinity. Thanks to the influence of Hellenic sentiment, the Christian Church (in spite of the violent opposition of the Jewish Christians), had, in the moulding of its dogma, steered successfully past that most dangerous cliff, Semitic monotheism, and has preserved in her otherwise perilously Judaised conception of the Godhead the sacred "Three in Number" of the Aryans. * It is well known that we continually come across the number Three among the Indo-Europeans: it is, as Goethe says,

..... die ewig unveraltete,
Dreiamig — Dreigestaltete.

We find it in the three groups of the Indian gods, at a later time (several centuries before Christ) developed into the detailed and expressly stated doctrine of the Trinity, the Trimūrti: "He, who is Vishnu, is also Çiva, and he, who is Çiva, is also Brahma: one being but three Gods." And the conception can be traced from the distant east to the shores of the Atlantic Ocean, where Patricius found the clover leaf as the symbol of the Trinity among the Druids. The number Three was bound at an early time to impress itself upon races that were inclined to poetry and metaphysics, for it and it alone is not a chance number (like five or ten which are derived from the fingers) nor a pedantically calculated

* That the Indo-Europeans also were at bottom monotheists, I have at a much earlier point emphasised, in opposition to the widespread popular error (*see* vol. i. pp. [218](#) and [424](#)); *cf.* also Jac. Grimm in the preface to his *Deutsche Mythologie* (pp. xlv.-xlvi.) and Max Müller in his lectures on the Science of Languages (ii. 385). But this kind of monotheism must be distinguished from the Semitic.

25 RELIGION

number (like seven, which is derived from the so-called seven wandering stars), it expresses a fundamental phenomenon, so that the conception of a Trinity might rather be called an experience than a symbol. The authors of the Upanishads had already recognised that all human knowledge rests on three fundamental forms — time, space, causality — and that not a triplicity but (to quote from Kant) a “unity of apperception“ results therefrom; space and time also are inseparable unities, but possess three dimensions. In short, the threefoldness as unity surrounds us on all sides as an original phenomenon of experience and is reflected in all individual cases. Thus, for example, the most modern science has proved that without exception every element can take three — but only three — forms: the solid, the fluid, the gaseous; and this only further shows, what the people long ago knew, that our planet consists of earth, water and air. As Homer says:

Everything was divided into three.

If we search for such conceptions intentionally, the proceeding very soon degenerates (as in the case of Hegel) into trifling; * but there is no trifling in the spontaneous, intuitive development into a myth of a general, but not analytically divided, physical and at the same time metaphysical cosmic experience. And from this example we derive the consoling certainty that in the Christian dogma too the Indo-European spirit has not become entirely untrue to its own nature, but that its myth-creating religion has still remained nature-symbolism, as was the case from time immemorial with the Indo-Eranians and the Teutonic nations. But here the symbolism is very subtle indeed, because in the first

* Thus, for example, the so-called necessary progression of the thesis, antithesis and synthesis, or again the deity of the Absolute as father, the different existence as son, the return to itself as spirit.

26 RELIGION

Christian centuries philosophical abstraction flourished, while artistic creative power was dormant. * We must also emphasise the fact that the myth was not felt by the great mass of the Christians as a symbol; but the same was true of the Indians and Teutonic peoples with their deities of light, air and water; it is indeed no mere symbol: all nature testifies to the inner, transcendental truth of such a dogma as well as to its power of vigorous progressive development. †

Now the structure of Christian dogma contains a great deal of such

external, or, if we will, cosmic mythology.

In the first place nearly everything which as doctrine supplements the conception of the Trinity: the incarnation of the Word, the Paraclete, &c. More especially is the myth of God becoming man an old Indian ancestral property. We see it in the idea of unity in the very first book of the *Rigveda*; it meets us in philosophical transformation in the doctrine of the identity of Atma and Brahma; and it assumed visible form in the God-man Krishna, a figure which the poet makes God explain in the *Bhagavadgîtâ* as follows: "Again and again when virtue languishes and injustice prevails I create myself (in human form). For the protection of the good, the destruction of the evil and the confirmation of virtue am I born on earth." ‡ The dogmatic conception of the nature of Buddha is merely a modification of this myth. The conception, too, that the god who became man could

* See the whole conclusion of the first chapter.

† The Egyptian Triads were formerly allowed to have a greater influence upon the moulding of Christian dogmas than was right. In truth the conception of the son of God in his relation to God the Father (the son "not made, nor created but begotten," literally as in the Athanasian Creed) seems specifically Egyptian: we find it in all the various Egyptian systems of gods; but the third person is the goddess (Cf. Maspero: *Histoire ancienne des peuples de l'Orient classique*, 1895 i. 151, and Budge: *The Book of the Dead*, p. xcvi.)

‡ *Bhagavadgîtâ* Book IV. §§ 7 and 8.

27 RELIGION

only be born of a virgin is an old mythical feature and decidedly belongs to the class of nature-symbols. The much-ridiculed schoolmen who wished to find not only heaven and hell, but also the Trinity, the incarnation, the birth from a virgin, &c., suggested in Homer and expressed in Aristotle, were not quite wrong. The altar and the view of the sacraments among the earliest Christians point likewise rather to common Aryan conceptions of a symbolic nature-cult than to the Jewish peace-offering to an angry God (see details concerning this at the end of the chapter). In short, no single feature of Christian mythology can lay claim to originality. Of course, all these conceptions received a very different meaning in the Christian doctrine — not that the mythical background had become essentially different, but rather because from now onwards the historical personality of Jesus Christ stood in the foreground, and because the metaphysics and the myths of the Indo-Europeans, when recast by the men of the chaos, had mostly been so disfigured as to be no longer recognisable. An attempt has been made in the nineteenth century to explain away the fact of Christ as a myth; * the truth lies in the very reverse: Christ is the one thing in Christianity that

is not mythical; through Jesus Christ, through the cosmic greatness of his personality (and to this may be added the historically materialising influence of Jewish thought) myth has, so to speak, become history.

CORRUPTION OF THE MYTHS

Before I pass on to the moulding of myths from inner experience, I must say a word about those alien, transforming influences that brought themselves to bear upon the visible structure of religion, and so falsified our own inherited mythical conceptions.

* See vol. i. p. [181](#).

28 RELIGION

For example, it is, as I have said, an old idea that God becoming man was born of a virgin, but the worship of the “mother of God“ was taken from Egypt, where for about three centuries before Christ the rich plastically changeable Pantheon with its usual readiness to receive the alien had assimilated this idea with particular zeal, transforming it, like everything Egyptian, to a purely empirical materialism. But it was long before the cult of Isis could force its way into the Christian religion. In the year 430, the term “mother of God“ is described by Nestorius as a blasphemous innovation; it had just made its way into the Church! In the history of mythological dogma nothing can be so clearly proved as the direct, genetic connection of the Christian worship of the “mother of God“ with the worship of Isis. In the latest times the religion of the chaos that dwelt in Egypt had limited itself more and more to the worship of the “son of God“ — Horus and his mother Isis. Concerning this the famous Egyptologist Flinders Petrie writes: “This religious custom had a profound influence upon the development of Christianity. We may even say that, but for the presence of Egypt we should never have seen a Madonna. Isis had obtained a great hold on the Romans under the earlier Emperors; her worship was fashionable and widespread; and when she found a place in the other great movement, that of the Galileans, when fashion and moral conviction could go hand in hand, then her triumph was assured, and, as the Mother Goddess, she has been the ruling figure of the religion of Italy ever since.“ * The same author then shows also

* *Religion and Conscience in Ancient Egypt*, ed. 1898, p. 46. Every year new proofs of the universal spread of the Isis cult in all places where the influence of the Roman chaos had penetrated are being discovered in all parts of Europe. The belief in the



resurrection of the body and the communication by sacrament of the manna of eternal life were elements of these mysteries long before the birth of Christ. One finds the greatest number of evidences in the Museum of Guimet, since Gaul and Italy were the chief seats of the Isis cult. (In the

29 RELIGION

how the worship of Horus as a child of God was transferred to the conceptions of the Roman Church, so that out of the profound and thoughtful, ripe and manly proclaimer of salvation of the earliest representations there grew finally the arrogant bambino of Italian pictures. * Here we see the chaos of peoples as well as Indo-Europeanism and Judaism at work in the development of the structure of the Christian Church. We find the same in the conceptions of heaven and of hell, of the resurrection, of angels and evil spirits, &c., and at the same time we find their mythological worth becoming less and less, till finally almost nothing is left but slavish superstition, which worships before the fetish of the putative nails of a saint. I attempted in the second half of the first chapter to explain the difference between superstition and religion; at the same time I showed how the delusive conceptions of the uneducated mob, in league with the most subtle philosophy, successfully instituted an attack upon genuine religion, as soon as Hellenic poetical power began to decline; what was said there is applicable here and need not be repeated. (See vol. i. pp. [70 to 80.](#)) Centuries before Christ the so-called mysteries were introduced into Greece, and into them men were initiated by purification (baptism), in order that by partaking together of the divine flesh and blood (Greek *mysterion*, Latin *sacramentum*) they might then share in the divine nature and immortality; but these delusive doctrines were accepted

meantime Flinders Petrie has made new discoveries, especially in Ehnasya, from which step by step it can be traced how the cult of Isis and of Horus were transformed into the would-be “Christian“ worship of the Madonna. See the communications of this scholar before the *British Association*, 1904.)

* Interesting in this connection is the demonstration by the same author that the well-known Christian monogram so frequent on old monuments and still employed to-day (supposed to be *khi-rho* from the Greek alphabet) is nothing more or less than the common Egyptian symbol of the God Horus!

30 RELIGION

exclusively by the ever-increasing population of “foreigners and slaves“ and inspired all genuine Hellenes with horror and contempt. * The more deep the religious and creative consciousness sank, the more boldly did

the chaos raise its head. A fusion of all shades of superstitions was brought about by the Roman Empire, and when Constantine II. at the end of the fourth century proclaimed the Christian religion to be the religion of the State and so forced all those who were at heart non-Christians into the community of the Christians, all the chaotic conceptions of degenerate "heathendom" flowed in at the same time and from those days onward formed — at least to a great extent — an essential element of the dogma.

This moment is the turning-point in the development of the Christian religion.

Noble Christians, especially the Greek Fathers, fought desperately against the disfiguration of their pure, simple faith, a struggle which found its most important but its most violent and best known expression in the long conflict about image-worship. Already in this, Rome, prompted by race, culture and tradition, took the side of the chaos. At the end of the fourth century the great Vigilantius, a Goth, raises his voice against the pseudo-mythological Pantheon of guardian angels and martyrs, the abuse of relics — and the monkhood taken over from the Egyptian worship of Serapis; † but Hieronymus,

* See especially the famous speech of Demosthenes *De Corona*, and for a summary of the facts Jevons: *Introduction to the History of Religion*, 1896, chap. xxiii. For the tracing back of the Last Supper to Old Babylon see Otto Pfeleiderer's *Christusbild*, p. 84, and for its relation to other old mysteries see the same author's *Entstehung des Christentums*, 1905, p. 154. For the fundamental facts see Albr. Dieterich's *Eine Mithrasliturgie*, 1903.

† Pachomius, the founder of real monkhood, was an Egyptian like his predecessor, the hermit Antonius. He was a native of Upper Egypt, and as a "national attendant on Serapis" learned the practices which he afterwards transferred almost unchanged to Christianity. (Cf. Zöckler: *Askese und Mönchtum*, 2nd ed. p. 193 f.)

31 RELIGION

who was educated in Rome, fights it down and enriches the world and the calendar with new saints invented by his own imagination. The "pious lie" was already at work. *

THE MYTHOLOGY OF INNER EXPERIENCE

This may suffice to illustrate the manner in which the mythology derived from outer experience and handed down by the Indo-Europeans was unavoidably disfigured by the Chaos of Peoples. If we now turn our attention to the forming of myths from inner experience, we shall find the Indo-European legacy in purer form.

The kernel of the Christian religion, the focus in which all rays

concentrate, is the conception of a “redemption of man“: this idea has always been and still is strange to the Jews; it absolutely contradicts their whole conception of religion; † for here we have not to do with a visible, historical fact, but with an inexpressible, inner experience. It is, on the other hand, the central idea in all Indo-Eranian religious views; they all revolve, as it were, round the longing for redemption, the hope of salvation; nor was this idea of redemption strange to the Hellenes; we find it in their mysteries: it forms the basis of many of their myths, and in Plato (*e.g.*, in the seventh book of the *Republic*) it is clearly recognisable, although, for the reason stated in the first chapter, the Greeks of the Classical epoch revealed to a very small extent the inner, moral, or, as we should say to-day, pessimistic side of these myths. They sought the kernel elsewhere:

What are treasures to me in comparison with life.
And yet alongside of this high estimate of life as the

* Cf. vol. i. [p. 313](#). For the “adoption of heathendom,” see also Müller. p. 204 f.

† Cf. vol. i. [p. 413](#), and also the passage on [p. 337](#), quoted from Graetz.

32 RELIGION

most glorious of all possessions there is the song of praise to the one who dies young:

All things are fair in death, whatever may appear. *

But whoever notices the tragic basis of the proverbial “Greek cheerfulness“ will be inclined to recognise this “redemption in beautiful manifestation“ as clearly related to those other conceptions of the redemption; it is the same theme in a different key, Major instead of Minor.

The idea of redemption — or let us rather say the mythical conception of redemption † — embraces two others: that of a present imperfection and that of a possible perfection by some non-empirical, that is, in a certain sense supernatural or transcendental process: the one is symbolised by the myth of degeneration, the other by that of gracious help bestowed by a Higher Being. The myth of degeneration becomes particularly plastic where it is represented as the fall by sin; this is in consequence the most beautiful and imperishable page in Christian mythology; whereas the complementary conception of grace is so pre-eminently metaphysical that it can scarcely be presented in plastic form. The story of the fall is a fable, by which attention is drawn to a great fundamental fact of human life awakened to consciousness; it leads up to knowledge; grace, on the other hand, is a conception which only

follows after knowledge, and can only be acquired by personal experience. ‡ Hence a great and interesting difference in

* *Iliad* ix. 401, and xxii. 73.

† That in the case of Homer the word *muthos* corresponds to the later *logos*, that is, that all speech is viewed, so to speak, as poetry (which it obviously is), is one of those things in which language reveals to us the profoundest facts concerning the organisation of our mind.

‡ Kluge gives in his *Etymologisches Wörterbuch* the following as etymology and explanation of grace (*Gnade*). Root meaning, “to bend, bend oneself”; Gothic, “to support”; Old Saxon, “favour, help”; Old

33 RELIGION

the development of all genuine (that is, non-Semitic) religions according to the predominant mental gifts of the various races. Wherever the creative and figurative element predominates (in the case of the Eranians, the Europeans, and, as it seems, the Sumero-Accadians) degeneration is plastically presented as “fall by sin” and made the centre of the complex of myths derived from inner experience: this complex of myths groups itself around the conception of redemption; * whereas where this is not the case (for example among the Aryan Indians, who have such high talents for metaphysics but as plastic artists are more rich in imagination than skilful in form), we do not find the myth of degeneration clearly and definitely formulated, but only all sorts of contradictory conceptions. On the other hand, grace — the weak point of our religion and for most Christians a mere confused word — is the radiant sun of Indian faith; it represents not merely hope but the triumphant experience of the pious, and therefore stands so very much in the forefront of all religious thought and feeling that the discussions of the Indian sages on grace, especially in its relation to good works, make the violent debates which have always divided the Christian Church appear relatively almost childish and to a great extent ridiculous, if we

High German, “pity, compassion, condescension”; Middle High German, “bliss, support, favour.”

* The myth of degeneration forms, as is well known, a fundamental component of the circle of conceptions of the Greeks, who nevertheless are so persistently called “cheerful.”

“Would I had sooner died, or else had been later born!
For now lives a race of iron: never by day
Are they free of misery and care, and by night
They suffer pain: and the burden of cares is the gift of the Gods!”
So speaks the “joyful” Hesiod (*Works and Days*, verse 175 f.). And he paints to us a past “golden age,” which we have to thank for the little good that still exists among us

degenerate men, for these great men of the past still move as spirits in our midst; cf. vol. i, [p. 89](#).

34 RELIGION

except the case of a very few men — an Apostle Paul and a Martin Luther. Should any one be inclined to doubt that here we are dealing with the mythical shaping of inexpressible inner experiences, I would refer him to the speech of Christ to Nicodemus, in which the word “regeneration“ would be just as senseless as the story in *Genesis* of the degeneration of the first beings by the eating of an apple, if there were not here as there, a case of making visible a perfectly actual and present but at the same time invisible process which therefore the understanding cannot grasp. And in reference to the fall by sin I refer to Luther, who writes: “Original sin means the fall of all nature“; and again: “The earth is indeed innocent and would willingly bring forth the best; but it is hindered by the curse that has fallen upon men by reason of sin.“ Here natural affinity between man's innermost action and surrounding nature is obviously postulated: that is Indo-European mythical religion in its full development (see vol. i. pp. [214](#) and [412](#)). I may also say that when this mythical religion reveals itself as the conception of reason (as in the case of Schopenhauer) it forms Indo-European metaphysics. *

Reflection upon this brings home to us the profound and very significant fact that our Indo-European view of “sin“ is altogether mythical, that is, it reaches beyond the real world. I have already pointed out (vol. i. p. [390](#)) how fundamentally distinct the Jewish view is, so that the same word denotes with them quite a different thing; I have, moreover, studied various modern Jewish handbooks of religious teaching without anywhere finding a discussion of the idea of “sin“: whoever does not break the law is righteous; on the other hand, the Jewish theologians expressly and energetically reject the dogma

* Luther's thoughts are vaguely anticipated in the 5th chapter of the *Epistle to the Romans*, but they are found quite fully expressed in the writings of Scotus Erigena, whom he valued so highly (see *De Divisione Naturae*, Book V. chap. 36).

35 RELIGION

of original sin which the Christians derived from the Old Testament. * Now if we reflect on this position of the Jews, which is perfectly justified by their history and religion, we shall soon come to see that from our different standpoint sin and original sin are synonyms. It is a question of

an unavoidable condition of all life. Our conception of sinfulness is the first step towards the recognition of a transcendental connection of things; it is evidence that our direct experience of this connection is beginning — an experience which receives its consummation in the words of Christ: “The Kingdom of Heaven is within you.” (see vol. i. [p. 187](#)). Augustine's definition: „*Peccatum est dictum, factum vel concupitum contra legem aeternam*“, † is only a superficial extension of Jewish conceptions; Paul goes to the root of the matter by calling sin itself a “law” — a law of the flesh, or, as we should say to-day, an empirical law of nature — and by showing in a famous passage which has been considered obscure but is perfectly clear (*Romans viii*), that the Church law, that so-called *lex aeterna* of Augustine, has not the least power over sin, which is a fact of nature, over which grace alone can prevail. ‡ The exact transcription of the Old Indian thought! The singer of the Veda already “searches eagerly for his sin” and finds it not in his will but in his condition, which even in his dreams holds evil up before his eyes, and finally he turns to his God, “the God of grace,” who enlightens the simple. §

* Consult as an example Philippon's *Israelitische Religionslehre*, ii. 89.

† Sin is a breach of the everlasting law by word, deed or desire.

‡ Cf. especially Pflleiderer: *Der Paulinismus*, 2nd ed. p. 50 f. This purely scientific theological exposition is naturally different from mine, but nevertheless confirms it, especially by the proof (p. 59) that Paul assumed the presence of an impulse to sin before the Fall, which obviously could mean nothing but the removal of the myth beyond arbitrary historical boundaries; then also by the clear demonstration that Paul, in opposition to the Augustinian dogmatists, recognised in the flesh the common and unchanging source of all sinful nature.

§ *Rigveda* vii. 86.

36 RELIGION

And in the same way as later Origenes, Erigena and Luther, the Çârîraka-Mîmânsâ considers all living beings as “in need of redemption, but only human beings as being capable of it.” * It is only when we view sin as a condition, not as the transgression of a law, that we can arrive at the two conceptions of redemption and of grace. Here we have to do with the inmost experiences of the individual soul, which, as far as is possible, are made visible and communicable through mythical images.

How unavoidable the struggle was in this whole range of myth-building becomes clear from the simple reflection that such conceptions are directly contradictory to the Jewish view of religion. Where does one find in the sacred books of the Hebrews even the slightest hint of the conception of the divine Trinity? Nowhere. Note also with what fine instinct the first bearers of the Christian idea take precautions that the

“redeemer“ should not be incorporated in any way with the Jewish people: the house of David had been promised everlasting duration by the Priests (2 *Samuel* xxii, 5), hence the expectation of a King from this tribe; but Christ is not descended from the house of David; † neither is he a son of Jehovah, the God of the Jews; he is the son of the cosmic God, that “holy ghost“ which was familiar to all Aryans under different names — the “breath of breath,“ as the Brihadâraryaka says, or, to quote the Greek Fathers of the Christian Church, the *poietes* and *plaster* of the world, the “originator of the sublime work of creation.“ ‡ The idea of a redemption and with it of necessity the conceptions of degeneration and grace have always been and still are alien to the Jews. The surest proof is afforded by the fact that, although the Jews themselves relate the myth of the Fall at the

* [Cankara](#): *Die Sûtra's des Vedânta*, i, 3, 25.

† See the fictitious genealogies in *Matthew* i. and *Luke* ii., both of which go back to Joseph — not to Mary.

‡ See Hergenröther: *Photius* iii. 428.

37 RELIGION

beginning of their sacred books, they themselves have never known anything of original sin! I have already pointed to this fact, and we know of course that all the myths contained in the Bible are without exception borrowed, reduced from mythological ambiguity to the narrow significance of an historical chronicle, by those who composed the Old Testament. * For this reason there grew up in regard to the cycle of myths of redemption a strife within the Christian Church which raged wildly during the first centuries, and signified a life and death struggle for religion, which is not yet settled and never can be — never, so long as two contradictory views of existence are forced by obstinate want of comprehension to exist side by side as one and the same religion. The Jew, as Professor Darmesteter assured us (vol. i. [p. 421](#)), “Has never troubled his brain about the story of the apple and the serpent“; for his unimaginative brain it had no meaning; † for the Greek and the Teuton, on the other hand, it was the starting-point of the whole moral mythology of humanity laid down in the book of *Genesis*. These therefore could not help “troubling their brains“ about the question. If like the Jews they rejected the Fall completely, they at the same time destroyed the belief in divine grace and therewith disappeared the conception of redemption, in short, religion in our Indo-European sense was destroyed and nothing but Jewish rationalism remained behind — without the strength and the ideal element of Jewish national tradition and blood relationship. That is what Augustine clearly recognised. But on the other hand: if we were to

accept this very ancient Sumero-Accadian fable, which was meant, as I said before, to awaken the perceptive faculty, if we fancied we must interpret it in that Jewish fashion

* See vol. i pp. [230](#), [418](#), and [433](#).

† Professor Graetz (i. 650) considers the doctrine of original sin to be a “new doctrine,” invented by Paul!

38 RELIGION

which views all things mythical as materially correct history, the result must be a monstrous and revolting doctrine, or, as Bishop Julianus of Eclanum at the beginning of the fifth century expresses it, “a stupid and profane dogma.” It was this conviction that decided the pious Briton Pelagius — and before him, as it seems, almost the whole Hellenic Christendom. I have studied various histories of dogma and histories of the Church without ever finding this so very simple cause of the unavoidable Pelagian controversy even hinted at. Harnack, for example, in his *History of Dogma*, says of Augustine's doctrine of grace and sin: “As the expression of psychological religious experience it is true; but when projected into history it is false,” and a little further on he says, “the letter of the Bible had a confusing influence”; here on two occasions he is very near the explanation, without seeing it, and in consequence the rest of his exposition remains abstract and theological, leaving us very uncertain on the matter. For here we have obviously an instance, if I may use a popular expression, of a knife that cuts both ways. By scornfully rejecting the low materialistic, concretely historical view of Adam's Fall, he proves his deeply religious feeling and maintains it in happy protest against shallow Semitism; at the same time — by proving death, for example, a universal and necessary law of nature having nothing to do with sin — he is fighting for truth against superstition, for science against obscurantism. On the other hand, he and his comrades have had their sense for poetry and myth so destroyed by Aristotelianism and Hebraism, that he himself (like so many an Anti-Semite of the present day) has become half a Jew and rejects the good with the bad: he will hear nothing of the Fall; the old, sacred image which points the way to the profoundest knowledge of human nature he discards completely; but grace is hereby made to shrink to a meaningless word and redemption becomes so shadowy

39 RELIGION

an abstraction that a follower of Pelagius could speak of an “emancipation of man from God by free will.” This path would have led directly back to flatly rationalistic philosophy and Stoicism, with the never-failing complement of grossly sensual mystery-service and superstition, a movement which we can observe in the ethical and theosophical societies of the nineteenth century. There is no doubt, therefore, that Augustine in that famous struggle, in which he originally had the greatest and most gifted portion of the Episcopate, and more than once the Pope too, against him, saved religion as such; for he defended the myth. But by what means only was that possible to him? It was only possible because he threw the narrow Nessus-shirt of acquired Jewish narrow-mindedness over the splendid creations of divining, intuitive, heavenward-soaring wisdom, and transformed Sumero-Accadian similes into Christian dogmas, in the historical truth of which every one must henceforth believe on penalty of death. *

I am not writing a history of theology and cannot go deeper into this controversy, but I hope that these fragmentary hints have thrown some light on the inevitable quarrel concerning the Fall, and characterised it in its essentiality. Every educated man knows that the Pelagian controversy is still going on. The Catholic Church, by emphasising the importance of works as opposed to faith, could not help diminishing the importance of grace; no sophistry can put aside this fact, which when further reflected has influenced the actions and thoughts of millions. But Fall and Grace are so closely connected parts of one single organism that the least touching of the one influences the other; thus it was that step by step the true significance of the myth

* This may have been difficult enough for Augustine himself, for earlier, in the 27th chapter of the 15th book of the *De Civitate Dei*, he had spoken strongly against attempting to interpret the book of *Genesis* as historical truth entirely free of allegory.

40 RELIGION

of the Fall became so weakened that the Jesuits to-day are generally described as semi-Pelagians, and they themselves even call their doctrine a *scientia media*. * As soon as the myth is infringed, Judaism is inevitable.

It is clear that the struggle must rage more fiercely concerning the conception of grace; for the Fall was at least found in the sacred books of the Israelites, though only as uncomprehended myth, whereas grace is nowhere to be found there and is and remains quite meaningless to them. The storm had already burst among the Apostles, and it has not yet died away. Law or grace: the two could no more exist simultaneously

than man could at once serve God and Mammon. "I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain." (*Paul to the Galatians* ii. 21). One such passage is decisive; to play off against it other so-called "canonical" utterances (*e.g.*, *The Epistle of James*, ii, 14, 24) is childish; for it is not a question of theological hair-splitting but of one of the great facts of experience of inner life amongst us Indo-Europeans. "Only he receives redemption, whom redemption chooses," says the Kâtha-Upanishad. And what gift is it that this metaphysical myth lets us "receive by grace"? According to the Indo-Eranians knowledge; according to the European Christians faith: both guaranteeing a regeneration, that is, awakening man to the consciousness of a different connection of things. † I quote again the words of Christ, for they cannot too often be quoted: "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you." This is a discernment or a faith, obtained by divine grace. Redemption by knowledge, redemption by

* I shall only quote one witness whose judgment is moderate and correct, Sainte-Beuve. He writes (*Port Royal*, Book IV. chap. 1): „*Les Jésuites n'attestent pas moins par leur méthode d'éducation qu'ils sont sémi-pélagiens tendant au Pélagianisme pur, que par leur doctrine directe.*“

† Cf. vol. i. pp. [193](#) and [437](#); and the paragraph on "[Philosophy and Religion](#)" in the ninth chapter (vol. ii.).

41 RELIGION

faith: two views which are not so very different as people have thought; the Indian, and Buddha, put the emphasis on the intellect, the Graeco-Teuton, taught by Jesus Christ, upon the will: two interpretations of the same inner experience. But the second is of more far-reaching importance, since redemption by knowledge, as India shows, signifies fundamentally a pure and simple negation and so affords no positive, creative principle; while redemption by faith takes hold of humanity by its darkest roots and forces it to take a definite and a strongly positive direction:

Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott!
To the Jewish religion both views are equally foreign.

JEWISH CHRONICLE OF THE WORLD

So much for information and instruction concerning those mythological portions of the Christian religion, which certainly were not borrowed from Judaism. Manifestly, the structure is essentially Indo-European, not a temple built solely in honour of the Jewish religion. This structure rests upon pillars, and these pillars upon foundations, which

are not all Jewish. But now it remains to appreciate the importance of the impulse derived from Judaism, whereby at the same time the nature of the struggle within the Christian religion will appear more and more manifest.

Nothing would be falser than to regard the Jewish influence in the creation of the Christian religion as merely negative, destructive and pernicious. If we look at the matter from the Semitic standpoint, which with the help of any Jewish religious doctrine we can easily do, we shall see things in exactly the opposite light: the Helleno-Aryan element as the undoing, destroying force that is hostile to religion as we already observed in the

42 RELIGION

case of Pelagius. Without giving up our natural point of view, an unprejudiced consideration will show us that the Jewish contribution is very important and almost indispensable. For in this marriage the Jewish spirit was the masculine principle, the generative element, the will. Nothing entitles us to assume that Hellenic speculation, Egyptian asceticism and international mysticism, without the fervour of the Jewish will to believe, would ever have given the world a new religious ideal and at the same time a new life. Neither the Roman Stoics with their noble but cold, impotent moral philosophy, nor the aimless, mystic self-negation of the theology introduced from India to Asia Minor, nor the opposite solution found in the neo-Platonic Philo, where the Israelite faith is viewed in a mystical, symbolical fashion, and Hellenic thought, deformed by senility, must embrace this strangely adorned youngest daughter of Israel — none of these, obviously, would have led to the goal. How could we otherwise explain the fact that at the very time when Christ was born Judaism itself, so exclusive in its nature, so scornful of everything alien, so stern and joyless and devoid of beauty, had begun a genuine and most successful propaganda? The Jewish religion is disinclined to all conversion, but the Gentiles, impelled by longing for faith, went over to it in crowds. And that too although the Jew was hated. We speak of the Anti-Semitism of to-day. Renan assures us that horror of the Jewish character was even more intense in the century before the birth of Christ. * What is it then that forms the secret attraction of Judaism? Its will. That will which, ruling in the sphere of religion, created unconditional, blind faith. Poetry, philosophy, science, mysticism, mythology — all these are widely divergent and to a certain extent paralyse the will; they testify to an unworldly, speculative, ideal tendency of

* *Histoire du peuple d'Israël* v, 227.

43 RELIGION

mind, which produces in the case of all noble men that proud contempt of life which makes it possible for the Indian sage to lay himself while still alive in his own grave, which makes the inimitable greatness of Homer's hero Achilles, which stamps the German Siegfried as a model of fearlessness and which received monumental expression in the nineteenth century in Schopenhauer's doctrine of the negation of the will to live. The will is here in a way directed inwardly. This is quite different in the case of the Jew. His will at all times took an outward direction; it was the unconditional will to live. This will to live was the first thing that Judaism gave to Christianity: hence that contradiction, which even today seems to many an inexplicable riddle, between a doctrine of inner conversion, toleration and mercifulness, and a religion of exclusive self-assertion and fanatical intolerance.

Next to this general tendency of will — and inseparably bound up with it — must be mentioned the Jewish purely historical view of faith. In the third chapter I have treated at length the relation between the Jewish faith of will and the teaching of Christ, while I have in the fifth discussed its relation to religion as a whole; I presuppose both passages to be known. * Here I should like merely to call attention to the fact, how great and decisive an influence the Jewish faith as a material unshakeable conviction concerning definite historical events was bound to exercise at that moment of history at which Christianity arose. On this point Hatch writes: “The young Christian communities were helped by the current reaction against pure speculation — the longing for certainty. The mass of men were sick of theories; they wanted certainty. The current teaching of the Christian teachers gave this certainty. It appealed to definite facts of which their predecessors were eye-

* See vol. i. pp. [238 f.](#) and [415 f.](#)

44 RELIGION

witnesses. Its simple tradition of the life and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ was a necessary basis for the satisfaction of men's needs.“ * That was a beginning. The attention was in the first place directed solely to Jesus Christ; the sacred books of the Jews were counted as very suspicious documents; Luther speaks in anger of the small respect which men like Origenes and even Hieronymus (as he tells us) paid to the Old Testament; most of the Gnostics rejected it *in toto*; Marcion actually regarded it as a work of the Devil. But as soon as the thin edge of Jewish

historical religion had found its way into men's ideas, the whole wedge could not fail gradually to be driven in. It is believed that the so-called Jewish Christians suffered a defeat and that the heathen Christians with Paul carried off the victory? That is only true in a very conditional and fragmentary manner. Outwardly, indeed, the Jewish law with its “sign of the Covenant“ suffered complete shipwreck; outwardly, too, the Indo-European with his Trinity and other mythology and metaphysics prevailed; but inwardly, during the first centuries, the true backbone of Christianity came to be Jewish history — that history which had been remodelled by fanatical priests according to certain hieratic theories and plans, which had been supplemented and constructed with genius but at the same time with caprice — that history which historically was utterly untrue. † Christ's advent, which had been foretold to them by authentic witnesses, was to those poor men of the chaos like a light in the darkness; it was an historical phenomenon. Sublime spirits indeed placed this historic personality in a symbolical temple; but what signified logos and demiurgos and emanations of the divine principle to the common people? Its

* *Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages upon the Christian Church*, 6th ed. p. 312.

† See vol. i, pp. [452](#) and [460](#).

45 RELIGION

healthy instinct impelled it to fasten on to something which gave it a firm hold, and that was Jewish history. The Messianic hope — although in Judaism it by no means played the part which we Christians imagine * — formed the uniting link in the chain, and mankind possessed henceforth not only the teacher of the new sublime religion, not only the divine picture of the Sufferer on the Cross, but the whole world-plan of the Creator from the time when he created heaven and earth to the moment when he should sit in judgment, “which was soon to be.“ The longing for material certainty, the distinguishing mark of that epoch, had, as we see, not rested, till every trace of uncertainty had been destroyed. That signifies a triumph of Jewish, and fundamentally of Semitic, philosophy and religion.

Closely allied to this is the introduction of religious intolerance. Intolerance is natural to the Semite; in it an essential feature of his character expresses itself. To the Jew especially the unwavering belief in the history and destination of his people was a vital question; this belief was his only weapon in the struggle for the existence of his nation; in it his particular gifts had been permanently expressed; in short, for him there was at stake something which had grown outward from within — something which was the gift of the history and character of the people.

Even the negative qualities of the Jews which are so prominent, for example the indifference and unbelief which has been widespread from earliest times to the present day, had contributed to the rigidity of the compulsion to believe. But now this powerful impulse was applied to quite another world. Here there was no people, no nation, no tradition; that moral motive power of a fearful national trial, which lends consecration to the hard, narrow Jewish law, was

* See vol. i, [p. 235 note](#).

46 RELIGION

altogether lacking. The introduction, therefore, of compulsory faith into the Chaos (and then among the Germanic nations) was in a way an effect without a cause, in other words the rule of caprice. What in the case of the Jews had been an objective result became here a subjective command. What there had moved in a very limited sphere, that of national tradition and national religious law, ruled here without any limitations. The Aryan tendency to establish dogmas (see vol. i. [p. 429](#)) entered into a fatal union with the historical narrowness and deliberate intolerance of the Jews. Hence the wild struggle for the possession of the power to proclaim dogmas, lasting through all the first centuries of our era. Mild men like Irenaeus remained almost without influence; the more intolerant the Christian bishop was, the more power did he possess. But this Christian intolerance is distinguished from Jewish intolerance in the same way as Christian dogma is distinguished from Jewish dogma: for the Jews were hemmed in on all sides, confined within definite narrow boundaries, whereas the whole field of the human intellect stood open to Christian dogma and Christian intolerance; moreover Jewish faith and Jewish intolerance have never possessed far-reaching power, whereas the Christians, with Rome, soon ruled the world. And thus we find such inconsistencies as that a heathen Emperor (Aurelian, in the year 272) forces upon Christianity the primacy of the Roman bishop, and that a Christian Emperor, Theodosius, commands, as a purely political measure, that the Christian religion be believed on pain of death. I say nothing of other inconsistencies, *e.g.*, that the nature of God, the relation of the Father to the Son, the eternity of the punishments of hell, &c., *ad inf.*, were settled by majority by Bishops, who frequently could neither read nor write, and became binding upon all men from a fixed day, in somewhat the same

47 RELIGION

way as our Parliament imposes taxes upon us by the vote of the majority. Yet, however difficult it may be for us to watch this monstrous development of a Jewish thought on alien soil without uneasiness, we must admit that a Christian Church could never have been fully developed without dogma and intolerance. Here then we are indebted to Judaism for an element of strength and endurance.

But not only the backbone of the growing Christian Church was borrowed from Judaism; the whole skeleton was its product. Take first the establishment of faith and virtue: in ecclesiastical Christianity it is absolutely Jewish, for it rests on fear and hope: on the one side eternal reward, on the other eternal punishment. In regard to this subject also I can refer to former remarks, in the course of which I pointed out the fundamental difference between a religion which addresses itself to the purely selfish emotions of the heart, *i.e.*, to fear and desire, and a religion which, like that of Brahma, regards the renunciation of the enjoyment of all reward here and in the other world as the first step towards initiation into true piety. * I will not repeat myself; but we are now in a position to extend our former knowledge, and only by so doing shall we clearly recognise what unceasing conflict must inevitably result from the forcible fusion of two contradictory views of life. For the least reflection will convince us of the fact that the conception of redemption and of conversion of will, as it had hovered in many forms before the minds of the Indo-Europeans, and as it found eternal expression in the words of the Saviour, is quite different from all those which represent earthly conduct as being punished or

* See the excursus on Semitic religion in the fifth chapter (vol. i.) and compare especially p. [437](#) with p. [453](#). Compare, too, the details concerning the Germanic view of the world in the particular paragraph of chap. ix. (vol. ii. [p. 423](#)).

48 RELIGION

rewarded in an after-life. * Here it is not a case of some trifling difference, but of two creations standing side by side, strange from the root to the crown. Though these two trees may have been firmly grafted the one upon the other they can never join together and be one. And yet it was this fusion which early Christianity tried to effect and which still for faithful souls forms the stone of Sisyphus. At the beginning indeed, that is, before the whole national chaos and with it its religious conceptions had in the fourth century been forcibly driven into Christianity, this was not the case. In the very oldest writings one hardly finds any threats of punishment, and heaven is only the belief in an unspeakable happiness, † gained by the death of Christ. Where Jewish influence prevails, we find

even in the earliest Christian times the so-called Chilianism, that is, the belief in an approaching earthly millennium (merely one of the many forms of the theocratic world-empire of which the Jews dreamt); wherever, on the other hand, philosophic thought kept the upper hand for a time, as in the case of Origenes, conceptions manifest themselves which can scarcely be distinguished from the transmigration

* This system is most perfectly developed among the old Egyptians, who believed that the heart of the dead was laid on scales and weighed against the ideal of right and uprightness; the idea of a conversion of the inner man by divine grace was quite alien to them. The Jews have never risen to the height of the Egyptian conceptions; formerly the reward for them was simply a very long life to the individual and future world-empire to the nation — the punishment, death and misery for future generations. In later times, however, they adopted all sorts of superstitions, from which there resulted a kingdom of God which was altogether secularly conceived (*see* vol. i. p. 481) and as counterpart to it a perfectly secular hell. From these and other conceptions which arose from the lowest depths of human delusion and superstition the Christian hell was formed (of which Origenes knew nothing, except in the form of qualms of conscience!), while neo-Platonism, Greek poetry and Egyptian conceptions of the “Fields of the Blest“ (*see* the illustrations in Budge's *The Book of the Dead*) provided the Christian heaven, which, however, never attained to the clearness of hell.

† Mostly on the strength of a misinterpretation (*Isaiah* lxiv. 4).

49 RELIGION

of souls of the Indians and of Plato: * the spirits of men are regarded as being created from eternity; according to their conduct they rise or sink, until finally all without exception are transfigured, even the demons. † In such a system, it is plain that neither the individual life itself, nor the promise of reward and the threat of punishment, has anything in common with the Judaeo-Christian religion. ‡ But here too the Jewish spirit quickly prevailed, and that in exactly the same way as did dogma and intolerance, by taking a development which hitherto had been undreamt of on the limited soil of Judea. The pains of hell and the bliss of heaven, the fear of the one and the hope of the other, are henceforth the only mainsprings which influence all Christendom. What redemption is, scarcely any one now knows, for even the preachers saw in it — and indeed still see in it at the present day — nothing more than “redemption from the punishments of hell.“ § The men of the chaos in fact understood no other arguments; a contemporary of Origenes, the African Tertullian, declares frankly that only one thing can improve men, “the fear of eternal punishment and the hope of eternal reward. (*Apol.* 49). Naturally some chosen spirits rebelled constantly against this materialising and Judaising of religion; the importance of Christian mysticism, for example, could perhaps be said to lie in this, that it rejected all these conceptions and aimed

* Concerning the relation between these two, see vol. i. pp. [46](#) and [86](#).

† I refer especially to chap. xxix. of the work *On Prayer* by Origenes; in the form of a commentary to the words “Lead us not into temptation“ this great man develops a purely Indian conception concerning the importance of sin as a means of salvation.

‡ As a fact Origenes has expressly recognised the mythical element in Christianity. Only he thought that Christianity was “the only religion which even in mythical form is truth“ (cf. Harnack: *Dogmengeschichte*, Abriss, 2nd ed. p. 113).

§ Take up, for example, the *Handbuch für Katholischen Religionsunterricht* by the Prebendary Arthur König, and read the chapter on redemption. Nicodemus would not have found the slightest difficulty in understanding this doctrine.

50 RELIGION

solely at the transformation of the inner man — that is, at redemption; but the two views could never be made to agree, and it is just this impossibility that was demanded of the faithful Christian. Either faith is to “improve“ men, as Tertullian asserts, or it is to completely transform them by a conversion of the whole soul-life, as the gospel taught; either the world is a penitentiary, which we should hate, as Clemens of Rome taught in the second century * and after him the whole official Church, or else this world is the blessed soil, in which the Kingdom of Heaven lies like a hidden treasure, according to the teaching of Christ. The one assertion contradicts the other.

In the further course of this chapter I shall return to these contrasts; but I had first to make the reader feel their reality, and at the same time point out to him the measure of the triumph of Judaism as an eminently positive active power. With the proud independence of the genuine Indo-European aristocrat Origenes had expressed the opinion, “only for the common man it may suffice to know that the sinner is punished“; but now all these men of the chaos were “common men“; sureness, fearlessness and conviction are the gift only of race and nationality; human nobility is a collective term; † the noblest individual man — for example an Augustine — cannot rise above the conceptions and sentiments of the common man and attain to perfect freedom. These “common“ men needed a master who should speak to them as to slaves, after the manner of the Jewish Jehovah: a duty which the Church, endowed with the full power of the Roman Empire, accepted. Art, mythology and metaphysics in their creative significance had become quite incomprehensible to the men of that time; the character of religion had in consequence to be lowered to

* See his second letter, § 6.

† Cf. vol. i, [p. 318](#).

51 RELIGION

the level on which it had stood in Judea. These men required a purely historical, demonstrable religion, which admitted no doubt or uncertainty either in the past or in the future and least of all in the present: this was found only in the Bible of the Jews. The motives had to be taken from the world of sense: corporal punishments alone could deter these men from evil deeds, promises of a happiness, free of all care, alone could urge them to good works. That was of course the religious system of the Jewish hierocracy (*cf.* vol. i. p. [453](#)). From that time onward the system of ecclesiastical commands, taken from Judaism and further developed, decided authoritatively in regard to all matters, whether incomprehensible mysteries or obvious facts of history (or it might be, historical lies). The intolerance which had been foreshadowed in Judaism but had never attained to its full development, * became the fundamental principle of Christian conduct, and that as a logically unavoidable conclusion from the presuppositions just mentioned: if religion is a chronicle of the world, if its moral principle is legal and historical, if there is an historically established precedent for the decision of every doubt, every question, then every deviation from the doctrine is an offence against truthfulness and endangers the salvation of man which is conceived as purely material; and so ecclesiastical justice steps in and exterminates the unbeliever or the heretic, just as the Jews had stoned every one who was not strictly orthodox.

I hope that these hints will suffice to awaken the vivid conception and at the same time the conviction that Christianity as a religious structure actually rests upon two fundamentally different and directly hostile “views of existence“: upon Jewish historical-chronistic faith and upon Indo-European symbolical and metaphysical

* This fancy has found its most complete expression in the novel *Esther*.

52 RELIGION

mythology (as I asserted upon [p. 19](#)). I cannot give more than indications, not even now, when I am preparing to cast a glance at the struggle which was bound to result from so unnatural a union. Real history is true only when it is apprehended as much as possible in detail; where that is not possible, a survey cannot be made too general; for only by this is it possible really to grasp completely a truth of the higher order, something living and unmutilated; the worst enemies of historical insight are the compendia. In this particular case the recognition of the connection of phenomena is simplified by the fact that we have here to do with things which still live in our own hearts. For the discord spoken

of in this chapter dwells, though he may not know it, in the heart of every Christian. Though in the first Christian centuries the struggle seemed, outwardly, to rage more fiercely than it does to-day, there never was a complete truce; it was just in the second half of the nineteenth century that the question here touched upon came to a more acute crisis, chiefly through the active energy of the Roman Church, which never grows weary in the fight; neither is it thinkable that our growing culture can ever attain to true ripeness, unless illuminated by the undimmed sun of a pure, uniform religion; only that could bring it out from the "Middle Ages". If it is now obvious that a clear knowledge of that early time of open, unscrupulous strife must enable us to understand our own time, then unquestionably the spirit of our present age helps us in turn to comprehend that earliest epoch of growing, honestly and freely searching Christianity. I say expressly that it is only the very earliest epoch that the experiences of our own heart teach us to comprehend; for at a later time the struggle grew less and less truly religious, more and more ecclesiastical and political. When Popery had attained to the summit of its power in the twelfth century under Innocent III.,

53 RELIGION

the real religious impulse which a short time before had been so strong under Gregory VII. ceased, and the Church was henceforth, so to speak, secularised; no more can we even for a moment regard and judge the Reformation as a purely religious movement, it is manifestly at least half political; and under such conditions there soon is nothing left but a mere matter of business in which the purely human interest sinks to the lowest level. On the other hand, in the nineteenth century, in consequence of the almost complete separation in most countries of State and Religion (which is in no way influenced by the retention of one or more State churches) and in consequence of the altered, henceforth purely moral position of Popery, which outwardly has become powerless, there has been a noticeable awakening of religious interest, and of all forms of genuine as well as of superstitious religiosity. A symptom of this ferment is the abundant formation of sects among ourselves. In England, for example, more than a hundred different and so-called Christian unions possess churches which are officially registered, or at any rate places of meeting for common worship. In this connection it is striking that even the Catholics in England are divided into five different sects, only one of which is strictly orthodox Roman. Even among the Jews religious life has awakened; three different sects have houses of prayer in London and there are besides two different groups of Jewish Christians there. That reminds us of the centuries before the religious degeneration; at the end of the second century, for example, Irenaeus tells of thirty-two

sects, Epiphanius, two centuries later, of eighty. Therefore we are justified in the hope that the further back we go the better we shall understand the spiritual conflict of genuine Christians.

54 RELIGION

PAUL AND AUGUSTINE

We get the most vivid idea of the double nature of Christianity when we see how it affects individual great men, as Paul and Augustine. In the case of Paul everything is much greater and clearer and more heroic, because spontaneous and free; Augustine, on the other hand, is sympathetic to all generations, is venerable, awakening pity at the same time that he commands admiration. Were we to place Augustine side by side with the victorious Apostle — perhaps the greatest man of Christianity — he would not for a moment bear comparison; but when we put him on a line with those around him, his importance is brilliantly manifest. Augustine is the proper contrast to that other son of the Chaos, Lucian, of whom I spoke in chapter iv.: there the frivolity of a civilisation hurrying to its fall, here the look of pain raised to God from amid the ruins; there gold and fame as the goal in life, mockery and pleasantries the means; here wisdom and virtue, asceticism and solemn earnest working; there the tearing down of glorious ruins, here the toilsome building up of a firm structure of faith, even at the cost of his own convictions, even though the architecture should be very rude in comparison with the aspirations of the profound spirit, no matter, if only poor, chaotic humanity may yet get something sure to cling to, and wandering sheep gain a fold.

In two so different personalities as Paul and Augustine the double nature of Christianity naturally reveals itself in very different ways. In the case of Paul everything is positive, everything affirmative; he has no unchanging theoretical “theology,” * but — a contemporary of Jesus

* This assertion will meet with many contradictions; all I mean by it, however, is that Paul rather uses his systematic ideas as a dialectical weapon to convince his hearers than endeavours to establish a connected, solely valid and new theological structure. Even Edouard

55 RELIGION

Christ — he is consumed, as if by living flames, by the divine presence of the Saviour. As long as he was against Christ he knew no rest until he

should have swept away the very last of his disciples; as soon as he had recognised Christ as the redeemer, his life was entirely given up to spreading the “good news“ over the whole world that he could reach; in his life there was no period of groping about, of seeking, or irresolution. If he must discuss, then he paints his theses on the sky, visible from afar; if he must contradict, he does so with a few blows of a club, as it were, but his love flashes up again immediately, and he is, as his own epigram says, “all things to all men,“ caring not if he has to speak in one way to the Jew, in another to the Greek and in another to the Celt, if only he can “save some.“ * However profoundly the words of this one apostle flash into the darkest regions of the human heart, there is never a trace of painful constructing, of sophisticating in them; what he says is experienced and wells up spontaneously from his heart; indeed his pen seems unable to keep pace with his thought; “not as though I had already attained, but I follow after ... forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before“ (*Phil.* iii, 13). Here contradiction is openly placed side by side with contradiction. What matters it if only many believe in Christ the Redeemer? Not so Augustine. No firm national religion surrounds his path as it did that of

Reuss, who, in his immortal work, *Histoire de la Théologie Chrétienne au siècle apostolique* (3e ed.), vindicates to the Apostle a definite, uniform system, admits at the end (ii. 580) that real theology was for Paul a subordinate element, and on p. 73 he shows that Paul's aim was so completely directed to popular and practical work that wherever questions begin to be theoretical and theological, he leaves the metaphysical sphere for the ethical.

* We must read the whole passage, *I Cor.* ix. 19 f., to see how exactly the apostle denies the later formula *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*. Cf., too, the *Epistle to the Philippians*, i, 18: “What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.“

56 RELIGION

Paul; he is an atom among atoms in the shoreless ocean of a fast decaying chaos. No matter where he puts his foot, he encounters sand or morass; no heroic figure — such as Paul saw — appears like a blinding sun on his horizon, but from a dreary writing of the lawyer Cicero he must draw the inspiration for his moral awakening of others, and from sermons of the worthy Ambrosius his appreciation of the significance of Christianity. His whole life is a painful struggle; first against and with himself, until he has overcome the various phases of unbelief and after trying various doctrines has accepted that of Ambrosius; then against what he had formerly believed, and against the many Christians whose opinions differed from his own. For while the living memory of the personality of Christ tinged all religion in the lifetime of the Apostle Paul,

this was now effected by the superstition of dogma. Paul had been able proudly to say of himself that he did not fight like those who swing their arms around them in the air; Augustine, on the other hand, spent a good part of his life in such fighting. Here, therefore, the contradiction which is always endeavouring to conceal itself from its own eye and that of others, goes much deeper; it rends the inner nature, mixes as it were "the corn with chaff," and builds (in the intention of founding a firm orthodoxy) a structure which is so inconsistent, insecure, superstitious and in many points actually barbarous, that should the Christianity of the Chaos one day crumble to pieces, Augustine more than any other man would be responsible for it.

Let us now study these two men more closely. And first of all let us try to gain some fundamental ideas concerning Paul, for here we may hope to reveal the germ of the development which followed.

57 RELIGION

PAUL

In spite of all assertions, it remains very doubtful whether Paul was a pure Jew by race; I am strongly of opinion that the double nature of this remarkable man must be explained partly by his blood. There are no proofs. We only know the one fact, that he was not born in Judea or Phoenicia, but outside the Semitic boundary, in Cilicia, and that too in the city of Tarsus, which was founded by a Dorian colony and was thoroughly Hellenic. When we consider on the one hand how lax the Jews of that time outside of Judea were in regard to mixed marriages, * on the other hand that the Diaspora, in which Paul was born, was keenly propagandist and won a large number of women for the Jewish faith, † the supposition appears not at all unwarrantable that Paul's father was indeed a Jew of the tribe of Benjamin (as he asserts, *Romans xi. 1; Philippians iii. 5*), but that his mother was a Hellene who had gone over to Judaism. When historical proofs are lacking, scientific psychology may well have the right to put in its word; and the above hypothesis would explain the otherwise incomprehensible phenomenon, that an absolutely Jewish character (tenacity, pliancy, fanaticism, self-confidence) and a Talmudic education accompany an absolutely un-Jewish intellect. ‡
However

* See, for example, *Acts of the Apostles xvi. 1.*

† Cf. vol. i. p. 119 note.

‡ What we know of the laws of heredity would speak very strongly for the supposition of a Jewish father and a Hellenic mother. The formerly popular saying: A man inherits the character of his father and the intellect of his mother, has indeed shown itself to be much too dogmatic; if twins that have grown together with but one pair of legs can yet

be absolutely different in character (*cf.* Höffding: *Psychologie*, 2nd ed. p. 480), we see how cautious we must be with such assertions. Yet there are so many striking cases among the most important men (I will only mention Goethe and Schopenhauer) that we are entitled in the case of Paul, where a striking incongruence stands before us as an inexplicable riddle, to put forward this hypothesis which is historically

58 RELIGION

that may be, Paul did not grow up, like the rest of the Apostles, in a Jewish land, but in a busy centre of Greek science, and of philosophical and oratorical schools. From his youth Paul spoke and wrote Greek: his knowledge of Hebrew is said to have been very defective. * Though he may therefore have been educated as a strict Jew, the atmosphere in which he grew up was nevertheless not purely Jewish, but the stimulating, rich, free-minded Hellenic atmosphere: a circumstance which deserves all the more attention in that the greater the genius, the greater is the influence of impressions received. And thus we see Paul in the further course of his life after the short epoch of Pharisaical errors in which he fervently persisted, avoiding as much as possible the society of genuine Hebrews. The fact that for fourteen years after his conversion he avoided the city of Jerusalem, although he would have met there the personal disciples of Christ, that he only stayed there of necessity and for a short time, limiting his intercourse as much as possible, has given rise to a library of explanations and discussions; but the whole life of Paul shows that Jerusalem and its inhabitants and their manner of thought were simply so abhorrent to him as to be unbearable. His first act as an apostle is the doing away with the sacred "sign of the covenant" of all Hebrews. From the very beginning he finds himself at feud with the Jewish Christians. Where he has to undertake apostolic mission at their side, he quarrels with them. † None of his few

quite probable. From Harnack's *Mission, &c.*, p. 40, I learn that even in earliest times the suggestion was made that Paul was descended from Hellenic parents.

* Graetz asserts (*Volkstümliche Geschichte der Juden* i, 646): "Paul had but a scanty knowledge of Jewish writings and knew the sacred writings only from the Greek translation." On the other hand, quotations from Epimenides, Euripides and Aratus prove his familiarity with Hellenic literature.

† See, for example, the two episodes with John "whose surname was Mark" (*Acts of the Apostles* xiii. 13, and xv. 38-39).

59 RELIGION

personal friends is a genuine Jew of Palestine: Barnabas, for example, is, like himself, from the Diaspora, and so anti-Jewish in sentiment that he

(as pioneer of Marcion) denies the old covenant, that is, the privileged position of the Israelite people; Luke, whom Paul calls “the beloved,” is not a Jew (*Col.* iv. 11-14); Titus, the one bosom-friend of Paul, his “partner and fellow-helper” (*2 Cor.* viii. 23), is a genuinely Hellenic Greek. In his mission work, too, Paul is always attracted to the “heathen,” especially to places where Hellenic culture flourishes. Modern investigation has thrown valuable light on this matter. Till a short time ago the knowledge of the geographical and economic relations of Asia Minor during the first Christian century was very defective; it was thought that Paul (on his first journey especially) sought out the most uncivilised districts and anxiously avoided the towns; this supposition has now been proved erroneous: * rather did Paul preach almost exclusively in the great centres of Helleno-Roman civilisation and with preference in districts where the Jewish communities were not large. Cities like Lystra and Derbe, which hitherto were spoken of in theological commentaries as unimportant, scarcely civilised places, were on the contrary centres of Hellenic culture and of Roman life. With this is connected a second very important discovery: Christianity did not spread first among the poor and uncultured, as was hitherto supposed, but among the educated and well-to-do. “Where Roman organisation and Greek thought have gone, Paul by preference goes,” Ramsay tells us, † and Karl Müller adds: “The circles which Paul had won had never really been Jewish.” ‡ And yet, this

* Especially by the works of W. M. Ramsay: *Historical Geography of Asia Minor, The Church in the Roman Empire before A.D. 170, St. Paul, the Traveller and the Roman Citizen.*

† *The Church, &c.*, 4th ed. p. 57.

‡ *Kirchengeschichte* (1892) i. 26.

60 RELIGION

man is a Jew; he is proud of his descent, * he is, as it were, saturated with Jewish conceptions, he is a master of Rabbinical dialectic, and it is he, more than any other, who stamps the historical mode of thinking and the traditions of the Old Testament as an essential, permanent part of Christianity.

Although religion is my theme, I have intentionally emphasised in the case of Paul these more exoteric considerations, because where I as a layman enter the sphere of theological religion, it is my duty to be extremely cautious and reserved. Gladly would I demonstrate sentence for sentence what in my opinion should be said about Paul, but how often does everything depend on the meaning of one single probably ambiguous word; the layman can only be on sure ground when he goes

deeper, to the source of the words themselves. Hence Paul calls cheerfully to us: "According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master-builder, I have laid the foundation and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereon!" (I *Cor.* iii. 10). So let us now take heed — let us follow the admonition of Paul, not to leave this care to others — and we shall discover, even without entering the domain of learned discussions, that the foundation of the Christian religion laid by Paul is made up of incongruous elements. In his deepest inner nature, in his view of the importance of religion in the life of man, Paul is so un-Jewish that he deserves the epithet anti-Jewish; the Jew in him is merely the outer shell, he shows it only in the ineradicable habits of the intellectual mechanism. At heart Paul is not a rationalist but a mystic. Mysticism is mythology carried back from symbolical images to the inner experience of the Inexpressible, an experience which has grown in intensity and realised

* See especially *Galatians*, ii. 15: "Although we are by nature Jews and not sinners of the Gentiles," and many other passages.

61 RELIGION

more clearly his own inner nature. The true religion of Paul is not the belief in a so-called chronicle of the history of the world, it is mythical-metaphysical discernment. Such things as the distinction between an outer and an inner man, between flesh and spirit, "Miserable man that I am, who will redeem me from the body of this death?" — the many expressions such as the following, "We are all one body in Christ," &c. — all these sayings point to a transcendental view of things. But the Indo-European tendency of mind is still more apparent when we consider the great fundamental convictions. Then we find as kernel (see p. 31) the conception of redemption; the need of it is produced by the natural and quite general tendency to sin, not by transgressions of law with consequent feeling of guilt; redemption is brought about by divine grace which bestows faith, not by works and holy life. And what is this redemption? It is "regeneration," or, as Christ expresses it, "conversion."
*

* Let me give the reader who is not well read in Scripture some quotations. Redemption forms the subject of all the Pauline Epistles. The universality of sin is implicitly admitted by the adducing of the myth of the Fall of man and by its un-Jewish interpretation. So we find such passages as *Rom.* xi. 32: "God has included all men in unbelief," and the still more characteristic *Ephesians* ii. 3: "We all are by nature children of wrath." With regard to grace perhaps the most decisive passage is the following: "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (*Philippians* ii. 13). With regard to the importance of faith in contrast to merit

by good works we find numerous passages, for this is the main pillar of Paul's religion, here — and here perhaps alone — there is no shadow of a contradiction; the apostle is teaching the purely Indian doctrine. We should note especially *Rom.* iii. 27-28, v. 1, the whole of chaps. ix. and x., likewise the whole *Epistle to the Galatians*, &c. &c. As examples: "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law (*Rom.* iii. 28); "We know that a man is not justified by the Works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ" (*Gal.* ii. 16). But grace and faith are only two phases, two modes — the divine and the human — of the same process; hence in the following passage faith is to be regarded as included in grace: "And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work" (see the letter to *Titus* iii. 5). Re-birth is mentioned as "regeneration" in a manner akin to the Indo-Platonic view.

62 RELIGION

It would be impossible to hold a religious view which represented a sharper contrast to all Semitic and specially to all Jewish religion. So true is this that not only was Paul during his lifetime opposed by the Jewish Christians, but this very kernel of his religion for fifteen hundred years lay hidden within Christianity under the over-luxuriant tangle of Jewish rationalism and heathen superstitions — anathematised, when it attempted to show its head in the case of men like Origenes, rendered unrecognisable by the deeply religious Augustine, who was at heart genuinely Pauline, but was carried away by the opposite current. Here Teutons had to interfere; even to-day Paul has apart from them no genuine disciples: a circumstance the full significance of which will be apparent to every one, when he learns that two centuries ago the Jesuits held a conference to discuss how the Epistles of Paul could be removed from the sacred writings or corrected. * But Paul himself had begun the work of anti-Paulinism, by erecting around this core of belief, which was the product of an Indo-European soul, an absolutely Jewish structure, a kind of latticework, through which a congenial eye might indeed see, but which for Christianity growing up amid the unhappy chaos became so much the chief thing that the inner core was practically neglected. But this outer work could naturally not possess the faultless consistency of a pure system like the Jewish or the Indian. In itself a contradiction to the inner, creative religious thought, this pseudo-Jewish theological structure became entangled in one inconsistency after the other in the endeavour to

* Pierre Bayle: *Dictionnaire*. See the last note to the statement about the Jesuit Jean Adam, who in the year 1650 caused much offence by his public sermons against Augustine. One may trust this report absolutely, since Bayle was altogether sympathetic to the Jesuits and remained until his death in close personal intercourse with them. The famous Père de la Chaise also declares that "Augustine can only be read with caution," and this refers naturally to the Pauline elements of his religion (*cf.* Sainte-Beuve: *Port Royal*, 4th ed. ii. 134, and iv. 436).

63 RELIGION

be logically convincing and uniform. We have already seen that it was Paul himself who made such a fine attempt to bring the Old Testament into organic connection with the new doctrine of salvation. This is particularly the case in the most Jewish of his letters, that to the Romans. In contrast to other passages the Fall of Man is here introduced as a purely historical event (v. 12), which then logically postulates the second historical event, the birth of the second Adam "from the seed of David" (i. 3). Hence the whole history of the world runs in accordance with a very clear, humanly comprehensible, so to say "empirical" divine plan. Instead of the narrow Jewish view we here certainly find a universal plan of salvation, but the principle is the same. It is the same Jehovah, who is conceived quite humanly, who creates, commands, forbids, is angry, punishes, rewards; Israel is also the chosen people, the "good olive," upon which some twigs of the wild tree of Heathendom are henceforth grafted (*Rom. xi. 17*); and even this extension of Judaism Paul brings about solely by a new interpretation of the Messianic doctrine, "as it had been fully developed in the Jewish Apocalypse of that time." * Now everything is arranged in a finely logical and rationalistic manner: the creation, the accidental fall of man, the punishment, the selection of the special race of priests, from whose midst the Messiah shall come, the death of the Messiah as atonement (exactly in the old Jewish sense), the last judgment, which takes account of the works of men and distributes punishment and reward accordingly. It is impossible to be more Jewish: a capricious law decides what is holiness and what sin, the transgression of the law is punished, but the punishment can be expiated by the making of a corresponding sacrifice. Here there is no question of an inborn need of redemption in the Indian sense, there is no room

* Pfleiderer, p. 113.

64 RELIGION

for rebirth, as Christ so urgently impressed it upon His disciples, the idea of grace possesses in such a system no meaning, any more than does faith in the Pauline sense. *

* My space is so limited that I cannot help asking the reader to consult the authorities on such an important point. The double process of thought with its inextricable antinomy is most clearly seen when we fix our attention upon the end, the judgment, and in this we are excellently assisted by a small specialised work (in which all the literature is also given), Ernst Teichmann's *Die paulinischen Vorstellungen von*

Auferstehung und Gericht und ihre Beziehungen zur jüdischen Apokalyptik (1896). Armed with an exact knowledge of the Jewish literature of that time, Teichmann shows, sentence for sentence, how literally all the New Testament, and especially the Pauline conceptions of the last judgment, are taken from the late apocalyptic doctrines of Judaism. That these in turn are not of Hebrew origin, but borrowed from Egypt and Asia and saturated with Hellenic thoughts (see pp. 2 f., 32, &c.), only shows from what a witches' cauldron the Apostle drew his material, and it matters little, since the powerful national spirit of the Jews made everything it took hold of "Jewish." Decisive, on the other hand, is the detailed proof that Paul elsewhere (especially where his real religion is making headway) expressly does away with the idea of judgment. See especially the paragraph on *Die Aufhebung der Gerichtsvorstellung*, p. 100 f. Teichmann writes here: "The doctrine of justification by faith was diametrically opposed to all former views. Jews and Gentiles knew no better than that the deeds, the works of man decided his destiny after death. But here religious conduct takes the place of moral conduct." And on p. 118 the author thus summarises his statements: "On the other hand the Apostle is quite independent when he, by the consistent development of his pneuma-doctrine, puts aside the conception of judgment. On the basis of faith, gracious reception of the *πνεύμα* [which Luther translates by "Geist," spirit, but in Paul is called heavenly, reborn, divine spirit, as for example, 2 Cor. iii. 17. *ο κύριος το πνευμά εστιν*: God the Lord is the pneuma]: by the *πνεύμα*, mystical union with Christ: in it is participation in the death of Christ and consequently in his *δικαιοσύνη* (righteousness) and his resurrection, but thereby attainment of *υιοθεσία* (adoption); these are the stages in the development of this idea. In the thus-formed doctrine of the *πνεύμα* we have the real Christian creation of the Apostle." Teichmann seems, like most of the Christian theologians, not to know that the doctrine of *πνεύμα* is as old as Indo-Aryan thought and that, as *Prâna*, it had long before the birth of Paul passed through all possible forms from the purest spirit to the finest ether (cf. on p. 42 the different views concerning Paul's Pneuma); nor does he know that the conception of religion as faith and regeneration, in contrast to ethical materialism, is an old Indo-European legacy, an organic tendency of mind; but his evidence is all the more valuable, because it shows that the most scrupulously detailed research from the narrow standpoint of scientific Christian theology leads to exactly the same result as the most daring generalisation.

65 RELIGION

Between the two religious views of Paul there is not a merely organic contrast, such as all life furnishes, but a logical one, that is, a mathematical, mechanical, indissoluble contradiction. Such a contradiction leads necessarily to a conflict. Not necessarily in the heart of the one originator, for our human mind is rich in automatically working contrivances for adaptation to circumstances; just as the lens of the eye accommodates itself to various distances, whereby the object which at one time is clearly seen is on the next occasion so blurred as to be almost unrecognisable, so the inner image changes with the point of vision, and hence on the various levels of our philosophy there may stand things which are not in harmony without our ever becoming aware of the fact; for if we contemplate the one the details of the other disappear, and *vice versa*. We must therefore distinguish between those logical contradictions which the martyred spirit of compulsion with full

consciousness presents — as for example those of Augustine, who is always hesitating between his conviction and his acquired orthodoxy, between his intuition and his wish to serve the practical needs of the Church — and the unconscious contradictions of a frank, perfectly simple mind like Paul. But this distinction serves only to make the particular personality better known to us; the contradiction as such remains. Indeed Paul himself confesses that he is “all things to all men,” and that certainly explains some deviations; but the roots strike deeper. In this breast lodge two souls: a Jewish and an un-Jewish, or rather an un-Jewish soul with pinions fettered to a Jewish thinking-machine. As long as the great personality lived, it exercised influence as a unity through the uniformity of its conduct, through its capacity for modulating its words. But after its death the letter remained behind, the letter, the fatal property of which is to bring all and everything to the same level, the

66 RELIGION

letter, which destroys all perspective moulding and knows but one plane — the superficial plane! Here contradiction stood side by side with contradiction, not as the colours of the rainbow which merge into each other, but as light and darkness which exclude each other. The conflict was unavoidable. Outwardly it found expression in the establishment of dogmas and sects; nowhere was it more powerfully expressed than in the great Reformation of the thirteenth century, which was throughout inspired by Paul, and might have chosen as its motto the words: “Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage“ (*Gal. v. 1*); even to-day the conflict between the Jewish and the non-Jewish religion of Paul goes on. Still more fatal almost was and is the inner struggle in the bosom of the individual Christian, from Origenes to Luther, and from him to every man of the present day who belongs to a Christian Church. Paul himself had not been in the least bound down by any kind of dogma. It has been proved that he knew very little of the life of Christ; * that he received counsel and instruction from no one, not even from the disciples of the Saviour, nor from those who were “regarded as pillars“; he explicitly states this and makes it a boast (*Gal. i. and ii.*); he knows nothing of the cosmic mythology of the Trinity; he will have nothing to do with the metaphysical hypostasis of the Logos, † nor is he in the painful position of having to reconcile himself with the utterances of other Christians.

He passes with a smile many a superstition that was widespread in his time and that was later transformed into a Christian dogma, saying, for example, of the angels that “no one hath seen them“ (*Col. ii. 18*), and that one should not by such conceptions be “beguiled of one's

* See especially Pfleiderer, p. iii. f.

† Full and remarkably precise information in Reuss, Book V. chap. viii.

67 RELIGION

reward“; he frankly admits that we “know only in part; we see now through a glass darkly“ (1 *Cor.* xiii. 9, 12), and so it never occurs to him to fit his living faith into dogmatic piecework: in short, Paul still remained a free man. No one after him was free. For by his fastening on to the Old Testament, he had produced a New Testament: the old was revealed truth, the new consequently the same; the old was certified historical chronicle, the new could be nothing less. But while the old at a late period had been put together and revised with a particular aim, it was not so with the new; here the one man stood naturally beside the other. If for example Paul, clinging firmly to the one great fundamental principle of all ideal religion, teaches that it is faith not works that redeems us, then the pure Jew James immediately utters the fundamental dogma of all materialistic religion that not faith but works make us blessed. We find both in the New Testament, both are in consequence revealed truth. And now for the striking contradiction in Paul himself! Those learned in Scripture may say what they like — and amongst them we must in this case include even a Martin Luther — the Gordian knots that we have to deal with here (and there are several of them) can only be cut, not loosened: either we are for Paul or we are against him, either we are for the dogmatically chronistic pharisaical theology of the one Paul or we believe with the other Paul in a transcendental truth behind the mysterious mirage of empirical appearance. And it is only in the latter case that we understand him when he speaks of the “mystery“ — not of a justification (like the Jews), but of the mystery of “transformation“ (1 *Cor.* xv. 51). And this transformation is not something future; it is independent of time altogether, *i.e.*, something present: “ye are saved; he has made us sit together in heavenly places...” (*Eph.* ii. 5, 6). And if we “must speak after the manner

68 RELIGION

of men because of the infirmity of our flesh“ (*Rom.* vi. 19), if we must speak with words of that mystery which is beyond words, that mystery which we indeed see in Jesus Christ, but cannot conceive and hence cannot express — then we do speak of original sin, of grace, of redemption by regeneration, and all this we embrace with Paul as “faith.“

Though therefore we put aside the different teachings of other Apostles, neglect the later additions to the church doctrine from mythology, metaphysics and superstition, and hold to Paul alone, we kindle an inextinguishable fire of conflict in our own hearts, as soon as we try to force ourselves to look upon both religious doctrines of the Apostle as equally justified.

This is the conflict in which Christianity has from the very first been involved; this is the tragedy of Christianity, before which the divine and living personality of Jesus Christ, the one source of everything in Christianity that deserves the name of religion, soon faded into the background. Though I named Paul especially, it must be clear from many a remark here and there, that I am far from regarding him as the one source of all Christian theology; very much in it has been added later, and great world-revolutionising religious struggles, such as that between Arians and Athanasians, are carried on almost altogether outside of the Pauline conceptions. * In a book like this I am compelled to simplify very much, otherwise the mass of material would reduce my pictures to mere shadows. Paul is beyond question the mightiest “architect” (as he calls himself) of Christianity, and it has been my object to show, in the first place, that by introducing the Jewish chronistic and material standpoint Paul establishes also the intolerantly dogmatic, causing thereby unspeakable evil in later times; and

* I do not overlook the fact that the Arians appeal to the somewhat vague passage in the *Epistle to the Philippians*, the authenticity of which is very much doubted, chap. ii. 6.

69 RELIGION

secondly, that even when we go back to pure unmixed Paulinism, we encounter inexplicable hostile contradictions — which are historically easy to explain in the soul of this one man, but which, when stamped into lasting articles of faith for all men, were bound to sow discord among them and to extend the conflict into the heart of the individual. This unfortunate discordancy has from the first been a characteristic of Christianity. All that is contradictory and incomprehensible in the never-ending strifes of the first Christian centuries, during which the new structure of religion was erected stone by stone with such difficulty, awkwardness, inconsistency, toil and (apart from some great minds) indignity — the later deviations of the human intellect in scholasticism, the bloody wars of confessions, the fearful confusion of the present day with its Babel of Creeds, which the secular sword alone holds back from open combat with each other, the whole drowned by the shrill voice of blasphemy, while many of the noblest men shut their ears, preferring to

hear no message of salvation than such a cacophony — all this is really the result of the original hybrid or discordant nature of Christianity. From the day when (about eighteen years after the death of Christ) the strife broke out between the congregations of Antioch and Jerusalem, as to whether the followers of Christ need be circumcised or not, to the present day, when Peter and Paul are much more diametrically opposed than then (see *Galatians* ii. 14), Christianity has been sick unto death because of this. And that all the more as from Paul to Pio Nono all seem to have been blind to two simple clear facts: the antagonism of races, and the irreconcilability of the mutually exclusive religious ideals lying side by side. And thus it came to pass that the first divine revelation of a religion of love led to a religion of hatred, such as the world had never known before. The followers of the Teacher who yielded without

70 RELIGION

a struggle and went unresistingly to the Cross, within a few centuries murdered in cold blood, as “pious work,” more millions of human beings than fell in all the wars of antiquity; the consecrated priests of this religion became professional hangmen; whoever was not prepared to accept under oath an empty idea which no man comprehended but which had been stamped as dogma, an echo perhaps from the leisure hour of the intellectual acrobat Aristotle or the subtle Plotinus — that is, all the more gifted, the more earnest, the nobler, the free men — had to die the most painful death; though the truth of religion lay not in the word but in the spirit, for the first time in the history of the world the Word entered upon that fearful tyranny which even to-day lies like a nightmare upon our poor struggling “Middle Ages.” But enough, every one understands me, every one knows the bloody history of Christianity, the history of religious fanaticism. And what is at the root of this history? The figure of Jesus Christ? No, indeed! The union of the Aryan spirit with the Jewish and that of both with the madness of the Chaos that knew neither nation nor faith. The Jewish spirit, if it had been adopted in its purity, would never have caused so much mischief; for dogmatic uniformity would then have rested on the basis of something quite comprehensible, and the Church would have become the enemy of superstition; but as it was the stream of the Jewish spirit was let loose upon the sublime world of Indo-European symbolism and freely creative, rich imaginative power; * like the poison of the arrow of the South American this spirit penetrated and benumbed an organism to which only constant change and remodelling could give life and beauty. The dogmatic element, † the letter-creed, the

* See vol. i. p. [216](#).

† In vol. i. p. [428 f](#). I have explained at length what a different significance dogma had for the Jew.

71 RELIGION

fearful narrowness of religious conceptions, intolerance, fanaticism, extreme self-conceit — all this is a consequence of the linking on to the Old Testament of the Jewish historical belief: it is that “will,” of which I spoke before, which Judaism gave to growing Christianity; a blind, flaming, hard, cruel will, that will which formerly at the sacking of an enemy's city had given the order to dash the heads of the babes against the stones. At the same time this dogmatic spirit transformed as by a spell the most stupid and revolting superstition of miserable slavish souls into essential components of religion; what had hitherto been good enough for the “common man” (as Origenes expressed it) or for the slaves (as Demosthenes scoffingly says), princes of intellect must now accept for the salvation of their souls. In a former chapter I have already called attention to the childish superstitions of an Augustine (vol. i. [p. 311](#)); Paul would not for a moment have believed that a man could be changed into an ass (we see how he speaks of the angels), Augustine on the other hand finds it plausible. While therefore the highest religious intuitions are dragged to the ground and so distorted as to lose all their fine qualities, long obsolete delusive ideas of primitive men — magic, witchcraft, &c. — were at the same time given an officially guaranteed right of abode in *praecinctu ecclesiae*.

AUGUSTINE

No human being offers such a fine but at the same time sad example as does Augustine of the discord caused in the heart by a Christianity thus organised. It is impossible to open any work of his without being touched by the fervour of his feeling, and being held spellbound by the holy earnestness of his thoughts; we cannot read it long without being forced to regret that such a spirit, chosen to be a disciple of the living Christ, capable as few

72 RELIGION

only were capable to carry on the work of Paul and to assist the true religion of the Apostle to victory at the decisive moment, was yet unable

to contend — without Fatherland, race or religion as he was — against the powers of the Chaos, from which he himself had arisen, so that finally in a kind of mad despair he clung to the one ideal only — to help to organise the Roman Church as the saving, ordering, uniting, world-ruling power — even though it should cost the better part of his own religion. But if we remember what Europe was like at the beginning of the fifth century (Augustine died in 430), if the *Confessions* of this Father of the Church have thrown light on the social and moral condition of the so-called civilised men of that horrible time, if we realise that this “Professor of Rhetoric,” educated by his parents in the “*spes litterarum*” (*Confessions*, ii, 3), well acquainted with the rounded phrases of Cicero and the subtleties of neo-Platonism, had to live to see the rude Goths, *truculentissimae et saevissimae mentes* (*De Civitate Dei* i. 7), capturing Rome, and the wild Vandals laying waste his African birthplace, — if we remember, I say, what terror-inspiring surroundings impressed themselves upon this lofty spirit from every side, we shall cease to wonder that a man, who at any other time would have fought for freedom and truth against tyranny of conscience and corruption, should in this case have thrown the weight of his personality into the scale of authority and uncompromising hierocratic tyranny. Just as in the case of Paul, it is not difficult for any one with knowledge to distinguish between the true inner religion of Augustine and that which was forced upon him; but here, owing to the continued development of Christianity, the matter has become much more tragic, for the ingenuousness and thus the true greatness of the man is lost. This man does not contradict himself frankly, freely and carelessly; he is already enslaved, the contradiction is forced upon him by alien hands. It is not a question here, as in

73 RELIGION

the case of Paul, of two parallel views of existence; nor of a third which is added to them in the mysteries, sacraments and ceremonies of the Chaos; but Augustine must to-day assert the opposite of what he said yesterday: he must do it in order to influence men who would otherwise not understand him; he must do it because he has sacrificed his own judgment at the threshold of the Roman Church; he must do it in order not to lack some one subtle dialectical sophistry in dispute with would-be sectarians. It is a tragic spectacle. No one had seen more clearly than Augustine what pernicious consequences the forced conversion to Christianity entailed upon Christianity itself; even in his time there was in the Church, especially in Italy, a majority of men who stood in no inner relation to the Christian religion and who only adopted the new mystery cult in place of the old one, because the State demanded it. The one, as Augustine informs us, becomes Christian because his employer

commands him, the other because he hopes to win a suit through the intervention of the bishop, * the third seeks a situation, a fourth wins by this means a rich wife. Augustine gazes sorrowfully upon this spectacle, which actually became the poison that consumed the marrow of Christianity, and utters an urgent warning (as Chrysostom had done before him) against “conversion in masses.” Yet it is this same Augustine who establishes the doctrine of “*compelle intrare in ecclesiam*,” who seeks sophisticatedly to establish the grave principle that, by means of the “scourge of temporal sufferings,” we must endeavour to rescue “evil slaves” — who demands the penalty of death for unbelief and the use of the State power against heresy! The man who had said these beautiful words concerning religion, “By love we go to meet it, by love we seek it, it is love that knocks, it is love that makes us

* See below for the part played by bishops as judges in civil cases.

74 RELIGION

constant in what has been revealed“ * — this man becomes the moral originator of the inquisition! He did not, indeed, invent persecution and religious murder, for these were of the essence of Christianity from the moment when it became the State religion of Rome, but he confirmed and consecrated them by the power of his authority; it was he who first made intolerance a religious, as well as a political, power. It is very characteristic of the true, free Augustine that he, for example, energetically rejects the assertion that Christ meant Peter when he said “upon this rock will I build my Church,” and even denounces it as something senseless and blasphemous, since Christ evidently meant upon the rock of this “faith,” not of this man; Augustine consequently makes a clear distinction between the visible Church, which is built partly upon sand, as he says, and the real Church: † and yet it is this very man who, more than any other, helps to establish the power of this visible Roman Church which claims Peter as its founder, who praises it as directly appointed by God, “*ab apostolica sede per successiones episcoporum*,” ‡ and who supplements this purely religious claim to power by the more decisive claim of political continuity — the Roman Church the legitimate continuation of the Roman Empire. His chief work *De Civitate Dei* is inspired to as great an extent by the Roman imperial idea as by the *Revelation of St. John*.

Still more fateful and cruel does this life in inconsistency, this building up from the ruins of his own heart, appear when we contemplate the inner life and the inner

* *De moribus eccl.* i. § 31.

† In his letters Augustine addresses the Bishop of Rome simply as “brother.” He certainly employs also the expression “Thy Holiness,” not, however, to the Bishop of Rome alone, but to every priest, even when he is not a bishop; every Christian belonged, according to the way of speaking at that time, to the “community of the Saints.”

‡ *Ep.* 93 ad Vincent (from Neander).

75 RELIGION

religion of Augustine. Augustine is by nature a mystic. Who does not know his *Confessions*? Who has not read again and again that magnificent passage, the tenth chapter of the seventh book, where he describes how he only found God when he sought him in his own heart?

* Who could forget his conversation with his dying mother Monica, that wondrous blossom of mysticism which might have been culled in the Brihadâraryaka-Upanishad: “If the stones of the senses were silent, and those shadowy figures of earth, of water and of air were dumb, if the vault of Heaven were silent and the soul too remained silent and turned back upon itself, so that it should, self-forgotten, float out beyond itself; if dreams were silent and revelations that are dreamt, if every tongue and every name were silent, if everything were silent that dying passes away, if the universe were still — and He alone spoke, not through His creatures, but Himself, and we heard His words, not as though one spoke with tongue of man nor by voice of angels nor in thunder nor in the riddle of allegories — and this supreme and unique Being thrilled the one who looked upon Him, consuming him completely and sinking him in mystic bliss (*interiora gaudia*) — would not eternal life be like this conception suggested by a brief moment conjured up by our sighs?” (ix. 10). But Augustine is not merely a mystic in feeling

* “Turning away from books I inclined myself to my own heart; led by Thee I entered the deepest depths of my heart; Thou didst help me, that I was able to do it. I entered in. However weak my eye, I yet saw clearly — far above this the eye of my soul, raised beyond my reason — the unchanging light. It was not that common light with which the senses are familiar, nor was it distinguished from this merely by greater power, as though the daylight had become ever brighter and brighter, till it had filled all space. No, it was not that, but another, a quite different one. And it did not hover high above my reason, as oil floats upon water or the heaven above the earth, but it was high above me, because it had created me myself, and I was of small account as a creature. Whoever knows the truth knows that light, and whoever knows that light knows eternity. Love knows it. O eternal truth and true love and loved eternity! thou art my God! Day and night I long for thee!”

76 RELIGION

(many such have been prominent in Christianity), he is a religious genius who strives after the inner “conversion“ which Christ taught, and who through the Epistles of Paul became regenerated; he tells us how it was Paul that caused light, peace, blessedness to penetrate his soul rent by passion and driven to complete despair by years of inner conflict and fruitless study (*Conf.* viii, 12). With the fullest conviction, with profound understanding he grasps the fundamental doctrine of grace, of *gratia indeclinabilis*, as he calls it; it is to him so absolutely the foundation of his religion that he rejects the appellation “doctrine“ for it (*De gratia Christi*, § 14); and as a genuine disciple of the Apostle he shows that the merit of works is excluded by the conception of grace. His view of the importance of redemption and of original sin is more uncertain and not to be compared with those of the Indian teachers; for the Jewish chronicle here dims his power of judgment, though that is almost of secondary importance, since he on the other hand establishes the idea of regeneration as the “immovable central point of Christianity.“ * And now comes this same Augustine and denies almost all his inmost convictions! He who has told us how he had discovered God in his own soul and how Paul had brought him to religion, writes henceforth (in the heat of combat against the Manichaeans): “I would not believe the gospel, if the authority of the Catholic Church did not compel me to do so.“ † Here accordingly for Augustine the Church

* Particularly in the *De peccato originali*. Concerning grace Augustine expresses himself very clearly in his letter to Paulinus, § 6, where he is arguing against Pelagius: “Grace is not a fruit of works; if it were so, it would not be grace. Because for works there is given as much as they are worth; but grace is given without merit.“ In this connection he had had a good teacher in Ambrosius, for the latter had taught: “Not by works but by faith is man justified.“ (See the beautiful *Speech on the Death of the Emperor Theodosius*, § 9; Abraham is here quoted as an example.)

† *Contra epistolam Manichaei*, § 6 (from Neander].

77 RELIGION

— which, he himself testified, contained few true Christians — stands higher than the gospel; in other words, the Church is religion. In contrast to Paul, who had exclaimed “Let each man take heed how he build upon the foundation of Christ,“ Augustine gives the explanation that it is not the soul but the bishop who has to settle the creed; he refuses to the most earnest Christians something which even almost every Pope later granted, namely, the investigation of varying doctrines: “As soon as the bishops have spoken,“ he writes, “there is nothing more to investigate, the superior power shall put down heterodoxy by force.“ * We must take up detailed histories of dogma to trace how the pure doctrine of grace is

gradually weakened; he never could altogether give it up, but he so emphasised works that, although they remained (in Augustine's view) as "gift of God," components of grace — visible results of it — yet this relation was lost to the common eye. Thereby the door was thrown wide open to materialism — which is ever on the watch. As soon as Augustine emphasised this point, that no redemption was possible without the service of works, the previous clause was soon forgotten, viz., "that the capacity for these works was a gift of grace, and these accordingly blossom on the tree of faith." Augustine himself goes so far as to speak of the relative merit of various works and regards the death of Christ also from the standpoint of a value to be calculated. †

* A doctrine to which the Church at a later time appeals (thus, for example, the Roman synod of the year 680), in order to demand from the civil power that it should make orthodoxy "supreme, and see that the weeds be torn out" (Hefele, iii. 258).

† More details of Augustine's theory of grace will be found in Harnack's large *Dogmengeschichte*; the abridged edition is too short for this exceedingly complicated question. But the layman must never forget that, however confused the shades may be, the fundamental question remains always exceedingly simple. The confusion is simply a result of too subtle disputation, and its complication is caused by the possible complications of logical combinations; here we reach the sphere of intellectual mechanics. But the relation of the

78 RELIGION

That is Judaism in place of Christianity. And naturally this changing and shifting of the fundamental views cause as much hesitation and doubt in regard to subordinate questions. I shall return later to the question of the sacrament, which now began to be discussed; these few hints I shall close with a last one, a mere example, to show what far-reaching consequences these inner contradictions of this growing Church were to have in the course of centuries. In various places Augustine develops with acute dialectics the idea of the transcendentality of the conception of time (as we should say to-day); he does not find a word for his idea, so that in a long discussion of this subject in the eleventh book of the *Confessions* he at last confesses: "What is time then? As long as no one asks me, I know it quite well, but when I am called upon to explain it to a questioner, I know it no more" (chap. xiv). But we understand him quite well. He wishes to show that for God, *i.e.*, a conception no longer empirically limited, there is no time in our sense and thus demonstrates how meaningless are the many discussions concerning past and future eternity. Evidently he has grasped the essence of genuine religion; for his proof forces us irresistibly to the conclusion that all the chronicles of the past and prophecies for the future have only a figurative significance, and thereby punishment and reward are also done away with. And that

is the man who later was not able to do enough to prove, and to impress upon the mind as certain, fundamental and concrete truth the unconditional literal eternity of the punishment of hell. If we are fully entitled to recognise in Augustine a predecessor of Martin Luther, then he became at the same time a vigorous pioneer of that anti-Pauline tendency

religion of grace to the religion of law and service is just the same as that of + to -; everybody is not able to understand the subtleties of the mathematicians and still less of the theologians, but every one should be able to distinguish between plus and minus.

79 RELIGION

which at a later time found undisguised expression in Ignatius and his order and in their religion of hell. *

Harnack thus summarises his chapter on Augustine: "Through Augustine the Church doctrine became in extent and meaning more uncertain ... Around the old dogma, which maintained its rigid form, there grew up a large uncertain circle of doctrines, in which the most important thoughts of faith were contained, but which could not yet be fully surveyed and firmly attached to the old." Although he had worked so untiringly for the unity of the Church, he left, as is evident, more material for conflict and discord than he had found. The stormy conflict which even after his entry into the Church had arisen in his own breast, perhaps in many ways unconsciously, lasted till his death; — no longer in the form of a struggle between sensual enjoyment and longing for noble purity, but as a conflict between a grossly materialistic, superstitious Church faith and the most daring idealism of genuine religion.

* See vol. i. [p. 569](#). The abuse of indulgences which came into practice several centuries later could also appeal for support to Augustine in so far as from the above-mentioned relative valuation of works and especially of the death of Christ there was derived the idea of *opera supererogationis*, (works beyond the necessary measure), from which excessive fund, through the intervention of the Church, condignities are bestowed. Our whole conception of hell and of the pains of hell is, as is now known, taken from old Egyptian religion. Dante's *Inferno* is exactly represented on very early Egyptian monuments. Still more interesting is the fact that the conception of *opera supererogationis*, the treasure of grace, by which souls are freed from purgatory (also an Egyptian idea), is likewise a legacy from ancient Egypt. Masses and prayers for the dead, which to-day play so great a part in the Roman Church, existed in exactly the same form some thousands of years before Christ. On the gravestones too might be read then as to-day: "O ye who are living upon earth, when ye pass by this grave, utter a pious prayer for the soul of the dead N. N." (Cf. Prof. Leo Reinisch: *Ursprung und Entwicklung des Ägyptischen Priestertums*).

80 RELIGION

THE THREE CHIEF MOVEMENTS

I shall not be so bold as to sketch the history of religion here, any more than I undertook to write a history of law in the second chapter. If I succeed in awakening a vivid and at the same time intimately correct conception of the nature of the conflict that has been bequeathed to us — the conflict of various religious ideals struggling for the mastery — then my end will be attained. The really essential thing is to perceive that historical Christianity — a hybrid affair from the beginning — planted this conflict in the breast of the individual. With the two great figures of Paul and Augustine I have tried to show this as briefly but as clearly as I could. I have thereby revealed the chief elements of the external conflict, that is, of the conflict in the Church. “The true basis is the human heart,” says Luther. And so I now hasten to the end, choosing from the almost incalculable mass of facts relating to the “struggle in religion” a few which are especially suited to enlighten our views. I limit myself to what is absolutely necessary to supplement what has already been indicated. In this way we may hope to get a bird's-eye view as far as the threshold of the thirteenth century, where the external conflict begins in earnest, while the inner has practically ceased: henceforth divergent views, principles, powers — above all divergent races — opposed each other, but these are relatively at harmony with themselves and know what they wish.

Considered in the commonest outlines, the conflict in the Church during the first ten centuries consists first of a struggle between East and West, and later of one between South and North. These terms are not to be taken in the purely geographical sense: the “East” was a last flickering of the flame of Hellenic spirit and Hellenic culture, the “North” was the beginning of the awakening

81 RELIGION

of the Germanic soul; there was no definite place, no definite centre for these two powers: the Teuton might be an Italian monk, the Greek an African presbyter. Rome was opposed to both. Its arms reached to the most distant East and to the remotest North; but here again this term “Rome” is not to be understood merely in a local sense, though in this case there was a fixed immutable centre, the sacred city of ancient Rome. There was no specific Roman culture to oppose to the Hellenic, for all culture in Rome had from the first been and still was Hellenic; still less could one speak of a distinctly individual Roman soul, like that of the Teuton, since the people of ancient Rome had disappeared from the face

of the earth and Rome was merely the administrative centre of a nationless mixture; whoever speaks of Rome talks of the chaos of races. And yet Rome proved itself not the weaker but the stronger of the opponents. Of course it did not completely prevail either in the East or in the North; the three great "movements" are still more manifestly opposed to each other than they were a thousand years ago; but the Greek Church of the schism is in relation to its religious ideal essentially a Roman Catholic one, a daughter neither of the great Origenes nor of the Gnostics; nor did the Reformation of the North more than partially throw off what was specifically Roman, and it was so long before it produced its Martin Luther that considerable parts of Europe, which some centuries before would have belonged to it, since the "North" had reached the heart of Spain and the doors of Rome, were lost to it for ever — Romanised beyond all hope of salvation.

A glance at these three principal movements, in which an attempt was made to build up Christianity, will suffice to make clear the nature of the struggle which has come down to us.

82 RELIGION

THE "EAST"

The first enchanting bloom of Christianity was Hellenic. Stephen, the first martyr, is a Greek, Paul — who so energetically commands us to "rid ourselves of Jewish fables and old wives' tales" * — is a mind saturated with Greek thought, who clearly only feels at home when he is addressing those who have acquired Hellenic culture. But soon there was added to the Socratic earnestness and the Platonic depth of conception another genuinely Hellenic trait, the tendency to abstraction. It was this Hellenic tendency of mind which furnished the basis for Christian dogmatics, and not merely the basis, but all those conceptions which I have termed "external mythology" — the doctrine of the Trinity, of the relation of the Son to the Father, of the Word to the Incarnation, &c., indeed the whole dogma. Neo-Platonism and what we might call neo-Aristotelianism were then in a flourishing condition; all who had acquired Hellenic culture, no matter to what nationality they belonged, occupied themselves with pseudo-metaphysical speculations. Paul indeed is very cautious in the employment of philosophical arguments; he uses them only as a weapon, to convince and to refute; on the other hand, the author of the *Gospel of St. John* calmly welds together the life of Jesus Christ and the mythical metaphysics of late Hellenism. This was a beginning, and from that time forth the history of Christian thought and of the moulding of the Christian faith was for two centuries exclusively Greek; then it was about two hundred years more before,

with the subsequent anathematising of the greatest Hellenic Christian, Origenes, at the synod of Constantinople in the year 543, Hellenic

* 1 *Tim.* iv. 7, and *Tit.* i. 14. (Added in the 4th ed.; these letters are supposed not to be by Paul.)

83 RELIGION

theology was finally silenced. The Judaising sects of that time, such as the Nazarenes, the Ebionites, have no lasting importance. Rome, as the focus of the empire and of all traffic, was naturally and necessarily the organic centre for the Christian sect as for everything else in the Roman Empire; but it is characteristic that no theological thoughts came from there; when finally, at the end of the third century, a “Latin theology” arose, it was not in Italy but in Africa that it appeared, and it was a very stubborn Church and theology that caused Rome great uneasiness, until the Vandals and later the Arabs destroyed it. The Africans, however, like all those Greeks, who — like Irenaeus — fell under the spell of this overwhelming power, played into the hands of Rome. Not only did they look upon the pre-eminence of Rome as an understood thing, but they also resisted all those Hellenic conceptions which Rome, with its political and administrative ambitions, was bound to regard as injurious, but above all the Hellenic spirit in its whole individuality, which was opposed to every process of crystallisation, and in research, speculation and reorganisation always strove after the Absolute.

Here we have really a conflict between Imperial Rome, now bereft of all soul, but as an administrative power at its very highest perfection, and the old spirit of creative Hellenism which was flickering up for the last time; — a spirit so permeated and dimmed by other elements as to be unrecognisable, and lacking much of its former beauty and strength. The conflict was waged obstinately and mercilessly, not with arguments alone but with all the means of cunning, violence, bribery, ignorance and especially with a shrewd manipulation of all political conjunctures. It is clear that in such a conflict Rome was bound to be victorious; especially as in those early days (till the death of Theodosius) the Emperor was the actual head of the Church even in

84 RELIGION

matters of dogma, and the Emperors — in spite of the influence which great and holy archbishops in Byzantium for a time exercised over them — with the unerring instinct of experienced politicians always felt that

Rome alone was capable of introducing unity, organisation and discipline. How could metaphysical brooding and mystical meditation ever have prevailed over practical and systematic politics? Thus, for example, it was Constantine * — the still unbaptised murderer of wife and children, the man who by special edicts established the position of the heathen augurs in the Empire — it was Constantine who called together the first oecumenical council (at Nicaea, A.D. 325) and, in spite of the overwhelming majority of the bishops, established the doctrines of his Egyptian favourite Athanasius. Thus originated the so-called Nicene creed: on the one side the shrewd calculation of a level-headed, unscrupulous and un-Christian politician, who asked himself but the one question, “How can I most completely enslave my subjects?” on the other side the cowardly pliancy of frightened prelates, who put their signature to something which they considered false, and as soon as they had returned to their dioceses, began to agitate against it. For us laymen, by far the most interesting thing about this first and fundamental Church council is the fact that the majority of the bishops, as genuine pupils of Origenes, were altogether opposed to all enclosing of the conscience in such intellectual straitjackets and had demanded a formula of faith, wide enough to leave free play to the mind in things which transcend the human understanding, and thus to ensure the right of existence to scientific theology and cosmology. †

* We can read in Bernouilli: *Das Konzil von Nicäa*, how exclusively Constantine was actuated by political and not religious motives, for though he was inclined owing to circumstances to favour Arius, he took the opposite side as soon as he noticed that this offered better sureties of more vigorous organisation, in short, more hope of political duration.

† Karl Müller: *Kirchengeschichte* i. 181.

85 RELIGION

What these Hellenic Christians therefore aimed at was a condition of freedom within orthodoxy, comparable to that which had prevailed in India. * But it was just this that Rome and the Emperor wished to avoid: nothing was any longer to remain indefinite or uncertain; in religion, as in every other sphere, absolute uniformity was to be the law throughout the Roman Empire. How unbearable the limited and “limiting“ dogmatising was to the highly cultured Hellenic spirit becomes sufficiently clear from the one fact that Gregory of Nazianz, a man whom the Roman Church numbers among its saints because of his orthodoxy, even in the year 380 (long after the Nicæan Council) could write as follows: “Some of our theologians regard the Holy Ghost as God's method of manifesting His power, others regard it as a creation of God, others as God Himself; there are those again who say that they do not know which

they should accept, because of reverence for the Holy Writ, which is not clear on the point.“ † But the Roman Imperial principle could not yield to Holy Scripture; one tittle of freedom of thought and Rome's absolute authority would have been endangered. Hence in the second general synod at Constantinople in the year 381, the confession of faith was supplemented with a view to stopping up the last loophole of escape, and at the third, held at Ephesus in the year 431, it was definitely decided that “nothing might be added and nothing taken from this confession on penalty of excommunication.“ ‡ Thus the intellectual movement of dying Hellenism, which had lasted more than three hundred years, was finally brought to an end. Detailed accounts of

* Cf. vol. i. p. [429 f.](#)

† According to Neander: *Kirchengeschichte* iv. 109. According to Hefele: *Konziliengeschichte* ii. 8, it appears also as if Gregory of Nazianz had not advised or signed along with the others the extended symbolism of Constantinople (in the year 381).

‡ Hefele: *Konziliengeschichte* ii. 11 f. 372.

86 RELIGION

that are given in histories; but the works of theologians (of all churches) are to be taken with great caution, for a very natural feeling of shame causes them to pass hastily over the accompanying circumstances of the various councils, in which the dogmatic creed of Christianity was fixed, as it was supposed, for “all time.“ * In one council the proceedings were such that even in Roman Catholic works it was described as the “Robber-synod“; but it would be difficult for the impartial to decide which synod most deserved this title. Never were proceedings more undignified than at the famous third oecumenical council at Ephesus, where the “orthodox“ party, that is, the party that wished to gag all further thought, brought into the city a whole army of armed peasants, slaves and monks, in order to intimidate, to cry down and, if need be, to murder all the hostile bishops. That indeed was very different from the Hellenic way of furthering theology and cosmology! Perhaps it was the right way for that wretched age and those wretched human beings. And there is another important consideration: in spite of my repugnance for that chaos of races incorporated in Rome, I firmly believe that Rome did religion a service by emphasising the concrete as opposed to the abstract and saving it from the danger of complete evaporation. And yet it would be ridiculous to feel admiration for such narrow and common characters as Cyrillus, the murderer of the noble Hypatia, and to hold in reverence councils like that over which he presided at Ephesus, which the Emperor himself (Theodosius the younger) characterised as a “shameful and mischievous gathering,“ and which he had to break up on his own

authority, in order to put an end to the squabbles and rude violence of the holy shepherds.

* In spite of all new works I still should like to recommend to the layman chap. xlvii. of Gibbon's *Roman Empire* as being unsurpassed, at least as a preliminary survey of the subject.

87 RELIGION

Already at this second oecumenical council at Ephesos the special Hellenic theme, mythological mysticism, was no longer in the foreground; for now the specifically Roman dogma-mongering had begun, and that, too, with the introduction of the worship of Mary and of the child Christ. I have mentioned above that this cult which was taken from Egypt had been for long established throughout the whole Roman Empire, but especially in Italy. * The term “mother of God,” instead of “mother of Christ,” which first came into use in Christianity at the beginning of the fifth century, was opposed by the noble and almost fanatically orthodox Nestorius; he saw in this — and rightly too — the resurrection of heathendom. It was natural and consistent that it should be the Bishop of Egypt and the Egyptian monks, that is, the direct heirs of the cult of Isis and Horus, who with passion and rage, and supported by the rabble and the women, demanded the introduction of these primeval customs. Rome joined the Egyptian party; the Emperor, who loved Nestorius, was gradually stirred up against him. But here we have to deal not with the Hellenic cause in the real sense of the word but rather with the beginning of a new period: that of the introduction of heathen mysteries into the Christian Church. It was the business of the North to oppose them; for the question was one less of metaphysics than of conscience and morality; thus the frequent assertion that Nestorius (who was born in the Roman military colony Germanicopolis) was by descent a Teuton, is exceedingly plausible; he was at any rate a Protestant.

One more word about the East, before we pass to the North.

In its zenith of prosperity Hellenic theology, as has been pointed out, had occupied itself principally with those questions that hover on the borderland between

* See p. [28](#).

88 RELIGION

myth, metaphysics and mysticism. Hence it is almost impossible, in a

popular work, to enter more fully into it. At the end of the first chapter, when discussing our Hellenic legacy, I pointed to the amount of abstract speculation of Greek origin that has passed over into our religious thought — though mostly in an impure form. * So long as thought of this kind remained active, as was the case in Greece before Christian times, where the eager student could by crossing the street pass from one “heresy,” that is, from one “school,” to another, these abstractions formed a supplement to the intellectual life, which was perhaps all the more welcome, as Greek life was so inclined to busy itself wholly with artistic contemplation and scientific study of the empiric world. The metaphysical inclination of men asserted itself by startlingly daring fantasies. But if one studies the words and life of Jesus Christ, one cannot but feel that in comparison with them these proud speculations evaporate into nothing. Metaphysics, in fact, are merely a kind of physics; Christ, on the other hand, is religion. To call Him *logos*, *nous*, *demiurgos*, to teach with Sabellius that the Crucified one was only a “transitory hypostatizing of the word,” or with Paul of Samosata that “He had gradually become God,” is simply to change a living personality into an allegory, and that an allegory of the worst kind, namely, an abstract one. † And since it happened that this abstract allegory was compressed into

* See vol. i. [p. 69 f.](#)

† When so acute a thinker and one so strong in intuition as Schopenhauer asserts, “Christianity is an allegory, which represents one true thought,” we cannot too energetically refute so manifest an error. We might throw overboard all the allegorical elements of Christianity and the Christian religion would still stand. For the life of Christ and the conversion of will which he taught are reality, not figure of speech. It is none the less real because reason cannot think out, nor contemplation interpret, what is here present. Reason and understanding will always in the last instance find themselves compelled to go allegorically to work, but religion is nothing if not a direct experience.

89 RELIGION

a desolate Jewish chronicle, amalgamated with grossly materialistic mysteries, transformed into the one and only dogma held to be necessary to salvation, we may rejoice when practical men after three centuries exclaimed: “Enough! henceforth nothing more may be added!” We can well understand how Ignatius, when questioned regarding the authenticity of this or that word in Scripture, could answer that for him the unfalsified documents concerning Jesus Christ were Christ's life and death. * We must admit that Hellenic theology, though large-minded and brilliant in its interpretation of Scripture though far removed from the slavish sentiments of Western theology, yet was inclined to lose sight of

these “unfalsified documents,” namely, the actual manifestation of Jesus Christ.

There is room for admiration as well as criticism, but we must at the same time regret that all that was greatest and truest in this theology at its best was rejected by Rome. I will not try the patience of the reader by plunging into theological discussions; I will simply quote a sentence of Origenes; it will give us an idea of how much the Christian religion lost by this victory of the West over the East. †

In the twenty-ninth chapter of his book *On Prayer*, Origenes speaks of the myth of the Fall of Man, and makes the remark: “We cannot help observing that the credulity and inconstancy of Eve did not begin at the moment when she disregarded the word of God and listened to the serpent; they were manifestly present before, and the serpent came to her, because in its cunning

* *Letter to the Philadelphians*, § 8. Ignatius had sat at the feet of the Apostle John, indeed, according to tradition, he had as a child seen the Saviour.

† For more details I refer the reader to the small book of Hatch already quoted: *The Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages upon the Christian Church*. This book is unique, it is absolutely scholarly, so that it is recognised by authorities and yet it is readable for every educated thinker, though he possess no theological training.

90 RELIGION

it had already noticed her weakness.” With this one sentence the myth — which the Jews, as Renan rightly remarked (see vol. i. [p. 418](#)), compressed into a dry historical fact — is once more awakened to life. And with the myth nature steps into its rights. That which may be called sin, as soon as we aim at something higher, belongs to us, as Paul had already said, “by nature;” with the fetters of the chronicle we throw off the fetters of credulous superstition; we no longer stand opposed to all nature as something strange, something that has been born higher but that has fallen lower; we rather belong to nature, and we cast back upon it the light of grace that fell into our human heart. By carrying on the Pauline thought, Origenes here liberated science and at the same time pushed back the bolt that shut the heart to true, direct religion.

Such was the Hellenic theology that was vanquished in the struggle. *

THE “NORTH“

If we proceed to study the second anti-Roman movement, that movement which I summed up in the one word “North,” we shall immediately observe that it sprang from a quite different intellectual disposition and had to vindicate itself under entirely different temporal

circumstances. In Hellenism Rome had contended against a culture higher and older than its own; here, on the other hand, it was a question first and foremost not of speculative doctrines, but of a tendency of minds, and the representatives of this tendency were for the most part at a considerably lower stage of culture than the representatives of the Roman idea; it took centuries to remove the difference. Then there was another

* I have already briefly alluded to the fact, and shall discuss it later in this and the ninth chapter, that in the ninth century this theology awoke again to life in the person of the great Scotus Erigena, the real pioneer of a genuinely Christian religion.

91 RELIGION

circumstance to be considered. * While in the former struggle the still embryonic Roman Church had to seek to win the authority of the Emperor for its cause, it now stood as a perfectly organised powerful hierarchy whose absolute authority no one could question without danger to himself. In short, the conflict is different and it is being waged under different conditions. I say “is“ and “is being“, because the struggle between East and West was ended a thousand years ago — Mohammed crushed it out; the schism remained as a cenotaph, but not as a living development, whereas on the other hand the conflict between North and South is still going on and is throwing threatening shadows over our immediate future.

I have already had an opportunity of mentioning, at least in general outline, at the end of the fourth chapter and at the beginning and end of the sixth, wherein this revolt of the North consisted. † Here in consequence I merely require to briefly supplement these remarks.

Let me first of all remark that I have used the expression “North“, because the word “Germanicism“ would not correspond to the phenomenon, or at best would be equivalent to a daring hypothesis. We find everywhere and at all times opponents of the civil and ecclesiastical ideals which were incorporated in Rome; if the movement assumes significance only when it approaches from the North, the reason is that here, in Celtic and Slavonic Germanicism, whole nations thought and felt uniformly, whereas in the chaos of the South it was an accident of birth, when an individual came into the world with

* Naturally the individual from the barbarian North might be an outstanding personality, and the citizen of the Empire was certainly in most cases a very rude, uncultured individual; but culture is a collective term — we saw that especially in the case of Greece (vol. i. [p. 34](#)) — and so one can unquestionably assert that in Germanic countries a real culture scarcely began to show itself before the thirteenth century.

† See vol. i. pp. [325](#), [511 f.](#), [554 f.](#)

the love of freedom and spiritual religion in his heart. But that which one might call “Protestant“ sentiment has existed since earliest times: is this not the atmosphere that the Gospel histories breathe in every line? Is it possible to imagine that apostle of freedom, the writer of the *Epistle to the Galatians*, with his head bowed, because a *Pontifex maximus* on his curial chair has proclaimed some dogmatic decree? Do we not read in that rightly famous letter — belonging to the earliest Christian times — of the anonymous writer to Diognetus, that “invisible is the religion of the Christians?“ * Renan says: “*Les Chrétiens primitifs sont les moins superstitieux des hommes ... chez eux, pas d'amulettes, pas d'images saintes, pas d'objet de culte.*“ † Hand in hand with this goes a great religious freedom. In the second century Celsus testifies that the Christians varied very much in their interpretations and theories, all united only by the one confession: “through Jesus Christ the world is crucified for me and I for the world!“ ‡ Religion as spiritually profound as possible, its outward manifestation absolutely simple, freedom of individual faith — such is the character of early Christianity, it is not a later transfiguration invented by the Germanic races. This freedom was so great that even in the East, where Rome had always been predominant, every country, indeed frequently every city with its congregation, for centuries possessed its own confession. § We men of the North were far too practically and secularly inclined, too much occupied with civil organisation and commercial interests and sciences ever to go back to that absolutely genuine Protestantism of the pre-Roman period. More-

* § 6.

† *Origines du Christianisme*, 7th ed. vii, 629.

‡ Cf. Origenes: *Against Celsus*, v. 64.

§ Cf. Harnack: *Das apostolische Glaubensbekenntnis*, 27th ed. p. 9. The differences are not important. The present so-called “apostolic symbolism“ came into use only in the ninth century.

over these early Christians were more fortunate than we: the shadow of the theocratically transformed Roman imperial idea had not yet fallen upon them. It was, however, a fatal feature of the northern movement that it always had to make itself felt as a reaction — that it had to tear down before it could think of building up. But this very negative character permits us to unite an almost inestimable mass of

heterogeneous historical facts under one single term, viz., the Revolt against Rome. From the opposition of Vigilantius, in the fourth century, against the scandal of monachism which was threatening the prosperity of the nations, to Bismarck's conflict with the Jesuits, there is a trait of relationship uniting all these movements; for, however different the impulse may be which drives them to revolt, Rome itself represents so uniform, so persistently logical and so strongly established an idea, that all opposition to it receives a peculiar and to a certain extent similar colouring.

In order therefore to be clear we must hold fast to this idea of a Revolt against Rome. But inside it we must note an important difference. Under the uniform exterior the idea "Rome" conceals two fundamentally different tendencies: the one flows from a Christian source, the other from a heathen; the one aims at an ecclesiastical, the other at a political ideal. Rome is, as Byron says, "an hermaphrodite of empire." * Here again the unfortunate discord that we encounter in Christianity at every step! And in fact not only do two ideals — a political and an ecclesiastical — stand side by side, but the political ideal of Rome, Jewish-heathen in foundation and structure, contains a social dream so magnificent that it has at all times captivated even the greatest minds; whereas the religious ideal, permeated though it may be by the presence of Christ

* *The Deformed Transformed* i. 2.

94 RELIGION

(so that many a sublime soul sees only Christ in this Church), has introduced into Christianity and brought to perfection there, conceptions and doctrines which are directly anti-Christian. Many a man of sound judgment has therefore thought the political ideal of Rome more religious than its ecclesiastical one. If then the revolt against Rome received a certain uniformity by the fact that the fundamental principle of Rome in both spheres (the political and the religious) is absolute despotism, so that every contradiction means sedition, then we can easily comprehend that in reality the reasons of revolt were very different in the case of different men. Thus the Germanic Princes of the earlier age accepted without question the religious doctrine, just as Rome preached it, but they at the same time stood up for their own political rights in opposition to the ideal that lay at the root of all Roman religion — that political ideal with its splendid dream of a "city of God" upon earth — and it was only in the greatest extremity that they abandoned a few of their national claims; on the other hand, the Byzantine Emperor Leo, although there was no attempt to threaten his political rights, was moved by purely religious and Christian conviction when, in order to stem the inflowing

tide of heathen superstition, he opposed the worship of images and so came into conflict with Rome. * But how complicated

* Read in Bishop Hefele's *Konziliengeschichte*, vol. iii, the detailed and aggressively partial account of the dispute about images; it will be seen that Leo the Isaurian and his advisers simply attempted to stop the rapid decline of religious consciousness through the introduction of superstitious un-Christian customs. It is not a dogmatic quarrel, nor is there any political interest at stake; on the contrary, by his courageous conduct the Emperor incites against himself the whole people, led by a countless army of ignorant monks, and Hefele's explanation that the Emperor lacked aesthetic feeling is too childishly simple to deserve refutation. On the other hand, it is becoming clearer and clearer that he was right in his assertion that image-worship meant a step back into heathendom. In Asia Minor at the present day the archaeologists trace from place to place the transformation of the former gods into members of the Christian

95 RELIGION

are these two examples when we contemplate them carefully! For those Germanic princes, though questioning the secular claims of the Pope and the ecclesiastical conception of the *Civitas Dei*, used the Papal authority as often as it was to their advantage; and on the other hand such men as Vigilantius and Leo the Isaurian, who

Pantheon, who remained as before local Gods to whom pilgrimages were, and still are, made. Thus, for example, the giant-slaying Athena of Seleucia became a "Saint Thela of Seleucia"; the altars of the virgin Artemis were only renamed altars of the "virgin mother of God"; the God of Colossus was henceforth regarded as the Archangel Michael... for the populations the difference was scarcely noticeable (see Ramsay: *The Church in the Roman Empire*, p. 466 f.). The whole worship of images was connected with these primeval popular and absolutely un-Christian and anti-Christian superstitions; the Church could introduce as many *distinguishos* as it liked, the image remained, like the stone at Mecca, an object endowed with magic powers. In view of such facts which have kept the belief in local miracle-working divinities alive in the present day not only in Asia Minor but in all Europe (wherever we find Romish influence) (cf. Renan: *Marc-Aurèle*, chap. xxxiv), the "arguments" for image-worship, which Gregory II. brings forward in his letters to Leo, seem exceedingly comical. There are two especially which he expects to have decisive weight. The fact that the woman healed by Christ (*Matth.* ix. 20) erected on the spot where she was healed an image of Christ, and God, far from being angry, caused a healing plant hitherto unknown to grow up at the foot of the image! That is the first proof, the second is still finer. Abgar, Prince of Odessa, a contemporary of the Saviour, is said to have sent a letter to Christ, and the latter in thanking him sent him his portrait!! (Hefele, pp. 383, 395.)

It is very noteworthy, and in judging the Roman standpoint very instructive, for us to know that the Pope reproaches the Emperor (see p. 400) with having robbed men of images and given them instead "foolish speeches and musical farces." That means that Leo, like Charlemagne a few years later, had reintroduced the sermon into the Church and provided music to elevate the minds. Both of these seemed to the Roman monk as superfluous as image-worship was indispensable. If we remember that Germanicia, the home of Leo, on the borders of Isauria, was one of those veteran colonies planted by the late Emperors (Mommsen: *Roman History*, 3rd ed. v. 310), if we remember that

numerous Teutons served in the army, and that, further, Leo was a son of the people, who had so distinguished himself from the genuine sons of Asia Minor, not by his culture but by his character, as to actually hate what they loved, then we may well begin to ask whether this attack upon Roman heathen materialism, although springing up in the South, was not in reality a product of northern soil? Many a hypothesis rests on a weaker foundation.

96 RELIGION

from purely religious interests attacked things which they looked upon as a scandal to Christianity, fell likewise into a grave inconsistency, in that they did not question the authority of Rome in principle and so logically submitted to it. The more closely we investigate the matter the greater becomes the confusion which is only indicated here. Any competent scholar who should devote himself to the exposition of this one subject — the revolt against Rome (from about the ninth to the nineteenth century) — would reveal the remarkable results that Rome has had the whole world against it, and is indebted for its incomparable power solely to the impelling force of a relentlessly logical idea. No one ever proceeded logically against Rome; Rome was always recklessly logical in its own cause. Thereby it overcame not only open resistance but also the numerous attempts from within to force it into other directions. Not only did Leo the Isaurian fail, who attacked it from without, the holy Francis of Assisi failed just as signally in his endeavour to reform the *ecclesia carnalis*, as he called it, from within; * that fiery apostolic spirit, Arnold of Brescia, failed to realise his fond hope of separating the Church from its secular aims; the Romans failed in their repeated and desperate revolts against the tyranny of the Popes; Abelard — a fanatic for the Roman religious ideal — failed in his endeavour to unite to it more rational and higher thought; Abelard's opponent, Bernhard, the reformer of monkdom, who desired to force upon the Pope and the whole Church his mystical conception of religion and would gladly have forcibly closed the mouths of “the incomparable doctors of reason,” as he called them in mockery, failed to do so; the pious abbot Joachim failed in his struggle against

* It has lately been proved and should be kept in mind that the intellectual development of this remarkable man was most probably under the direct influence of the Waldensians. (Cf. Thode: *Franz von Assisi*, 1885, p. 31 f.)

97 RELIGION

the “Apotheosis of the Roman Church“ and the “carnal conceptions“ of

the sacraments; Spain, which in spite of its Catholicism refused to adopt the decisions of the Council of Trent, failed; the devout house of Austria and that of Bavaria as well, which as a reward for their characterless submissiveness were still quarrelling in the seventeenth century about the refusal of the cup to the laity and the marriage of priests in their States, failed; * Poland failed in its daring attempts at reformations; † France, in spite of all its persistency, failed in the endeavour to maintain the shadow of a half-independent Gallic Church ... but especially signal was the failure of all those, from Augustine to Jansenius, who tried to introduce into the Roman system the apostolic doctrine of faith and of grace in its perfectly pure form, likewise of all those who, from Dante to Lamennais and Döllinger, demanded the separation of Church and State, and the religious freedom of the individual. All these men and movements — and their number is in all centuries legion — proceeded, I repeat, illogically and inconsistently; for either they wanted to reform the fundamental Roman idea, or they wished to obtain for themselves inside this idea a certain measure of personal or national freedom: both manifestly preposterous ideas. For the fundamental principle of Rome (not only since 1870 but since all time) is its divine origin and consequent infallibility; as opposed to it freedom of opinion can only be sinful obstinacy; and in regard to the question of reform, we must point to the fact that the Roman idea, however complicated it appears on closer inspection, is nevertheless an organic product, resting on the firm foundations of a history of several thousand years and further built up under careful consideration of the character and religious

* For this and the former assertion compare the episcopally approved edition of the *Concilii Tridentini canones et decreta* by Canon Smets, with an historical introduction, 1854, p. xxiii.

† See vol. i. [p. 515.](#)

98 RELIGION

needs of all those men who in any way belong to the chaos of races — and we know how far the sphere of the latter extends. * How could a man of Dante's intellectual acumen regard himself as an orthodox Roman Catholic and yet demand the separation of secular and ecclesiastical power, as well as the subordination of the latter to the former? Rome is, in fact, the heir of the highest secular power; it is only as its agents that the Princes wield the sword, and Boniface VIII. astonished the world only by his frankness, not by the novelty of his standpoint, when he exclaimed: *“Ego sum Caesar! ego sum Imperator!”* Let Rome relinquish this claim (no matter how theoretical it might be as regards actual facts), it would have meant putting the knife to its own throat. One must never

forget that the Church derives all its authority from the supposition that it is the representative of God; as Antonio Perez with real Spanish humour says: “*El Dios del cielo es delicado mucho en sufrir compañero in ninguna cosa*“ (The God of Heaven is much too jealous to endure a rival in anything). † And in this connection we should not overlook the fact that all the claims of Rome, religious as well as political, are historical; its apostolic episcopate too, is derived from divine appointment — not from any mental superiority. ‡ If Rome were at any point to surrender its flawless historical con-

* Cf. vol. i, pp. [287](#) and [328](#).

† Quoted by Humboldt in a letter to Varnhagen von Ense on September 26, 1845.

‡ Towards Peter, Christ used words such as he uttered to no other apostle: “Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me; for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men“ (*Matth.* xvi, 23). And not only his threefold denial of Christ but also his conduct in Antioch which Paul denounced as “hypocrisy“ (*Gal.* ii, 13) prove to us that Peter was a violent but weak character. Supposing that he did actually receive the primacy, it was not for his service or to secure the natural preponderance of his pre-eminent greatness, but in consequence of an appointment pleasing to God and ratified by history.

99 RELIGION

tinuity, the whole structure could not fail to fall to pieces; and in fact the most dangerous point would be the point of connection with the supremacy of the Roman secular Imperium, henceforth extended to a divine Imperium; for the purely religious institution is so forced that even Augustine questioned it, * whereas the actual Empire is one of the most massive and fundamental facts of history, and the conception of it as of “divine origin“ (and therefore absolute) goes farther back and is more deeply rooted than any evangelical tradition or doctrine. Now none of the Protestants mentioned above — for they and not those who left the Roman Church deserve this negative characterisation — exercised lasting influence; within this firmly jointed frame it was impossible. If we take up detailed Church histories, we are astonished at the great number of pre-eminent Catholic men, who devoted their whole life to the spiritualising of religion, the struggle against materialisation, the spread of Augustinian doctrines and the abolition of priestly misconduct, &c.; but their efforts left not a trace behind. And in order to have a lasting influence in this Church, important personalities had either, like Augustine, to contradict themselves, or, like Thomas Aquinas, to grasp the specifically Roman idea by the roots and resolutely from youth up to remodel their own individuality according to it. The only other solution was complete emancipation. Whoever exclaimed with Martin Luther: “It is all over with the Roman stool“ † — gave up the hopeless inconsistent

struggle, in which first of all the Hellenic East and then the whole North, as far as it continued it, were vanquished and broken: and yet it was he and he only who made national regeneration possible, since he who rebels against Rome at the same time throws off the yoke of the Imperial idea.

* See p. [74](#).

† Missive of the year 1520 to Pope Leo X.

100 RELIGION

In the period with which we are here occupied matters did not go so far — except in the case of the Waldensian movement. The struggle between North and South was and remained unequal, and was carried on within what was regarded as the authoritative Church. There were countless sects, but mostly purely theological ones; Arianism could have provided a specifically Germanic Christianity, but the adherents of this faith lacked the cultural equipment needed to be vigorous in propaganda, or to be able to vindicate their standpoint; on the one hand the hapless Waldensians, although Rome on several occasions caused them all to be massacred (the last being in the year 1685) — so far as it could lay hands on them — have maintained themselves to the present day and now possess a Church of their own in Rome itself: a proof that whoever is just as consistent as Rome, endures, no matter how weak he may be.

Hitherto I have been compelled to sketch this struggle without regard to proper sequence, because of the disjointed efforts and inconsistency of the men of the North as opposed to their uniform foe. Moreover, I have confined myself to mere indications; facts are like gnats: as soon as a light is struck, they fly in thousands in through the windows. Hence, to complete what has been indicated regarding the struggle between North and South I shall take two men as examples: a practical politician and an ideal politician, both zealous theologians in their leisure hours and enthusiastic sons of the Roman Church at all times; I refer to Charlemagne and Dante. *

* Dante was born in 1265, in the century that forms the great turning-point; apart from this formal justification for naming him here, there is a further one in the fact that the eye of this great poet looked back as well as forward. Dante is at least just as much an end as a beginning. If a new age begins with him, that is not least of all explained by the fact that he has closed an old one: especially as regards his attitude on the relation between Church and State he is quite biased by the views and visions of the age of Charlemagne and of the Ottos, and really remains blind to the great political reformation of Europe which manifests itself so stormily around him.

101 RELIGION

CHARLEMAGNE

If ever a man had acquired a right to exercise influence upon Rome, it was Charlemagne; he could have destroyed the Papacy, he saved it and enthroned it for a thousand years; he, as no one before or after him, would have had the power to separate the Germans at least definitely from Rome; he on the contrary did what the Empire at its period of greatest splendour had not been able to do — incorporated them, all and sundry, in the “Holy“ and “Roman“ Empire. This so fatally enthusiastic admirer of Rome was nevertheless a good German, and nothing lay nearer his heart than reforming from top to bottom, and freeing from the clutches of heathenism this Church which he so passionately prized as an ideal. He writes pretty blunt letters to the Pope, in which he wars against everything possible and calls ecclesiastically recognised councils *ineptissimae synodi*; and not content with criticising the apostolic stool, his care extends so far as to inquire how many concubines the country priests maintain! He takes heed above all that the priests or at least the bishops should once more become acquainted with the Holy Writ, which under the influence of Rome had become almost forgotten; he sees carefully to it that the sermon is reintroduced and in such a way that “the people can understand it“; he forbids the priests to sell the consecrated oil as a charm; he ordains that in his empire no new saints shall be invoked, &c. In short, Charlemagne proves himself a Germanic prince in two ways: in the first place, he and not the bishop, not even the Bishop of Rome, is master in his Church; secondly, he aims at that spirituality of religion which is peculiar to the Indo-European. That manifests itself most clearly in the quarrel about image-worship. In the famous *libri Carolini*, addressed to the Pope, Charlemagne

102 RELIGION

indeed condemns iconoclasm, but also iconolatry. He expresses the view that it is permissible and good to have images as ornaments and memorials, but they are a matter of absolute indifference, and in no case should they be honoured, much less worshipped. In this he opposed the doctrine and practice of the Roman Church, and that with perfect consciousness, by expressly rejecting the decisions of the synods and the authority of the Church Fathers. An attempt has been made and still is made in the most modern Church histories to represent the matter as a misunderstanding: that the Greek word *proskynesis* was falsely translated by *adoratio*, and that Charlemagne was thus misled, &c. But the important point is not the fine distinction between *adorare*, *venerari*,

colere, &c., which still plays such a large part in theory and so small a one in practice; it is a case of two views being opposed to each other: Pope Gregory II. had taught the doctrine that certain images work miracles; * Charlemagne, on the other hand, asserts that all images possess only artistic worth, being in themselves of no account; the opposite assertion is blasphemous idolatry. The seventh general synod of Nicaea had ordained in the year 787 at its seventh sitting, that “candles and incense should be dedicated to the worship of images and other sacred utensils”; Charlemagne answers literally: “It is foolish to burn incense and candles in front of images.” † And so the matter stands to-day. Gregory I. (about the year 600) had expressly ordered the missionaries to leave the heathen local gods, the miracle-working springs, and such things untouched, and be satisfied with merely giving them a Christian name; ‡

* Cf. p. [94 note](#).

† See the documentary account in Hefele's *Konziliengeschichte*, iii. 472 and 708. It requires audacity to attempt to persuade us laymen that we have to do with an innocent misunderstanding; here, on the contrary, two different views of life, two different races are opposed to each other.

‡ *Gregorii papae Epistularum* xi, 71 (from Renan).

103 RELIGION

his advice is still followed at the close of the nineteenth century; even to-day noble Catholic prelates contend desperately but without success against the heathenism systematically nurtured by Rome. * In every Roman “church of pilgrimage” there are particular images, particular statues, in fact, special works of art, which have assigned to them a generally quite definite, limited influence; or it is a fountain which springs up at the spot where the mother of God had appeared, &c.: this is primeval fetishism, which had never died out among the people but had been already quite abandoned by Europeans in the age of Homer. This fetishism has been newly strengthened and nurtured by Rome — perhaps rightly, perhaps because it felt that there was here a true motive power capable of being idealised, something which those men who have not yet “entered the daylight of life” cannot do without — and Charlemagne opposed it. The contradiction is manifest.

Now what has Charlemagne achieved in his struggle against Rome? Momentarily a good deal, but nothing permanent. Rome obeyed where it had to, resisted where it could, and quietly pursued its way, as soon as the powerful voice became silent for ever. †

* One proof only from among the great number: in the year 1825 the Archbishop of Cologne, Graf Spiegel zum Desenberg, testifies that in his archbishopric “the real

religion of Jesus has become gross image-worship“ (*Letters to Bunsen*, 1897, page 76). What would the right reverend gentleman say to-day?

† A thousand years after Charlemagne the sale of the “holy oil“ as a domestic charm was vigorously pursued; thus, for example, a newspaper published by Abt in Munich, *Der Armen-Seelen Freund, Monatsschrift zum Troste der leidenden Seelen im Fegfeuer*, in the 4th number of 1898, advertises “holy oil from the lamp of Mr. Dupont in Tours at 4d. per bottle! This oil is praised as particularly efficacious for inflammations!“ (The editor of this paper is a Catholic city priest; the magazine is under episcopal censure. The high nobility are said to be Mr. Dupont's best customers.)

104 RELIGION

DANTE

Dante achieved less than nothing, if that be possible. His ideas of reform went further and of him his most modern and praiseworthy Roman Catholic biographer says: “Dante did not after the manner of the heretic aim at or hope for a reform against the Church but through the Church: he is a Catholic, not a heretical or schismatic reformer.“ * But for this very reason he has exercised upon the Church — in spite of his mighty genius — not the slightest influence, either in life or in death. “Catholic Reformer“ is a *contradictio in adjecto*, for the movement of the Roman Church can only consist, as it has actually consisted, in making its principles clearer, more logical and more unrelenting and in putting them into practice as such. I should like to know what curse of excommunication would be hurled at the man who, as a Catholic, would to-day venture to address the followers of Christ upon earth in the following words:

E che altro è da voi all' idolatre,
Se non ch' egli uno, e voi n'orate cento? †
and who, after branding and scorning the Roman priesthood as an un-Christian “unevangelical brood,“ continued:

Di questo ingrassa il porco, sant' Antonio,
Ed altri assai, che son peggio che porci,
Pagando di moneta senza conio. ‡

* Kraus: *Dante*, (1897), p. 736.

† *Inferno*, canto xix. “What then distinguishes you from an idolator except that he worships one and you a hundred idols?“

‡ *Paradiso*, canto xxix.: “From the gains (of the depicted misleading of the 'stupid people') the holy Antonius feeds his swine, and many others do likewise, who are worse than swine and pay with unstamped coin [indulgences].“ The Italians never seem to have had any particular admiration for their Roman priests. Boccaccio also calls them “swine which flee to where they can eat without working“ (*Decamerone* iii. 3).

105 RELIGION

The very fact that no one would venture to-day to use such language shows us how completely all those northern men, * who had dreamt of a reform “not against the Church but through the Church,” have been vanquished. † Also the emphasis Dante lays on faith as opposed to works,

La fé, senza la qual ben far non basta
(see, for example, *Purgatorio*, xxii, &c.), would scarcely be allowed to-day. But what I should like particularly to call attention to here is the fact that Dante's views on the purely spiritual office of the Church — which is subordinate to the secular power — have been doubly anathematised by paragraphs 75 and 76 of the Syllabus of the Year 1864. And this is perfectly logical, since, as I have shown above, the power of Rome lies in its consistency and especially in the fact that it under no circumstances gives up its temporal claims. It is a poor, short-sighted orthodoxy which tries to whitewash Dante to-day, instead of openly admitting that he belongs to the most dangerous class of genuine protestors. For Dante went further than Charlemagne. The latter had had in his mind a kind of Caesaric papacy, in which he, the Emperor, like Constantine and Theodosius, should possess the double power in contrast to the Papal Caesarism, which the Roman *pontifex maximus* aimed at; he did not therefore go beyond the genuine Roman idea of universal empire. Dante, on the other hand, demanded the complete separation of Church and State; but that would be the ruin of Rome, as the Popes have understood better than Dante and his latest biographer. Dante reproaches Constantine as being the author of all evil, because he had founded the ecclesiastical State.

* See vol. i. [p. 538 note.](#)

† Dante would have shared the same fate as those “Church Fathers and saints” of whom Balzac in *Louis Lambert* writes: “To-day the Church would brand them as heretics and atheists.”

106 RELIGION

Ahi, Constantin! di quanto mal fu matre,
Non la tua conversion, ma quella dote
Che da te prese il primo ricco patre! *

And according to him Constantine deserves double blame, first because he led the Church astray, secondly because he weakened his own Empire. In verse 55 of the twentieth canto of the *Paradiso*, he says that Constantine “destroyed the world,” by giving power to the Church. And if we trace this idea in Dante's work *De Monarchia*, it is clear that we have here to deal with an absolutely heathen-historical doctrine — the

conception that universal power is the legitimate legacy of the Roman Empire! † How is it possible to approach so close to the fundamental idea of Rome's ecclesiastical power and yet not grasp it? For it is the Church itself that inherits that world-power. It was only by its taking possession of it that the *Civitas Dei* came into being. Long ago Augustine had proved with a logic which we should have liked Dante and his apologists to have possessed, that the power of the State was based upon the power of sin; henceforth, since by Christ's death the power of sin was broken, the State must submit to the Church; in other words, the Church stood at the head of the civic government. The Pope is, according to the orthodox doctrine, the representative of God, *vicarius Dei in terris*; ‡ if he were merely the “representative of Christ” or the “successor of Peter,” his function could be regarded as exclusively the care of souls, for Christ said: “My Kingdom is not of this world”; but who would presume

* *Inferno* xix.: “O Constantine! How much evil has been caused not by your conversion but by the gift which the first rich father (= Pope) received from you.”

† *De Monarchia*, the whole of the second book. But see especially chap. iii., in which the “divine predestination” of the Roman people as the world-ruling power is derived not from interpretations of Old Testament prophets or from the appointment of Peter but proved from the genealogical tree of Aeneas and Creusa! Race and not religion is the decisive thing for Dante!

‡ *Concilium Tridentinum, decretum de reformatione*, chap. i.

107 RELIGION

to exercise authority over the representative on earth of the almighty Godhead? Who dare deny that the Temporal is just as much subject to God as the Eternal? Who would venture in any sphere to refuse to recognise his supremacy? Though, therefore, in theological matters of faith, Dante may have been a strictly orthodox Catholic, who did not doubt the “infallible preceptorship of the Church” * — such dogmatic agreement is of little importance, the important thing is to know what a man, by the whole tendency of his nature, is and must be, wills and must will; and this impelled Dante to attack in passionate words not only the inviolable person of the *Pontifex maximus* and almost continuously to scourge all the servants of the Church, but to undermine the foundations of the Roman religion.

This attack, too, was hurled back from the mighty walls of Rome, upon which it left not a single trace.

* Kraus, p. 703 f., seems to successfully establish his thesis, but to have no idea how little such formal orthodoxy means and how dangerous his own standpoint is for the Roman Church. Moreover I cannot help calling attention to the fact that Dante's famous confession of faith at the end of the 24th canto of the *Paradiso* is really grievously abstract. Kraus regards as final proof of Dante's orthodoxy a Credo, which does not

mention the name of Jesus Christ! What, on the contrary, has struck me is that Dante does not go beyond general mythology. And if I review in my memory a series of other utterances, I get the impression that Dante (like many other of his contemporaries) can hardly be called a Christian at all. The great cosmic God in Heaven and the Roman Church on earth: everything intellectual and political, or moral and abstract. There is an infinite longing for religion, but religion itself, that Heaven which does not come with outward signs, had been stolen from the great and noble man in his cradle. Dante's poetical greatness lies not least of all in the fearful tragedy of the thirteenth century, the century of Innocent III. and Thomas Aquinas! His hope is content with the *luce intellettuale* (*Paradiso xxx*), and his true guide is not Beatrice nor the holy Bernhard, but the author of the *Summa theologiae*, who sought to illuminate with the pure light of reason and to idealise the almost un-Christianised Christendom and the night of that age which hated all knowledge and beauty. Thomas Aquinas signifies the nationalistic supplement of a materialistic religion; Dante threw himself into his arms. (See the interesting book — which in truth is written in support of quite a different thesis — of the English Catholic, E. G. Gardner, *Dante's Ten Heavens*, 1898.)

108 RELIGION

I have intentionally emphasised the struggle between North and South only as it manifested itself inside the Church of Rome, and that not merely because I have already had occasion to speak of other manifestations, or because in point of time and historical sequence they belong only to the next epoch of culture, but because I think that this side of the matter is usually neglected, and that it is of great significance for the comprehension of the present age. The Reformation strengthened the Catholic Church at a later time; for it effected the elimination of elements that could not be assimilated, elements which, in the persons of submissive and yet rebellious sons — like Charlemagne and Dante — were much more dangerous than if they had been enemies, inasmuch as they inwardly hindered the logical development of the Roman ideal while outwardly they could further it little or nothing. A Charlemagne with Dante as his Chancellor would have wrecked the Roman Church; but a Luther has made the Church so clear concerning itself that the Council of Trent has meant for it the dawn of a new day.

RELIGIOUS INSTINCTS OF RACE

I need not return to the question of race-differences, although they are at the bottom of this struggle between North and South; what is evident does not require proof. But I shall not break off this short discussion of the northern power in the Christian religious struggle and pass to “Rome,” without first begging the reader to take up some good history, *e.g.*, the first volume of Lamprecht's *Deutsche Geschichte*; * careful study will convince him how deeply rooted in the Germanic character are

certain fundamental convictions; at the same time he will discover that though

* *Geschichte der deutschen Sprache*, 2nd ed. pp. iv. and 550.

109 RELIGION

Jacob Grimm may be right in his assertion that “Germanic strength decided the victory of Christianity,” this Christianity is essentially and from the first different from that of the Chaos. It is a question, as it were, of brain convolutions: * whatever is put in must bend and yield according to their shapes. Just as a boat, entrusted to the apparently uniform element of the ocean, will be driven very different ways, according as the one current or the other seizes it, so the same ideas in different heads travel in widely different ways and reach regions that have very little in common. How infinitely important, for example, is the old Germanic belief in a “universal, unchangeable, predestined and predestining fate!” † Even in this one “brain convolution,” which is common to all Indo-Europeans, lies — perhaps along with much superstition — the guarantee of a rich intellectual development in entirely different directions and upon clearly defined paths. In the direction of idealism faith in destiny will with the necessity of nature lead to a religion of grace, in the direction of empiricism to strictly inductive science. For strictly empiric science is not, as is often asserted, a born enemy of religion, still less of the doctrine of Christ; it would have harmonised excellently, as we have seen, with Origenes, and in the ninth chapter I shall show that mechanism and idealism are sisters; but science cannot exist without the idea of flawless necessity, and hence, as even a Renan must admit, “all Semitic monotheism is essentially opposed to physical science.” ‡ Like Judaism, Christianity developed under Roman influence postulates as its fundamental dogma absolute creative arbitrariness; hence the antagonism and never-ending struggle between Church and science; it was non-existent among the Indians; it has been artificially forced

* Cf. vol. i. [p. 481.](#)

† 2nd ed. i. 191. Cf. my remarks in vol. i. chap. iii. [p. 239.](#)

‡ *Origines du Christianisme*, vii. 628.

110 RELIGION

upon the Germanic races. * Just as important is the fact that for the old

Teutons — in the same way as for the Indians and Greeks — moral speculation did not narrow off into a question of good and bad. † Out of this with the same inevitableness the religion of faith in contrast to the religion of works was bound to develop, *i.e.*, idealism in contrast to materialism, inner moral conversion in contrast to Semitic sanctity of law and Roman sale of indulgences. Here we have moreover an excellent example of the importance of mere direction, that is, of feeling one's way correctly in the intellectual sphere. For never has any man taught the doctrine that life could be good without good works, ‡ and on the other hand it is the unexpressed assumption of Judaism and a religious law of the followers of Rome, that good works without faith avail not: in itself therefore each view is noble and moral; but according as the one or the other is emphasised, we place the essence of religion in the spiritual conversion of the man, his disposition, his whole manner of thinking and feeling, or on the other hand in outward observances, redemption outwardly brought about, reckoning up of good and evil deeds and the calculation of morality after the manner of a profit

* See vol. i. [p. 431](#).

† Lamprecht, p. 193. Lamprecht himself, like most of our contemporaries, has no idea of the meaning of this phenomenon (which I discuss fully in the ninth chapter). He is of the opinion that “moral individualism was still slumbering.”

‡ It is incredible that even at the present day in scientific Roman works it is still taught (see, for example, Brück: *Lehrbuch der Kirchengeschichte*, 6th ed. p. 586) that Luther preached that whoever believed could sin as he pleased. The following quotation may suffice to refute such criminal stupidity: “As now the trees must be before the fruits, and the fruits do not make the trees good or bad, but the trees make the fruits, so too the man must be good or bad in person, before he does good or bad works. And his works do not make him good or bad, but he does good or bad works. We see the same in all handiwork: a good or bad house does not make a good or bad carpenter; but a good or bad carpenter makes a good or bad house; no work makes a master according as the work is, but as the master is, so is his work.” (*Von der Freiheit eines Christenmenschen*).

111 RELIGION

and loss account. * Such things are scarcely less remarkable than the fact that it was impossible to bring home to the Teutons the idea “devil”; Walfila rendered Mammon as *Viehgedräng* (crowd of cattle), but he had to leave Satan and Beelzebub untranslated. † Happy beings! And how suggestive that is, when one remembers the Jewish religion of terror and Loyola the Basque's constant references to devil and hell! ‡ Other things again are of purely historical interest, as for example the fact that the Teutons possessed no professional priesthood, that in consequence theocracy was strange to them, a circumstance which, as Wietersheim shows, has much facilitated the introduction of Roman Christianity. §

* Among the Israelites even in ancient times “the whole idea of right and wrong was reduced to a money standard“ (Robertson Smith: *Prophets of Israel*, p. 105), so that Hosea had to complain: “They eat up the sin of my people, and they set their heart on their iniquity“ (iv, 8). I remember once in Italy threatening a man who broke his word with the qualms of his own conscience: “Ah what! good sir,“ he said, “that was only a minor lie; seven years in purgatory and ten soldi is all it will cost me!“ Thinking that he was making a fool of me, the next time that two Franciscan monks knocked at my door I asked the reverend gentlemen how Heaven punishes a “minor“ lie, and their immediate answer was, “Seven years in purgatory! But you are a benefactor of Assisi, much will be forgiven you.“ It is interesting to note that the West Goths already in the sixth century fight against the “irregularity in the system of penitence, so that one sins as one likes and is always demanding reconciliation from the priest“ (Hefele, iii. 51): these are again symptoms of the struggle of the Teutons against a religion spiritually alien. One finds in Gibbon's *Roman Empire*, chap. lviii., details of the tariff of indulgences for money or scourgings shortly before the first Crusade.

† Lamprecht, p. 359.

‡ See vol. i. pp. [222](#) and [569](#). This *timor servilis* remained henceforth the foundation of all religion in Loyola's order. Very interesting in this connection is a letter of a Canadian Jesuit (published in Parkman's *The Jesuits in North America*, p. 148) who is ordering pictures for his congregation: one Christ, one *âme bienheureuse*, several holy virgins, a whole selection of condemned souls! One is here reminded of the anecdote told by Tylor (*Beginnings of Culture*, ii. 337). A missionary disputing with an Indian chief said to him: “My God is good, but he punishes the godless“; to which the Indian replied: “My God is also good, but he punishes no one, being content with doing good to all.“

§ *Völkerwanderung*, 2nd ed. ii. 55.

112 RELIGION

But I shall leave these inquiries concerning natural religious tendencies to the reader, in order that I may have the necessary space left to bring forward some facts concerning the third great force in the struggle, as a supplement to what has already been indicated in connection with the discussion of East and North.

ROME

The power of Rome lay in the continuance of the imperial idea, indeed, originally in the actual continuance of the imperial power. It was a heathen Emperor, as we have seen ([p. 46](#)), who first settled a quarrel between Christians by proclaiming the voice of the Roman bishop decisive, and the true founder of Roman Christianity as a world-power is not a Pope, Church Father, or concilium, but the Emperor Theodosius. It was Theodosius who on his own authority, by his edict of January 10, 381, did away with all sects except the one which he had elevated to the dignity of a State religion, and confiscated all churches in favour of Rome; it was he who founded the office of “Imperial inquisitor“ and punished with death every deviation from the orthodoxy which he

recommended. But the whole conception of Theodosius was “imperial,” not religious or apostolic: this is sufficiently clear from the fact that heterodoxy or heathenism was characterised juristically as high treason. * We cannot understand the full significance of this until we look back and find that two centuries earlier even so fiery a mind as Tertullian had demanded universal tolerance, because he was of the opinion that each one should worship God according to his own conviction, and that one religion cannot injure the other. It becomes further

* I mention Theodosius because he possessed the power as well as the will, but it was his predecessor Gratian who first established the idea of “orthodoxy,” and that too as a purely civil matter; any one who was not orthodox lost his right of citizenship.

113 RELIGION

clear when we see that 150 years before Theodosius, Clemens of Alexandria used the Greek word *hairesis* in the old sense, namely, to denote a particular school in contrast to other schools, no blame being expressed in the word. * To view heresy as a crime is, one can see, a legacy of the Roman Imperial system; the idea first occurred when the Emperors had become Christians, and it rests, I repeat, not upon religious assumptions, but upon the notion that it is high treason to hold a different creed from the Emperor. This respect for the Emperor was afterwards inherited by the *Pontifex maximus*.

In the second chapter, to which I refer the reader, I have discussed in detail the power of the genuine Roman idea of State as the history of that incomparable people that disappeared but too soon represents it, and also the revolutionary modifications which practically transformed this idea into its opposite, as soon as its creator, the Roman people, no longer existed. † The world was accustomed to receive laws from Rome, and from Rome alone; it was so used to this that even the separated Byzantine Empire still called itself “Roman.” Rome and ruling had become synonymous expressions. We must not forget that to the men of the Chaos, Rome was the one thing that held them together, the one idea of organisation, the only talisman against the influx of the Barbarians. The world is not ruled by interests alone (as modern historians are apt to teach), but above all by ideas, even when these ideas have become nothing but words; and thus we see Rome, even when bereft of its Emperor, retain a prestige such as no other city in Europe possessed. From time immemorial Rome had been called by the Romans “the holy city”: that we still call it so is no Christian custom, but a heathen legacy;

* Tertullian: *Ad Scapulum*, 2; Clemens: *Stromata*, 7, 15 (both quoted from Hatch, p. 329).

† See particularly vol. i. [p. 121 f.](#)

for to the old Romans, as we have shown at an earlier point (vol. i. [p. 110](#)), the one sacred thing in life was the Fatherland and the family. Henceforth there were no Romans; yet Rome remained the holy city. Soon, too, there was no Roman Emperor (except in name), but part of the imperial power had remained, *e.g.*, the *Pontifex maximus*. * Here, too, something had taken place which originally had no connection with the Christian religion. Formerly, in pre-Christian times, the complete subjection of the priesthood to the secular power had been a fundamental principle of the Roman State; the priests had been honoured, but they had not been permitted to exert any influence on public life; only in matters of conscience did they possess jurisdiction, that is, they could impose upon any one who accused himself (confession!) a punishment in expiation of his guilt (penitence!), exclude him from public worship, indeed lay upon him the curse of God (excommunication!). But when the Emperor had united in his own hands all the offices of the Republic, it became more and more the custom to regard the Pontificate as his highest dignity, whereby gradually the idea of *Pontifex* received a significance it had never before possessed. Caesar was of course not a title but only an eponym; *Pontifex maximus*, on the other hand, designated the highest, and from time immemorial the only lifelong, office; as *Pontifex* the Emperor was now “a sacred majesty,” and before this “representative of the divine upon earth” every one had to kneel in worship — a relation in which nothing was changed by the conversion of the Emperors to Christianity. But there is a second consideration. There was — and had been since earliest times — another conception inseparably bound up with this heathen *Pontifex maximus*: though no longer

* We have seen above that this Roman formula dating from primeval heathen times was adopted by the Council of Trent for the Christian Pope.

influential externally he was absolutely supreme within the priesthood; it was the priests who chose him, but in him they selected their dictator for life; he alone nominated the *pontifices*, he alone possessed in all questions of religion the final right of decision. * If now the Emperor had usurped the office of *Pontifex maximus*, so the *Pontifex maximus* at a later age could with still greater right regard himself as *Caesar et Imperator* (see [p. 98](#)), since he had in the meantime actually become the all-uniting

head of Europe.

Such is the stool (the *sella* famous since Numa's time), which the Christian bishop had bequeathed to him in a Rome that had lost its Emperor, such the rich legacy of dignity, influence, privileges, firmly established for 1000 years, which he received. The poor apostle Peter has little merit in the matter. †

Rome possessed therefore, if not culture and national character, at least the immeasurable advantages of firm organisation and old sacred tradition. It is probably impossible to over-estimate the influence of form in human things. Such an apparent trifle, for example, as the laying-on of hands to preserve the material, visible, historical continuity is of such direct influence upon the imagination that it has more weight with the people than the profoundest speculations and the most sacred examples of life. And all this is old Roman discipline,

* These details from Mommsen: *Römisches Staatsrecht*, and from Esmarch: *Römische Rechtsgeschichte*. How great, moreover, the authority of the *Pontifex maximus* was in old Rome is made sufficiently clear by a passage in Cicero (*De Natura Deorum*, lib. iii, chap. ii.), where he says that in all things pertaining to religion he simply referred to the *Pontifex maximus* and was guided by what he said.

† That the Popes actually ascended the Roman Imperial throne and owe to it their claims to power has recently been testified by a Roman Catholic Church historian. Prof. Franz Xavier Kraus writes in the *Wissenschaftliche Beilage zur Münchener Allgemeinen Zeitung* of February 1, 1900, No. 26, p. 5: "Soon after the Caesars had left the palaces of the Palatine, the Popes established themselves firmly there, so as to put themselves unnoticed into the position of Emperor in the eyes of the people."

116 RELIGION

old Roman legacy from the pre-Christian time. The ancient Romans — otherwise poor in invention — had been masters in the dramatic shaping of important symbolical effects; * the modern Romans maintained this tradition. And thus here, and here alone, young Christianity found an already existing form, an already existing tradition, an already practised and experienced statesmanship, on which it could support itself, in which it could crystallise itself into a firm and lasting form. It found not only the idea of statesmanship but also the experienced statesman. Tertullian, for example, who struck the first fatal blow at freely speculative Hellenic Christianity, by introducing Latin into the Church instead of Greek — Latin, in which all metaphysics and mysticism are impossible and which rob the Pauline Epistles of their deep significance — was a lawyer, and started "the tendency of western dogmatics towards juristicism"; he did so by emphasising on the one hand the materially legal motive power in religious conceptions, on the other by introducing ideas with a legal colouring — suited to the practical Latin world — into

the conceptions of God, of the “two substances“ of Christ and the freedom of the human being, who was felt to be in the position of a defendant, as at law. † Side by side with this theoretical activity of practical men there was also great activity in organisation. Ambrosius, for example, the right hand of Theodosius, was a civil official and was made a bishop, before he had been baptised! He himself tells frankly how he was “carried off from the bench,“ because the Emperor wished to employ him elsewhere, namely, in the Church, for the work of organisation, and how he thereby came into the painful position of having to teach others Christianity

* See vol. i. [p. 147.](#)

† Cf. Harnack, p. 103. Concerning the inevitably retarding effect of the Latin tongue upon all speculation and science, see Goethe's remarks in his *Geschichte der Farbenlehre*.

117 RELIGION

before he knew it himself. * It was men like these and not the successors of Peter in Rome, whose names are scarcely known in the first centuries, who laid the foundations of the Roman Church. The influence of the bishops was incalculably enhanced, for example, by the ordinance of Constantine, according to which, in the old Roman legal arrangement of the *receptum arbitrii* (court of arbitration) it was enacted that when the bishop was arbiter, his judgment should be unconditionally final; for the Christians it was in many cases a religious duty to apply to the bishop; henceforth he was even in civil law their supreme judge. † From this same purely civil, and absolutely non-religious source is derived the imposing idea of strictest uniformity in faith and worship. A State must manifestly possess a single, universally valid, logically perfected constitution; the individuals in the State cannot give legal decisions as they please, but must, whether they will or not, be subject to the law; this was all well understood by these Doctors of the Church and legal bishops, and regarded by them as ruling the religious sphere as well. The close connection of the Roman Church with Roman law was visibly expressed by the fact that for centuries the Church stood under the jurisdiction of this law and all priests in all lands were regarded *eo ipso* as Romans and enjoyed the many privileges which were attached to this legal position. ‡ The conversion of the European world to this political and juristical Christianity was not, as is so often asserted, brought about by a divine miracle, but by the commonplace method of compulsion. Even the pious Eusebius (who lived long before Theodosius)

* Cf. the beginning of the *De Officiis Ministrorum*.

† This, too, was not a new Christian invention; even in antiquity there had been in

Rome a *jus pontificium* in contrast to the *jus civile*; but the sound sense of the free Roman people had never permitted it to gain practical influence. (See Mommsen, p. 95.)
‡ Savigny: *Römischen Rechtes im Mittelalter*, vol. i. chap. iii.

118 RELIGION

complained of the “unspeakable hypocrisy and dissimulation of the so-called Christians”; as soon as Christianity became the official religion of the Empire, there was no need for dissembling; men became Christians as they paid their taxes, and they became Roman Christians because they must give to the Emperor what is the Emperor's; religion had become, like the soil, the property of the Emperor.

Christianity as an obligatory world-religion is therefore demonstrably a Roman imperial idea, not a religious one. When the secular Empire declined and disappeared, this idea remained behind; the religion ordained by the Emperors was to supply the cement for the world which had become disjointed; all men were hereby benefited and consequently the more sensible ever gravitated back towards Rome, for there alone was found not merely religious enthusiasm, but a practical organisation, which exercised an untiring activity in all directions, left nothing undone to resist every counter-movement, possessed knowledge of men, diplomatic skill and above all a central unchanging axis — not excluding movement, but guaranteeing security — namely, the absolute Primacy of Rome, that is, of the *Pontifex maximus*. Herein lay first and foremost the strength of Roman Christianity, against the East as well as the North. Then came the further fact that Rome, situated in the geographical centre of the Chaos, and moreover endowed almost exclusively with secular and political gifts, knew exactly the character and the needs of the half-breed population, and was hindered by no deep-rooted national tendencies and conscientious objections from making advances all round — under the one reservation that its supremacy remained unconditionally recognised and maintained. Rome was accordingly not only the one firmly established ecclesiastical power during the first thousand years, but also that which professed the most elasticity.

119 RELIGION

Nothing is more stiff-necked than religious fanaticism; even the noblest religious enthusiasm will not easily accommodate itself to a different view. Now Rome was strict, and cruel if need be, but never really fanatical, at least not in religious things nor in earlier times. The Popes were so tolerant, so anxious to arrange matters, and to make the Church

acceptable to all shades of opinions, that some of them long after their death had to be excommunicated in their graves, for the sake of uniformity of doctrine. * Augustine, for example, had considerable trouble with Pope Zosimas, who did not think the doctrine of *peccatum originale* important enough for him to conjure up on its account the dangerous struggle with the Pelagians, especially as the latter were not anti-Roman, but, on the contrary, yielded more rights to the Pope than their opponents did. † And whoever follows the course of Church history from this time down to the great dispute about grace between the Jesuits and the Dominicans in the seventeenth century (really the same thing again, but grasped at the other end and without an Augustine, to hinder the development of materialism) and sees how the Pope sought to settle it “by tolerating ‡ both systems and forbidding the adherents of both to persecute each other“ — he who, I say, follows with a clear eye this history will find that Rome without yielding an iota of its claims to power was yet more tolerant than any other Church organisation. It was the religious Hotspurs in its midst, especially the numerous secret Protestants, as also the violent opposition from without, that gradually forced the Papal stool to adopt a more and more definite and more and more one-sided dogmatic tendency, till finally a rash *Pontifex maximus*

* This has been finally proved of at least one Pope, Honorius (see Hefele, Döllinger, &c.).

† See Hefele: *Konziliengeschichte*, 2nd ed. ii. 114 f. and 120 f.

‡ Brück: *Lehrbuch der Kirchengeschichte*, 6th ed. p. 744 (orthodox Roman Catholic).

120 RELIGION

of the nineteenth century in his *Syllabus* declared war upon the whole European culture. * The Papacy was formerly wiser. The great Gregory complains bitterly of the theologians, who torture themselves and others with questions regarding the nature of the Godhead and other incomprehensible things, instead of devoting themselves to practical and benevolent objects. Rome would have been glad if there never had been any theologians. As Herder rightly remarks: “A cross, a picture of Mary with the child, a Mass, a rosary, were more to its purpose than much fine speculation.“ †

It is self-evident that this laxity went hand in hand with distinct secularity. And this too was an element of power. The Greek meditated and “sublimated“ too much, the religious Teuton was too much in earnest; Rome, on the other hand, never departed from the golden mean, which the vast majority of humanity prefers to follow. One need only read the works of Origenes (as an example of what the East aimed at) and then in strong contrast Luther's *Von der Freiheit eines Christenmenschen*

(as a summary of what the North understood by religion), to see at once how little the one or the other was suited for the men of the Chaos — and not only for them but for all who were at all infected with the poison of *connubia promiscua*. A Luther presupposes men, who have a strong support in themselves, who are capable of fighting spiritually as he himself has fought; an Origenes moves on the heights of knowledge, where the Indians might be at home, but not the inhabitants of the Roman Empire, not even a man like Augustine. ‡ Rome, on the other hand, thoroughly

* Since the assertion that “the Pope in his syllabus declared war on the whole European culture“ has met with contradiction, I quote the words of § 80 of the document itself: *Si quis dixit: Romanus pontifex potest ac debet cum progressu, cum liberalismo et cum recenti civilitate sese reconciliare et componere; anathema sit.*

† *Ideen für Geschichte der Menschheit*, xix, i. 1.

‡ Augustine was reproached by Hieronymus for not understanding

121 RELIGION

understood, as I remarked above, the character and the needs of that parti-coloured population which for centuries furnished the bearers and mediators of civilisation and culture. Rome demanded from its adherents neither greatness of character nor independent thought; the Church itself relieved them of that; for talent and imaginative enthusiasm it had indeed room — under the one condition of obedience — but such gifted and visionary men were merely auxiliaries; the attention was directed continuously to the great masses, and for them religion was so completely transferred from head and heart to the visible Church, that it became accessible to every one, comprehensible to every one, and as clear as daylight to all. * Never has an institution displayed so admirable and clear-sighted a knowledge of mediocre humanity as that Church, which began at an early time to organise itself

Hellenic thought. It is easy to see how true that was of the whole Roman Church if we take the trouble to read in Hefele's *Konziliengeschichte*, vol. ii. p. 255 f., the edict of the Emperor Justinian against Origenes and the fifteen anathemas against him of the Synods of Constantinople of the year 543. What these people did not notice gives us as good an idea of their mental qualities as what they found worthy of being anathematised. For example, the bigots did not notice that Origenes believes that the *peccatum originale* existed before the so-called fall, and yet that is, as I have shown above, the central point of his absolutely anti-Roman religion. On the other hand, it was revolting to them that this clear Hellenic mind considered a plurality of inhabited worlds an understood thing and that he taught the doctrine that the earth must have gradually grown by process of development. But they found it most fearful of all that he praised the destruction of the body in death as a liberation (whereas the people of the Chaos who were led by Rome could not think of immortality as anything but the eternal life of their wretched bodies), &c., &c. Many Popes, *e.g.*, Coelestin, who crushed

Nestorius, understood not a word of Greek and had in fact a very indifferent education, but this will surprise no one who has learned from Hefele's *Konziliengeschichte* that many of the bishops who by vote of majority founded the Christian dogma could not read, write, nor even sign their name.

* The high-spirited African Church had given the Roman Church a good example in this as in so much else, by inserting in its confession of faith the words: "I believe in forgiveness of sins, in the resurrection of the body and in eternal life through the holy church" (see Harnack: *Das apostolische Glaubensbekenntnis*, 27th ed. p. 9).

122 RELIGION

around the *Pontifex maximus* as central point. From the Jews it took the hierocracy, the intolerance, the historical materialism — but carefully avoided the inexorably strict moral commands and the sublime simplicity of Judaism, the sworn foe of all superstition (for this would have scared away the people, which is always more superstitious than religious); it willingly adopted Germanic earnestness, as also mystical rapture — but it took care that strict subjectivity did not make the path of salvation too full of thorns for weak souls and that mystical flights did not emancipate from the cult of the Church; it did not exactly reject the mystical speculations of the Hellenes — it understood their worth for the human imagination — but it robbed the myth of its plastic, incalculable, developable and so ever revolutionary significance, and condemned it to perpetual immobility like an idol to be worshipped. On the other hand, it adopted in the most large-hearted manner the ceremonies and especially the sacraments of the splendour-loving Chaos which sought religion in magic. This is its own real element, the one thing which the Imperium, that is, Rome, contributed independently to the structure of Christianity; and so it was that while holy men did not cease to reveal in Christianity the contrast to heathendom, the great masses passed from the one to the other without much noticing the difference: for they still found the splendidly robed priesthood, the processions, the images, the miracle-working local sanctuaries, the mystical transformation of the sacrifice, the material communication of eternal life, the confession, the forgiveness of sins, the indulgences — all things to which they had long been accustomed.

123 RELIGION

THE VICTORY OF THE CHAOS

I must still say a few words in explanation of this open, ceremonious entrance of the spirit of the Chaos into Christianity; it gave Christianity a

peculiar colouring, which has more or less tinged all confessions up to the present day (even those which are separated from Rome), and it reached its culminating point at the end of the period with which we are occupied. The proclamation of the dogma of transubstantiation, in the year 1215, betokens the completion of a 1000 years' development in this direction. *

The adoption of the objective religion of Paul (in opposition to the subjective) involved as was inevitable a view of expiation similar to that of the Jews; but what gives the Jew a special claim to our honest admiration is his unceasing struggle against superstition and magic; his religion was materialism, but, as I pointed out in a former chapter, abstract, not concrete materialism. † Now towards the end of the second century of our era an absolutely concrete materialism, though tinged with mysticism, had spread like a plague through the whole Roman Empire. That this sudden resuscitation of old superstitions was brought about by the Semites, by those Semites, namely, who were not under the benevolent law of Jehovah, has been proved; ‡ for the Jewish Prophets themselves had had trouble enough to suppress the belief (which was always asserting itself) in the magic efficacy of eaten sacrificial flesh; §

* The final formal completion was reached some years later, first by the introduction of the obligatory adoration of the Host in the year 1264, secondly by the universal introduction of the festival of the holy body in the year 1311, to celebrate the wonderful transformation of the Host into the body of God.

† See vol. i. [p. 224 f.](#)

‡ See especially Robert Smith: *Religion of the Semites* (1894), p. 358. For this whole question read lectures 8, 9, 10, 11.

§ See Smith, and as a supplement Cheyne: *Isaiah*, p. 368.

124 RELIGION

and it was this very faith, which was so widespread among born materialists, that now spread like wildfire through all the countries of the strongly Semitised Chaos of peoples. It was everlasting life that was demanded by miserable creatures, who might well feel how little of eternity there was in their own existence. It was everlasting life that the Priests of the newly arranged mysteries promised them through the mediation of "Agapes," common, ceremonious meals, in which flesh and blood, magically transformed to divine substance, were partaken of, and in which by the direct communication of this substance of eternity which conferred immortality the body of the human being was likewise transformed, to rise after death to everlasting life. * Thus Apuleius, for example, writes about his initiation into the mysteries of Isis, that he dare not betray what must be concealed, and can only say this: he had reached the borders of the realm of death, had crossed the threshold of

Proserpina and had returned from thence “reborn in all elements.” † Those initiated into the cult of Mithras were also called *in aeternam renati*, for ever regenerate. ‡

There is no doubt that we must see in this a revival of the very earliest, most widespread, totemistic § delusions, conceptions against which the noblest men of all countries have long and successfully contended. It certainly seems

* Rohde: *Psyche*, 1st ed. p. 687.

† *Der goldene Esel*, Book XI.

‡ Rohde, as above, and Dieterich's *Eine Mithrasliturgie*.

§ The use of the word *totemism* in this passage has led to misunderstandings and it indeed betrays an almost too daring ellipsis of thought. Totemism means “animal-worship,” a custom spread over the whole world; the animal in question is sacred and inviolate (the cow in India, the ape in southern India, the crocodile among certain African races, &c.). But if we trace the further development of this custom, we find that the sacred Totem nevertheless was sometimes sacrificed — thus, for example, in Mexico the youth worshipped as a God, the idea here being that by partaking of divine flesh and blood one receives a share of divinity: in view of this connection I have characterised these conceptions as totemistic.

125 RELIGION

to me doubtful whether the conception in this particular Semitic form of the Egypto-Roman mysteries ever existed among the Indo-Europeans; but these Indo-Europeans had in the meantime developed another idea, that of substitution sacrifices: *in sacris simulata pro veris accipi*. * Thus we see the old Indians using baked cakes in the form of discs (hosts) as symbolical representatives of the animals to be slain. Now in the Roman chaos, where all thoughts are found jumbled confusedly together, that Semitic conception of the magic change of substance in the human being became fused with this Aryan symbolic conception of *simulata pro veris*, which had really been meant only to show that the former literally interpreted thanks-offering was now a matter of the heart only. † Thus in the sacrificial meals of the pre-Christian Roman mystery-cults men partook not of flesh and blood but of bread and wine — magically transformed. It is well known what a part these mysteries played. Every one will at least remember having read in Cicero, *De Legibus* ii. 14, that it was only these mysteries (then consisting of a “baptism“ and a “love-feast“) that gave men “understanding in life and hope in death.“ But no one will fail to notice that we have here, in these *renati*, a view of regeneration absolutely contrary to that taught and lived by Christ. Christ and Antichrist stand opposed. Absolute idealism, which aims at a complete transformation of the inner man, his motives and purposes, is here opposed by a materialism intensified to madness, for by partaking of a mysterious food it hopes for a magical transformation of the

ephemeral body into an immortal one. This conception means a moral atavism, such as only a period of the most utter decay could produce.

* See Leist: *Gräco-italische Rechtsgeschichte*, p. 267 f.; Jhering: *Vorgeschichte der Indoeuropäer*, p. 313; &c.

† Augustine in his happy hours has this view too: “*Nos ipsi in cordibus nostris invisibile sacrificium esse debemus*“ (*De Civitate Dei* x. 19).

126 RELIGION

These mysteries, like everything else, were influenced by the genuine Christianity of the early days: it idealised them and used the forms of its time to give them a new purport. In the oldest post-evangelical writing, the *Doctrine of the Twelve Apostles*, found in 1883, and dating from the first Christian century, the mystic meal is merely a thanks-offering (Eucharist). When taking the cup the congregation says: “We thank Thee, O Father, for the sacred vine of Thy servant David, which Thou hast proclaimed by Thy servant Jesus; Thine be honour to all eternity.” When taking the bread it says: “We thank Thee, O Father, for life and knowledge, which Thou hast made known to us by Thy servant Jesus; Thine be honour to all eternity.” * In the somewhat later so-called *Apostolic Constitutions* the bread and wine are designated “gifts in honour of Christ.” † Of a transformation of the elements into body and blood of Christ no one at that time knows anything. It is in fact characteristic of the earliest Christians to avoid the word “mysterion” which was then so common (in Latin it was rendered by *sacramentum*). It is only in the fourth century (that is, after Christianity became the official, obligatory religion of the absolutely un-Christian Empire) that the word comes into use, unquestionably as the symptom of a new idea. ‡ But the best minds strove unceasingly against this gradual introduction into religion of materialism and magic. Origenes, for example, is of the opinion that not only is it to be understood merely “figuratively,” when we speak of the body of Christ at the Eucharist, but that this “figure” is suited only to “the simple;” in reality it is a “spiritual communion” that takes place. Hence, too, according to Origenes it is a matter of indifference who partakes of the Sacrament; the partaking in itself

* According to the edition of the Roman Catholic Professor Narcissus Liebert.

† Book VIII, chap. xii.

‡ Hatch, p. 302. Cf., too, what has been said on [p. 29](#).

127 RELIGION

neither helps nor harms, it depends solely on the state of mind. * Augustine was in a much more difficult position, for he lived in a world so sensualised that he found the conception widespread that the mere partaking of bread and wine makes one a member of the Church and secures immortality, whether one lives as a criminal or not — a conception against which he frequently and vigorously contends. † Eminent Church teachers too, like Chrysostom, had even then made the assertion that the body of the recipient was essentially changed by the consecrated food. Yet Augustine firmly maintains that sacraments are always merely symbols: *Sacrificia visibilia sunt signa invisibilium, sicut verba sonantia signa rerum.* ‡ The host, according to Augustine, bears the same relation to the body of Christ as the word to the thing. When he nevertheless in the case of the Sacrament teaches that the Divine is actually communicated, it is a question of communication to the mind and by the mind. So clear an utterance leaves no room for interpretations and excludes the later Roman doctrine of the sacrifice of the Mass. § These extremely sketchy remarks will suffice to show even the uninitiated reader that the Eucharist could be viewed in two ways: the one way was opened up by the more ideal and more spiritual mysteries of the purer Hellenes (henceforth filled with concrete purport as “feast of remembrance“ through the life of Christ); the other, which was connected with Egyptian and Semitic magic doctrines, tried to

* According to Neander: *Kirchengeschichte*, 4th ed. ii. 405.

† Cf., for example, Book XXI. chap. xxv. of the *De Civitate Dei*.

‡ *De Civitate Dei*, Book X. chap. xix. This doctrine was later adopted almost literally by Wyclif — the real author of the Reformation; for he writes regarding the host: “*Non est corpus dominicum, sed efficax ejus signum.*“

§ Gregory the Great (of about the year 600) was the first to teach that the Mass was an actual repetition of the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross, and this gave the Sacrament a sacrificial (Jewish) as well as Sacramental (heathen) significance.

128 RELIGION

see in the bread and wine the actual body of Christ and from that to prove that a magic transformation was brought about in its recipients.

These two tendencies * existed side by side for centuries, without ever coming to a decisive dogmatic struggle. The feeling of a mysterious danger may have contributed to prevent it; besides Rome, which at a very early period had quietly chosen the second way, knew that it had against it the most eminent Church fathers, as well as the oldest tradition. Once more it was the too conscientious North which threw the torch of war into this idyllic peace, where under the stole of a single universal and infallible Church the adherents of two different religions lived. In the

ninth century the abbot Radbert, in his book *Liber de corpore et sanguine Domini*, taught for the first time as an irrefutable dogma the doctrine of the magical transformation of the bread into the objectively present body of Christ, which exercised a magical and immortalising influence upon all who partook of it — even upon the ignorant and unbelieving. And who took up the gauntlet? In the most rapid survey such a fact cannot be passed over: it was the King of the Franks, later supported by the King of England! As always, the first instinct was correct; the Germanic princes immediately divined that their national in-

* In reality there are only two. Whoever has cast the most superficial glance at the witches' cauldron of theological sophism, will be grateful to me for seeking to introduce by means of extreme simplification not only clearness but also truthfulness into this confused matter, which, partly owing to the cunning calculation of greedy priests, partly owing to the religious delusion of honest but badly balanced minds, has become the real battlefield for all subtle follies and profound impossibilities. Here in particular lies the hereditary sin of all Protestant churches; for they rebelled against the Roman doctrine of the sacrifice of the Mass and of transubstantiation but had not the courage to sweep out all the superstitions derived from the Chaos. Instead they took refuge in wretched sophistries and have ever since been flitting with characterless indecision hither and thither on dialectical pin-points, without ever putting foot on solid ground.

129 RELIGION

dependence was being attacked. * Commissioned by Charles the Bald first of all Ratramnus and then the great Scotus Erigena refuted this doctrine of Radbert. That it was not a question here of a theological dispute of little consequence is proved by the fact that this same Scotus Erigena produces a whole system inspired by Origenes — an ideal religion, in which the Holy Script with its doctrines is viewed as “symbolism of the Inexpressible“ (*res ineffabilis, incomprehensibilis*) and the difference between good and bad proved metaphysically indefensible, &c., and that exactly at the same moment the admirable Count Gottschalk, following in the footsteps of Augustine, develops the doctrines of divine grace and predestination. The quarrel could no longer be settled diplomatically. The Germanic spirit began to awaken; Rome could not let it have its way, otherwise its own power would soon be gone. Gottschalk was publicly scourged almost to death by the ecclesiastics in power and then condemned to lifelong misery in prison; Scotus, who had fled in time to his English home, was treacherously murdered by monks commissioned by Rome. And so, for centuries, men wrangled over the nature of the Sacrament. The Popes indeed maintained personally a very reserved, in fact ambiguous, attitude; they were more concerned about the keeping together of all Christians under their episcopal staff than about discussions which might shake the Church to

its very foundations. But when in the eleventh century that fiery spirit Berengarius of Tours had once more begun to carry the religion of idealism through all France, the decision could no longer be postponed. There now sat on the Papal throne Gregory VII., the author of the *Dictatus papae*, † in which

* It is worth noting that in the case of the old mysteries, partaking in them removed all bonds of connection with the nation of one's birth. The initiated formed an international extra-national family.

† In recent times the authorship of the Pope has been doubted, but Catholics who are to be taken earnestly from a scientific point of view

130 RELIGION

for the first time it was frankly declared that Emperors and Princes were unconditionally subject to the Pope: he was that *Pontifex maximus* who first imposed on all bishops of the Church the vassal oath of complete allegiance to Rome, a man whose purity of heart increased tenfold his might which was great in itself; now, too, Rome felt strong enough to enforce its view in regard to the sacrament. Dragged from prison to prison, from council to council, Berengarius had finally in the year 1059, in order to save his life, to retract his doctrine before an assembly of 113 bishops in Rome, and to confess to the faith that “the bread is not merely a sacrament but the true body of Christ that is chewed with the teeth.” * However, the conflict still went on, indeed it now became general. In the second half of the thirteenth century there was in all countries into which Germanic blood had penetrated — from Spain to Poland, from Italy to England † — an awakening of religious consciousness such

admit that this representation of the supposed “rights” of Rome, if not from the Pope himself, yet originated from the circle of his most intimate admirers and thus in the main gives correctly the opinions of Gregory, and this is confirmed by his actions and letters (see Hefele, 2nd ed. v. 75). Most amusing, on the other hand, is the twisting and turning of the historians who write under Jesuitical influence; they have taken much from the great Gregory but not his honesty and love of truth, and thus in their attempts at improvement they spoil the deeds and words of that very Pope under whom the Roman idea of State attained its noblest, purest and most unselfish form, and exerted its greatest moral influence. Note, for example, what trouble the Seminar-Professor Brück (as above, § 114) takes to prove that Gregory “wished no universal monarchy,” and “did not regard the Princes as his vassals,” &c., but Brück cannot at the same time refrain from mentioning that Gregory has spoken of an *imperium Christi* and admonished all Princes and peoples to recognise in the Church “their superior and mistress.” Such dissimulation in face of the great fundamental facts of history is as unworthy as it is fruitless; the Roman hierocratic idea of a world-state is so great that one does not need to be ashamed of it.

* In a letter to the Pope he calls them wild animals who begin to roar at the mere word “spiritual communion with Christ” (see Neander, vi. 317). At a later time

Berengarius celled the Papal throne *sedem non apostolicam, sed sedem satanae*.

† About the year 1200 there were Waldensian congregations “in

131 RELIGION

as has perhaps never since been equalled; it signified the first dawn of a new day and manifested itself as a reaction against the enforced unassimilable religion of the Chaos. Everywhere there arose Bible and other pious societies, and wherever the knowledge of the Holy Writ had spread among the people, there followed, as if with mathematical necessity, the rejection of the secular and intellectual claims of Rome and above all the rejection of transubstantiation and the Roman doctrine of the sacrifice of the Mass. The situation became daily more critical. If the political situation had been more favourable, instead of being the most hopeless that Europe had ever known, an energetic and final severance from Rome would then have taken place even to the South of the Alps and the Pyrenees. There were reformers enough; in a way there was no need of them. The word Antichrist as a designation of the Roman stool was on every one's lips. Even the peasants knew that many ceremonies and doctrines of the Church were borrowed from heathendom, for at that time it had not yet been forgotten. Thus there was a widespread inner revolt against the externalising of religion, justification by works and particularly against the sale of indulgences. But Rome stood at that moment at the zenith of its political power, it conferred crowns, dethroned Kings and passed through its hands the threads of all diplomatic intrigues. It was then that that Pope ascended the Papal throne who used the memorable words, “*Ego sum Caesar! ego sum Imperator.*” It became again, as in the time of Theodosius, high treason to hold a different faith from him. The defenceless were cut down; those who had to be treated more considerately were imprisoned, intimidated, demoralised; those who were for sale were

France, Aragon, Catalonia, Spain, England, the Netherlands, Germany, Bohemia, Poland, Lithuania, Austria, Hungary, Croatia, Dalmatia, Italy, Sicily, &c.” (See the excellent work of Ludwig Keller: *Die Anfänge der Reformation und die Ketzerschulen*, 1897.)

132 RELIGION

bought. Then began the reign of Roman absolutism even in the sphere in which hitherto comparative tolerance had ruled, namely, in the sphere of the inmost religious conviction. It was introduced by two measures, whose connection is not at first manifest, but will become so from the

above exposition: the translation of the Bible into the language of the people was forbidden (even the reading in the Latin vulgate by educated laymen); the dogma of transubstantiation was promulgated. *

This completed the structure, in an absolutely logical manner. The *Apostolic Constitutions* had admonished the layman “when he sat at home to study the Gospel

* Innocent had already in the year 1198 forbidden the reading of the Bible; the synod of Toulouse in the year 1229 and other councils were continually emphasising the prohibition. The synod of Toulouse forbade most strictly that laymen should read a fragment of the Old or the New Testament, except the *Psalms* (chap. xiv.). If therefore the Bible was widespread in Germany before Luther's time, it is nevertheless throwing sand in our eyes to represent this fact, as Janssen and other Catholic writers do, as a proof of the liberalism of the Roman stool. The invention of printing had had a quicker influence than the slowly moving curia could counteract, moreover the German was at all times instinctively drawn to the Gospel, and if he was earnest about anything, he did not pay overmuch heed to prohibitions. In any case the Council of Trent soon brought order into this matter, and in the year 1622 the Pope forbade all reading of the Bible unless in the Latin vulgate. It was only in the second half of the eighteenth century that episcopally approved, carefully revised translations were permitted, and that only when they were provided with notes also approved of — a forcible measure against the spread of the Holy Script in the faithful editions of Bible societies.

The Bible studies of the Roman clergy in the thirteenth century are humorously shown up by the fact that at the synod of Nympha, in the year 1234, at which Roman and Greek Catholics met to pave the way to reunion, neither among the one party nor the other, nor in the churches and cloisters of the city and surroundings, was a copy of the Bible to be found, so that the followers of the Apostles had to proceed to the order of the day in regard to the wording of a doubtful quotation and have recourse once more, not to Holy Scripture, but to Church fathers and councils (see Hefele, v. 1048). At exactly the same time the Dominican Rainer, who had been sent to persecute the Waldensians, reports that all these heretics were very well read in the Holy Writ and he had seen uneducated peasants who could repeat the whole New Testament by heart (quoted in Neander, viii. 414).

133 RELIGION

diligently,“ * and in the Eucharist he was to see “an offering of gifts in honour of Christ“; but who at this time had preserved any knowledge of early, pure Christianity? Besides, as I have tried to show, Rome has never from the first adopted a specifically religious or a specifically evangelical standpoint; consequently those who have for centuries reproached it for its lack of evangelic spirit are in the wrong. Rome, by banishing the Gospel from the house and the heart of the Christian, and by taking as the official bases of religion the magical materialism, upon which the dying chaos of races had supported itself, as well as the Jewish theory of sacrifice, by which the priest became an indispensable mediator, has simply been consistent. At the same fourth Lateran synod, which in the year 1215 proclaimed the dogma of magical transformation,

the Inquisition Court was organised as a standing institution. Not the doctrine alone, but the system as well was henceforth perfectly frank. The synod of Narbonne established in the year 1227 the principle: "The persons and goods of heretics are given to any one who takes possession of them"; † *heretici possunt non solum excommunicari, sed et juste occidi*, was taught soon after by the first really Roman Church doctor, Thomas Aquinas. These principles and doctrines have not been abolished; they are a logical, irrefutable consequence of the Roman premisses and are still valid to-day; in the last years of the nineteenth century a pre-eminent Roman prelate, Hergenröther, has confirmed this, adding: "There is no yielding except under compulsion." ‡

* First book, *Von den Laien*, division 5.

† Hefele, v. 944.

‡ Cf. Döllinger: *Das Papsttum* (1892), p. 527.

134 RELIGION

THE POSITION TO-DAY

At the beginning of the thirteenth century therefore the struggle of almost a thousand years had ended with the apparently unconditional victory of Rome and the complete defeat of the Germanic North. But what I have called the awakening of the Germanic spirit in the religious sphere was only the symptom of a general effort of men feeling their way, and making up their minds; soon it penetrated the civic, political and intellectual life; it was no longer merely a question of religion, it was an all-embracing revolt against the principles and methods of Rome. The struggle broke out afresh, but with different results. If Rome could venture to be tolerant, the struggle might be regarded to-day as at an end; but she cannot venture, for it would mean suicide; and thus the intellectual and material position which we Northmen have won with such pains and so incompletely is continually being undermined and eaten away. Besides, Rome possesses, unsought and without any obligations, born allies in all enemies of Germanicism. What we need as a protection against this danger is an immediate and powerful regeneration of ideal sentiment, a regeneration that shall be specifically religious: we need to tear away the foreign rags and tatters that still hang upon our Christianity as the trappings of slavish hypocrisy: we need the creative power to construct out of the words and the spectacle of the crucified Son of Man a perfect religion fitting the truth of our nature, our capacities, and our present culture — a religion so directly convincing, so enchantingly beautiful, so present, so plastic, so eternally true, and yet so new, that we must give ourselves to it as a maid to her lover, without

questioning, happy, enraptured — a religion so exactly suited to our highly gifted, but

135 RELIGION

delicate, easily injured, peculiar Teutonic nature, that it shall have the power to master our inmost souls, ennobling and strengthening us: if we do not succeed in this, from the shadows of the future a second Innocent III. will come forth, another fourth Lateran synod will meet, and once more the flames of the Inquisition will crackle and flare up to heaven. For the world — and even the Teuton — will rather throw themselves into the arms of Syro-Egyptian mysteries than be edified by the threadbare twaddle of ethical societies and such-like. And the world will be right. On the other hand an abstract, casuistically dogmatic Protestantism, imbued with Roman superstition such as the Reformation has bequeathed to us in various different forms, is no living power. It certainly conceals a power, a great one — the Germanic soul; but this kaleidoscope of manifold and inwardly inconsistent intolerances means hindrance to, not improvement of, this soul; hence the profound indifference of the majority of those who are of this confession, and the pitiful absence of cultivation of the greatest power of the heart, the religious power. Romanism, on the other hand, may be weak as a dogmatic religion, but its dogmatism is at least consistent; moreover the Romish Church — provided only certain concessions are made to it — is peculiarly tolerant and generous; it is so all-embracing that only Buddhism can compare with it, providing a home, a *civitas Dei*, for all characters, all tendencies of mind and heart, a home in which the sceptic (like many a Pope) can scarcely be called Christian; * and it joins hands with the average

* In the posthumous process against Boniface VIII. many ecclesiastical dignitaries asserted on oath that this mightiest of all Popes laughed at the conception of Heaven and Hell and said of Jesus Christ that he had been a very clever man, nothing more. Hefele is inclined to regard these charges as not unfounded (see vi. 461 and the preceding discussion of the subject). And yet — or rather in this way — Boniface grasped the central idea of the Roman thought more clearly than almost any one before or after him, and in his famous bull *Unam*

136 RELIGION

mind still fettered to heathen superstition and with the fanatical enthusiast, like Bernard of Clairvaux, “whose soul is enraptured in the fullness of the house of God and drinks new wine with Christ in the

kingdom of his Father.“ * In addition there is the seductive and captivating idea of world and State, which is of great influence; for as an organised system, as a power of tradition, as a discerner of the human heart, Rome is great and admirable, more so almost than one can express in words. Even a Luther is said to have declared (*Tischreden*): “As far as outward government is concerned, the Empire of the Pope is the best thing for the world.“ A single David — strong in the innocently pure revolt of a genuine Indo-European against the shame inflicted upon our race — could perhaps lay low such a Goliath, but for a whole army of philosophising Lilliputians it would have been impossible. Its death too would be in no case desirable; for our Germanic Christianity will not and can not be the religion of the Chaos; the delusion of a world religion is rank chronistic and sacramental materialism; like a malady it clings to the Protestant Church out of its Roman past; only in limitation can we grow to the full possession of our idealising power.

A clear understanding of the momentous struggles in the sphere of religion in the nineteenth century and in the approaching future will be impossible if we have not before our minds an essentially correct and vividly coloured picture of the struggle in early Christianity, until the year 1215. What came later — the Reformation and the counter-Reformation — is much less important from a purely religious point of view, much more saturated with politics and ruled by politics; besides it remains a

sanctam, on which present Catholicism rests as on a foundation-stone, he has given expression to it. (More details of this bull in the next chapter.) In his *Port Royal* (Book III. chap. iii.) Sainte-Beuve proves convincingly that “one can be a very good Catholic and yet scarcely a Christian.“

† Helfferich: *Christliche Mystik*, 1842, ii. 231.

137 RELIGION

riddle, if we have not a knowledge of the past. It is this need that I have tried to meet in the present chapter. *

ORATIO PRO DOMO

If in the above account I am accused of partiality, I would reply that I do not possess the desirable gift of lying. What is the good of “objective phrases“? Even an enemy can appreciate honest frankness. When it is a question of the dearest possessions of the heart, I prefer, like the Teutons, to rush naked to battle, with the sentiment that God has given me, rather than to march to the field adorned in the artificial armour of a

science which proves nothing, or in the toga of an empty rhetoric which reconciles everything.

Nothing is further from my intention than the identification of individuals with their Churches. Our Churches to-day unite and separate by essentially external characteristics. When I read the *Memorials* of Cardinal Manning and see him calling the Jesuit Order the cancer of Catholicism, when I hear him violently complaining of the development (so zealously carried on at the present day) of the sacrament to downright idolatry, and calling the church in consequence a “booth” and an “exchange,” when I see him working so actively for the spreading of the Bible and openly opposing the Roman tendency to suppress it (which he admits to be the predominant tendency), or when I take up such excellent, genuinely Germanic writings as Professor Schell's *Der Katholizismus als Prinzip des Fortschrittes*, I have a strong feeling that a single divine whirlwind would suffice to sweep away

* To any one who wishes to read an attempt at a systematic refutation of the opinions which I have expressed in this chapter and in other parts of the book on the essence and history of the Roman Churches I recommend Prof. Dr. Albert Ehrhard's *Kritische Würdigung* of these “Foundations,” originally published in the periodical *Kultur* and now as No. 14 of the *Vorträge und Abhandlungen*, published by the Leo-Gesellschaft (1901, Mayer and Co., Vienna).

138 RELIGION

the fatal jugglery of delusions inherited from the stone age, to scatter like a veil of mist the infatuations of the fallen empire of half-breeds and to unite in blood fraternity all Teutons — in religion and through religion.

Moreover in my account, as I promised, the centre of all Christianity — the figure on the Cross — has remained untouched. And it is this figure which binds us all together, no matter how we may be separated by mode of thought and tendency of race. It is my good fortune to possess several good and true friends among the Catholic clergy and to the present day I have not lost one. I remember moreover a very highly gifted Dominican, who liked to argue with me and to whom I am indebted for much information on theological matters, exclaiming in despair: “You are a terrible man! Not even St. Thomas Aquinas could be a match for you!” And yet the reverend gentleman did not withdraw from me his good graces, nor I from him my admiration. What united us was greater and mightier than all that separated us; it was the figure of Jesus Christ. Though each may have believed the other so fettered to false error, that, transferred to the arena of the world, he would not have hesitated for a moment to attack him, yet, in the stillness of the cloister, where I was wont to visit the father, we always felt ourselves drawn into that condition so beautifully described by Augustine (*see p. 75*), in which

everything — even the voice of the angels — is silent and only the One speaks; then we knew that we were united and with equal conviction we both confessed: “Heaven and Earth shall pass away, but His words shall not pass away.”

139

EIGHTH CHAPTER

STATE

Methinks I see in my mind a noble and puissant nation rousing herself like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks: methinks I see her as an eagle mewing her mighty youth, and kindling her undazzled eyes at the full midday beam; purging and unscaling her long-abused sight at the fountain itself of heavenly radiance; while the whole noise of timorous and flocking birds, with those also that love the twilight, flutter about, amazed at what she means, and in their envious gabble would prognosticate a year of sects and schisms. — MILTON.

EMPEROR AND POPE

Were it my task to describe historically the struggle in the State till the thirteenth century, I could not fail to dwell specially upon two things: the struggle between the Pope and the Emperor, and the gradual transformation of the majority of free Teutons into bondsmen, while others among them raised themselves to that powerful class of hereditary nobility, so dangerous to those above as well as to those beneath them. But here I have to confine my attention to the nineteenth century, and neither that fatal struggle nor the curiously varied changes which society, tossed violently this way and that, underwent, possess more than historical interest to-day. The word “Emperor“ has become so meaningless to us, that quite a number of European princes have added it as an ornament to their titulature, and the “white slaves of Europe“ (as an English writer of our days, Sherard, calls them) are not

140 STATE

the result of a past feudal system, but the victims of a new economic development. * If we go deeper, we shall find that that struggle in the State, confused as it appears, was fundamentally a struggle for the State, a struggle, in fact, between universalism and nationalism. If we realise

this, we gain a clearer understanding of the events in question, and a bright light is shed upon our own time, giving us a more distinct view of many events to-day than we otherwise could attain.

This reflection enables us at once to map out the plan of this chapter. But before proceeding I must make one remark.

The Roman Empire might well be called a “world-empire”; *orbis romanus*, the Roman world, was the usual designation. Noteworthy is it that men should be wont to say “the Roman world,” not “the world” merely. Though the paid Court poet, in search of resounding hexameters, wrote the often quoted words:

Tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento!

yet the presumption thoughtlessly accepted even by some earnest historians, that this was the entire Roman programme, is quite unsound. As I have shown in the second chapter, the fundamental idea of ancient Rome was not expansion but concentration. The empty phrases of a Vergil should deceive no one on this point. Rome was compelled by historical events to expand around a firm central point, but even in the days of its most extensive power, from Trajan to Diocletian, nothing will strike the careful observer more than its strict self-control and self-restraint. That is the secret of Roman strength; by that Rome proves itself to be the truly political nation. But as far as it extends, Rome destroys individuality, it creates an *orbis romanus*; its influence

* See in chap. ix. the [division “Economy.”](#)

141 STATE

outwardly is a levelling one. And when there was no longer a Roman nation, no longer even a Caesar in Rome, there still remained that specifically Roman principle of levelling — the destruction of all individuality. On this the Church now planted the genuine universal idea, which the purely political Rome had never known. It had been the Emperors, in the first place Theodosius, who had created the idea of the Roman Church, but certainly all that they had thought of was the *orbis romanus* and its better discipline; now, however, a religious principle superseded the political, and while the latter is limited by nature, the former is unlimited. To convert to Christianity became henceforth a moral obligation, since the eternal salvation of man depended on it; such a conviction could know no limits. * On the other hand, it was a State duty to belong to the Roman Church, to the exclusion of every other form of Christianity; the Emperors ordered this on pain of severe punishment. In this way the former, systematically limited Roman idea was extended to that of a Universal empire; and since politics indeed supplied the organism, but the Church the categorical idea of universality, it is

natural that out of the Imperium there should gradually arise a theocracy and that the high priest should soon set upon his head the *diadema imperii*. †

The fact to which I should like first of all to call attention

* See, for example, the wonderful letter of Alcuin to Charlemagne (in Waitz: *Deutsche Verfassungsgeschichte*, ii, 182), in which the Abbot admonishes the Emperor to extend the Empire over the whole world, not in order to satisfy political ambition, but because by so doing he would extend the boundaries of Catholicism.

† It is still a disputed question which Pope first wound the double diadem round the tiara; it was at all events done in the eleventh or twelfth century. The one ring bore the inscription: *Corona regni de manu Dei*, the other: *Diadema imperii de manu Petri*. To-day the Papal crown has a triple diadem; according to Wolfgang Menzel (*Christliche Symbolik*, 1854, i, 531), who inclined to Catholicism, these three diadems symbolise the rule of the Roman Church over earth, hell, and heaven. No imperialism can go further than that.

142 STATE

is this, that it is not right to see in every Emperor — though he be a Henry IV. — a representative and champion of the secular power in opposition to the ecclesiastical. The idea of universal power is the essence of Christian-Roman imperialism. Now this idea does not come, as we saw, from ancient Rome; it was religion that had introduced the new revealed truth, the kingdom of God upon earth, a purely ideal power, founded, that is to say, on ideas, and ruling men by ideas. Of course the Emperors had, so to speak, secularised this principle in the interests of their power, but by adopting it, they had at the same time bound themselves to it. An Emperor, unwilling to belong to the Roman Church or to be an advocate and defender of the universalism of religion, would not have been an Emperor. A quarrel between Emperor and Pope is therefore always a quarrel within the Church; the one wishes more influence to be given to the *regnum*, the other to the *sacerdotium*; but the dream of universalism remains common to them both, as does that loyalty to the Imperial-Roman Church, which should supply the cement of souls in the world-empire. Now the Emperor nominates the Pope on his own authority (as in 999 Otto III. nominated Sylvester II.), and is hence an undisputed autocrat; on another occasion the Pope crowns the Emperor “from the fullness of Papal power“ (as Innocent II. in 1131 crowned Lothar); originally the Emperors (or the territorial Princes) nominated all bishops, at a later time the Popes claimed this right; the Council of Bishops, too, could arrogate the chief power, declare itself “infallible,“ depose and imprison the Pope (as in Constance in 1415), while the Emperor sat a powerless spectator among the prelates, not even able to rescue a Hus from death. And so on. It is in all these things,

manifestly, a question of competence within the Church, that is, within the theocracy considered as universal. Though the German archbishops commanded the army which Frederick I.

143 STATE

in 1167 sent against Rome and the Pope, it would surely be strange to see in this a real revolt of the secular power against the ecclesiastical. It would be just as strange to interpret the dismissal of Gregory VII. by the synod of Worms in 1076 as an anti-ecclesiastical move of Henry IV., for almost all the bishops of Germany and Italy had signed the Imperial decree, and that on the ground that “the Pope was arrogating to himself a power hitherto quite unknown, while he destroyed the rights of other bishops“ * Naturally I am far from wishing to deny the great political importance of all these events, and particularly their retrospective influence upon the growing national consciousness, but I maintain that this is all a question of struggles and intrigues inside the then prevailing universal system of the Church; that struggle, however, which decided the further course of the history of the world, in opposition at once to Pope and Emperor — that is, therefore, in opposition to the ecclesiastical ideal of State — was carried on by Princes, nobles and the middle classes. This means a struggle against universalism and, though nations were not the first to take it up, since none yet existed, it yet led necessarily to their formation, for they are essentially bulwarks against the despotism of the Roman imperialistic idea.

THE “DUPLEX POTESTAS“

I had to premise this, in order to settle, once for all, which struggle could and should occupy our attention in this book. The struggle between Emperor and Pope belongs to the past, that between nationalism and universalism is still going on.

But before we pass to our real theme, I should like to add another remark concerning this rivalry within the universalistic ideal. It is, in truth, not indispensable

* Hefele: *Konziliengeschichte*, v. 67.

144 STATE

for our judgment of the nineteenth century, but in our time the matter

has been much spoken of, and very greatly to the disadvantage of sound common sense; it has been again and again revived by the universalistic, *i.e.*, the Roman party, and many an otherwise good judgment is led astray by the skilfully represented, but quite untenable paradox. I refer to the theory of the *duplex potestas*, the double power. Most educated people know it from Dante's *De Monarchia*, although it was evolved earlier, contemporaneously, and later by others. With all respect for the great poet, I hardly think that any unbiased man, capable of forming a judgment on politics, will fail to find this work simply monstrous. A magnificent effect is certainly produced by the consistency and the courage with which Dante denies to the Pope every trace of secular power and worldly possession; but, while he transfers to another the fullness of this power, claiming for this other the theocratic origin of directly divine appointment, he has only replaced one tyrant by another. Of the Electors he says that one "may not call them 'selectors,' " but rather "proclaimers of the Divine Providence" (iii. 16); that is, of course, the unvarnished Papal theory! But then comes the monstrous idea: in addition to this absolute autocrat appointed "without intermediary" by God Himself, there is another equally absolute autocrat, likewise appointed by God Himself, the Pope! For "human nature is double and therefore requires a double head," namely, "the Pope, who in conformity with revelation guides humanity to eternal life, and the Emperor, who following the doctrines of the philosophers shall lead men to earthly happiness." As philosophy, even, this doctrine is monstrous; for according to it the endeavour after purely earthly happiness must go hand in hand with the attainment of an everlasting happiness in the future life; from a practical point of view it is the most un-

145 STATE

tenable delusion that a poetic brain ever conceived. We may accept it as axiomatic truth that universalism involves absolutism, that is, freedom from all limitations; how then can two absolute autocrats stand side by side? The one cannot take a single step without "limiting" the other. Where can we draw a boundary-line between the jurisdiction of the "philosophical" Emperor, the direct representative of God upon earth as the Omniscient, and the jurisdiction of the theological Emperor, the mediator of eternal life? Does that "double nature" of man, of which Dante speaks, not after all form a unity? Is it capable of dividing itself with nicety in two, and — in contradiction to the words of Christ — of serving two masters? Even the word mon-archy signifies rule by one, and is the monarchy now to possess two absolute rulers? In practice that is impossible. The Emperors who were Christians were absolute rulers inside the Church also; now and then they summoned the bishops to

councils, but they issued the ecclesiastical laws on their own authority, and in dogmatic questions it was their will that decided. Theodosius might do penance before the Bishop of Milan, as he would have done before any other priest, but he never dreamt of a rival to his absolute authority and would not have hesitated to crush such a rival. The sentiments of Charlemagne were just the same (see p. [101](#)), though naturally his position could not be so strong as that of Theodosius; but Otto the Great attained later exactly the same autocratic power, and his Imperial will sufficed to depose the Pope: the logic of the universalistic idea demands that all power should lie in one hand. Now indeed, in consequence of endless political confusion, and also because the intellects of men of that time were perplexed with questions of abstract law, many obscure ideas came into vogue, among others that clause of ancient Church law, *de duobus universis monarchiae gladiis*, concerning the two swords

146 STATE

of the State; but, as the above sentence with its genitive singular proves, the practical politician had never had so monstrous a conception of the matter as the poet; for him there is but one monarchy and both swords serve it. This one monarchy is the Church: a worldly and at the same time a spiritual Imperium. And because the idea of Imperium is so absolutely theocratic, we cannot be surprised when the highest power gradually is transferred from the King to the *Pontifex*. That both should stand equally high is excluded by the nature of men; even Dante says at the end of his work, that the Emperor should “show honour to Peter“ and “accept illumination by his light“; he therefore implicitly admits that the Pope stands above the Emperor. At last a strong, clear mind, with political and legal culture, cleared up this confusion of historical sophisms and abstractions; it happened just at the end of the epoch of which I am here speaking, at the close of the thirteenth century. * In his bull *Ineffabilis*, Boniface VIII. had already demanded the absolute freedom of the Church; absolute freedom means absolute power. But the doctrine of the two swords had made such fearful havoc of the intellectual strength of the princes, that they no longer remembered that the second sword was, at best, in the direct power of the Emperor; no, every individual prince wished to wield it alone, and the divine monarchy thus degenerated into a polyarchy all the more perilous as every petty prince had arrogated the Imperial theory and regarded himself as an absolute ruler directly appointed by God. One can sympathise with the princes, for they paved the way for nations, but their theory of “divine right“ is simply absurd — absurd, if they remained within the Roman

universal system, *i.e.*, in the Catholic Church, and doubly absurd, if they separated themselves

* Dante lived to see it but, as it appears, did not know how to estimate its importance or to draw the necessary conclusions from it.

147 STATE

from the magnificent idea of the one divinely desired *civitas Dei*. To this confusion Boniface VIII. sought now to put an end by his remarkable bull *Unam sanctam*. Every layman should know it, for no matter what has happened since or may happen in the future, the logic of the universal-theocratic idea * will always imply absolute power in the Church and its clerical head. First of all Boniface demonstrates that there can be only one Church — this would be the point where we should be forced at once to contradict him, for from this follows all else with logical necessity. Then comes the decisive, and, as history proves, true remark: “This one Church has only one head, not two heads like a monster!” But if it has only one head, then both swords must be in its hand, the spiritual and the secular: “Both swords are therefore in the power of the Church, the spiritual and the secular; the latter must be wielded for the Church, the former by the Church; the former by the Priesthood, the latter by Kings and warriors, but according to the will of the priest and as long as he suffers it. But one sword must be over the other, the secular authority subordinate to the spiritual ... Divine truth testifies that the spiritual power has to appoint the secular power, and to judge it, if it be not good.” † This made the doctrine of the Roman Church at last clear, logical and straightforward. We do not realise the depth of such an idea when we talk of priestly ambition, of the insatiable maw of the Church, &c.; the fundamental notion here is the magnificent one of a universal Imperium, which shall not merely subdue all peoples and thereby create eternal peace, ‡ but shall gird about every individual

* Not to be confused with National Theocratism, of which history offers many an example (above all Judaism).

† See the bull *Ineffabilis* in Hefele: *Konziliengeschichte*, 2nd ed. vi. 297 f., and the bull *Unam sanctam*, p. 347 f. I quote from Hefele's German translation, and therefore from an orthodox Catholic and at the same time authoritative source.

‡ This thought recurs again and again in the old authors.

148 STATE

with its faith, politics and hope. It is universalism in its highest

potentiality, external and internal, including even the strenuous endeavour to secure uniformity of language. The rock, upon which this empire rests, is the belief in divine appointment; nothing less could carry such a structure; it follows that this Imperium is a theocracy; in a theocratic State the hierarchy occupies the first place; its priestly head is therefore the natural head of the State. Not a single sensible word can be opposed to this logical deduction, nothing but threadbare sophisms. For in the most secular of all States, in Rome, the Emperor had arrogated the title and office of *Pontifex maximus* as his highest dignity, as unrivalled guarantee of divine justification (*Caesar Divi genus* — for even this idea is not of Christian origin). And should not the *Pontifex maximus* in a Christian State, that State to which religion first had given universality and absolutism, on his part feel justified and compelled to view his office as that of an Emperor? *

So much with regard to the *duplex potestas*.

These two discussions, the one on the fundamental identity of the powers of Emperor and Pope (both being only portions and manifestations of the same idea of a sacred Roman universal empire); the other on the struggle between the different ruling elements within this naturally very complicated hierarchy, are not really meant as a preface to what follows. By them we merely cast overboard ballast which would have delayed and made us deviate from the true course, for, as I have said, the real “struggle in the State“ lies deeper, and that it is which offers matter of present interest, indeed of passionate interest, and which especially contributes to the understanding of the nineteenth century.

* Compare the excellent remark of the Spanish statesman Antonio Perez, quoted in the preceding chapter, [p. 98](#).

149 STATE

UNIVERSALISM AGAINST NATIONALISM

Savigny, the great legal authority, writes: “The States into which the Roman Empire was broken up reflect the condition of the Empire before this breaking up.“ The struggle, of which I must here speak, is formally and ideally very much dependent upon the Imperium which has disappeared. Just as the shadows lengthen the farther the sun sinks in setting, so Rome, the first really great State, threw its shadow far over coming centuries. For, carefully considered, the struggle which now bursts into flame in the State is a struggle of nations for their personal right to live, against a universal monarchy dreamt of and aimed at, and Rome bequeathed not only the fact of a nationless Police-State with uniformity and order as its political ideal, but also the memory of a great

nation. Moreover, Rome bequeathed the geographical sketch of a possible — and in many features lasting — division of chaotic Europe into new nations, as well as fundamental principles of legislation and administration, from which the individual independence of these new structures could derive support and strength like the young vine from the dry stake. Rome therefore supplied the weapons for both ideals, for both systems of politics, for universalism as well as nationalism. But new elements were added, and they were the living part, the sap, which forced the growth of leaves and blossom, they were the hand that wielded the weapons; the religious ideal of the universal monarchy was new, and new too was the race of men that formed the nations. It was new that the Roman monarchy was no longer to be secular, but a religion preparing men for heaven; that its monarch should be henceforth, not a changing Caesar, but an immortal crucified God; that, in place of nations of former history that had disappeared,

150 STATE

there now sprang up a race of men, the Germanic peoples, just as creative and individualistic (and consequently with a natural inclination for forming States) as the Hellenes and Romans, and moreover in possession of a much more extensive, more productive and therefore more plastic, many-sided stock.

The political situation during the first ten centuries from Constantine onwards is therefore, in spite of the inextricable tangle of events, quite clear, clearer perhaps than it is to-day. On the one side the distinct, well-thought-out conception — derived from experience and existing conditions — of an imperially hieratic, unnational universal monarchy, unconsciously prepared by the Roman heathens at God's command, * henceforth revealed in its divinity, and therefore all-embracing, all-powerful, infallible, eternal — on the other hand, the naturally inevitable formation of nations demanded by the instinct of the Germanic people and of those peoples who were to a large extent “Germanic“ in the wider sense (see vol. i. chap. vi.), and at the same time an unconquerable dislike on their part to everything stereotyped, a passionate revolt against every limitation of the personality. The contradiction was flagrant, the conflict inevitable.

This is no arbitrary generalisation; on the contrary, it is only when we consider the apparent caprices of all history as lovingly as the physiographer contemplates the stone which he has polished, that the chronicle of the world's events becomes transparent, and what the eye henceforth sees is not a matter of accident, but the essential, in fact, the only non-accidental thing, the constant cause of necessary, but variable, incalculable events. For such causes bring about definite results. Where

far-seeing consciousness is present, as for example (in the case of universalism) in Charlemagne and Gregory VII., or on the other hand (in the case of nationalism) in King

* Augustine: *De Civitate Dei* v. 21 f.

151 STATE

Alfred or Walther von der Vogelweide, the necessary form of history assumes clearer outlines; but it was by no means necessary that every representative of the Roman idea or of the principle of nationalities should possess clear conceptions of the nature and compass of these ideas. The Roman idea was sufficiently imperative; it was an unchangeable fact, according to which every Emperor and every Pope was compelled to govern his conduct, no matter what he might otherwise think and intend. And the common explanation, that there has been a development, that ecclesiastical ambition gradually became more and more grasping, is not well founded, not at least in the modern superficial sense, according to which evolution can bring about radical changes; there has been an expansion, a complying with temporal conditions, and so forth; but Charlemagne followed exactly the same principles as Theodosius, and Pius IX. stood on exactly the same ground as Boniface VIII. Still less do I postulate a conscious endeavour to form nationalities. The late-Roman idea of a universal theocracy might certainly be thought out in detail by remarkable men, for it was based on an Imperium, which already existed and to which it was directly linked, and on the firmly established Jewish theocracy, from which it proceeded without a break; but how should men have thought of a France, a Germany, a Spain, before they existed? Here new forms had to be created, forms which even to-day are sending forth new shoots and will do so as long as life lasts. Shiftings of national consciousness are taking place before our eyes, and even at the present day we can see the nation-building principle at work, wherever so-called particularism is active: when the Bavarian manifests dislike for the Prussian, and the Swabian looks down upon both with mild contempt; when the Scotchman speaks of his "countrymen," to distinguish them from Englishmen, and the inhabitant of New York regards

152 STATE

the Yankee of New England as being not quite so perfect as himself; when local custom, local convention, local legal usages which no

legislation can altogether destroy, distinguish one district from another — in all this we see symptoms of a living individualism, symptoms of the capacity of a people to become conscious of its individuality in contrast to that of others, symptoms of ability for organic formative work. If the course of history created adequate outward conditions, we Teutons should produce a dozen new, characteristically distinct nations. In France this creative capacity has been weakened by progressive “Romanising”; moreover, it was almost completely trodden under foot by the rude Corsican; in Russia it has almost disappeared in consequence of the predominance of inferior, un-Teutonic blood, although in former days our genuine Slavonic cousins were richly endowed with the gifts which are necessary for individual creative work — as their language and their literature prove. Now it is this gift, which we find still present in some cases and no longer so in others, that we see at work in history, not consciously, not as a theory, not philosophically proved, not founded upon legal institutions and divine revelations, but overcoming all difficulties with the irresistibility of a law of nature, destroying where destruction was demanded — for on what were wrecked the unsound aspirations of the Roman Imperialism of Teutonic Kings but on the ever-growing jealousy of the tribes? — at the same time it builds up silently and diligently on all sides, so that the nations were established long before the princes had figured them on the map. While the craze of the *Imperium Romanum* towards the close of the twelfth century still fascinated a Frederick Barbarossa, the German singer could exclaim

übel müeze mir geschehen,
künde ich ie mîn herze bringen dar,
daz im wol gevallen

153 STATE

wolte fremeder site;
tiuschiu zuht gât vor in allen! *

And when in the year 1232 the most powerful of all Popes had through the medium of the King caused the enemy of Roman influence in England, Chief Justice Hubert de Burgh, to be taken prisoner, there was not a blacksmith to be found in the whole land who would forge manacles for him: when threatened with torture the journeyman answered defiantly, “Rather will I die any death than ever put irons on the man who defended England from the alien!” The wandering bard knew that there was a German people and the blacksmith that there was an English one, when this fact had little more than begun to dawn upon many of the leading lights of politics.

It is obvious that we are here dealing not with wind-eggs, laid by a hen of the brood of the philosophising historians, but with things of the greatest reality. And since we now know that by thus contrasting universalism and nationalism we have revealed fundamental facts of history, I should like to regard this matter generally, more from the inner standpoint. This makes it necessary for us to sound the depths of the soul, but in doing so we shall gain an insight which will be useful when we seek to form a judgment on the nineteenth century; for these two currents are still with us, and that not merely, on the one hand, in the visible form of the *Pontifex maximus* who in the year of grace 1864 once more solemnly asserted his temporal autocracy, † and, on the other, in

* Woe betide me, if I could ever constrain my heart to be pleased with foreign ways; German virtue is superior in all respects.

† See the Syllabus § 19 f., 54 f., as also the numerous articles against all freedom of conscience, especially § 15: "Whoever asserts that a

154 STATE

the national contrasts of the moment which are becoming more and more acutely felt, but also in many views and judgments which we pick up on the path of life without having any idea of their origin. Fundamentally it is a question, in fact, of two philosophies or views of existence, each of which so entirely shuts out the other that the two could not possibly exist side by side, and that it must be a struggle for life or death between them — were it not that men drift on unconsciously, like ships under full sail but without a rudder, aimlessly, heedlessly driven at the bidding of the wind. There again a remark of the sublimely great Teuton Goethe will throw light on the psychological riddle. In his *Aphorisms in Prose* he says of vitally mobile individuality, that it becomes aware of itself as "inwardly limitless, outwardly limited." That is a phrase pregnant with meaning: "outwardly limited, inwardly limitless." This expresses a fundamental law of all intellectual life. For the human individual, in fact, "outwardly limited" practically means personality, "inwardly limitless" means freedom; the same is true of a people. Now, if we follow up this thought, we shall find that the two conceptions are mutually dependent. Without the outward limitation the inner limitlessness is impossible; if, on the other hand, outward limitlessness is aimed at, the limit will have to be laid down inwardly. And this is the very formula of the neo-Roman ecclesiastical Imperium: inwardly limited, outwardly limitless. Sacrifice to me your human personality and I shall give you a share in Divinity; sacrifice to me your freedom, and I shall create an Empire which embraces the whole earth and in which order and peace shall eternally

prevail; sacrifice to me your judgment and I shall reveal to you the absolute Truth; sacrifice to me Time and I

man may adopt and confess that religion which seems to him, as far as his knowledge goes, to be the true one, shall be excommunicated.“

155 STATE

shall give you Eternity. For, in fact, the idea of the Roman universal monarchy and of the Roman universal Church aims at something outwardly limitless: to the head of the Imperium *omnes humanae creaturae* — all human creatures — are without exception subject, * and the power of the Church extends not only to the living, but also to the dead, whom it can punish after many centuries with excommunication and torments of hell, or promote from purgatory to heavenly bliss. I do not deny that there is something grand in this conception; we are not speaking of that now; my only object is to show that all aspiration after what is thus outwardly limitless necessarily presupposes and determines the inner limitation of the individual. From Constantine, who was the first to comprehend the Imperial idea consistently in the neo-Roman sense, to Frederick II. of the Hohenstaufen dynasty, the last ruler who was inspired by the true universal thought, no Emperor has permitted an atom of personal or national freedom, except when weakness has compelled him to make concessions to the one party, in order to checkmate the other. The doctrine *quod principi placuit, legis habet vigorem* was accepted by Barbarossa from Jurists trained in the Byzantine school: he then went and destroyed the cities of Lombardy, which were flourishing in defiant freedom and through the industry of the citizens, and strewed salt over the smoking ruins of Milan. With less violence but acting on the same principle, Frederick II. destroyed the liberties which the German middle classes were beginning to acquire under the princes of the land. It is not necessary to show with what undeviating narrowness the *Pontifex* lays down the “inner limits.“ The word *dogma* had signified to the ancient Greeks an opinion, a view, a philosophic doctrine; in the Roman Empire it meant an imperial edict; but now, in the Roman Church,

* See the bull *Unam sanctam*.

156 STATE

it was called a divine law of faith, to which all human beings must

unconditionally submit on pain of everlasting punishment. Let no one cherish illusions on this point; let no one be led astray by fallacies: this system cannot leave the individual a particle of free will: it is impossible, and that for the simple reason — against which no casuistry and no intention, however good, can avail — that whoever says “outwardly limitless“ must add “inwardly limited,“ whether he wills it or not. Outwardly the sacrifice of personality is demanded, inwardly that of freedom. Just as little can this system recognise distinct nationalities in their individuality and as the basis of historical events; to it they are at the best an unavoidable evil; for as soon as a strict outward boundary is drawn, the tendency to inward limitlessness will proclaim itself; the genuine nation will never submit to the Imperium.

The civic idea of the Roman hierocracy is the *civitas Dei* upon earth, a single, indivisible Divine State: every systematic division which creates outward boundaries threatens the limitless whole, for it produces personality. Hence it is that under Roman influence the liberties of the Teutonic tribes, their choice of their king, their special rights, and so forth, are lost; hence it is that the preaching monks, as soon as nationalities begin clearly to assume distinct shape, at the beginning of the thirteenth century, organise a thorough campaign against the *amor soli natalis* — the love of the native soil; hence it is that we see the Emperors planning the weakening of the princes, and the Popes indefatigably endeavouring for centuries to hinder the formation of States and — as soon as success in this was hopeless — to retard the development of their freedom, in which the Crusades in particular served their purpose well for a long time; hence it is that the constitutions of the Jesuit Order make it their first care that its members become completely “un-

157 STATE

nationalised“ and belong solely to the universal Church; * hence it is that we read in the very latest, strictly scientific text-books of Catholic Church law (see, for example, Phillips, 3rd ed., 1881, p. 804) of the triumph of the principle of nationality within the one and universal Church of God as one of the most regrettable events in the history of Europe. That the great majority of Roman Catholics are nevertheless excellent patriots shows a lack of consistency that does them honour; in the very same way Charlemagne, who called himself *a Deo*

* The Jesuits are rigidly forbidden to talk about individual nations; the ideal of Ignatius was, says Goethe (in *Ignatius von Loyola*, p. 336), to “fuse all nations“; only where the States made it a condition did he allow instruction to be given by natives, otherwise it was his fixed principle to remove every member from his native land, which

secured that no Jesuit pupil was educated by a compatriot. The system has not yet been changed. Buss, the ultra-montane author of the *Geschichte der Gesellschaft Jesu*, praises it in particular because "it has no character that is dependent upon the genius of a nation or the peculiarity of a single law." The French Jesuit Jouvancy in his *Lern- und Lehrmethode* warns the members of the Order especially against "too much reading of works in the mother tongue"; for, he continues, "not only is it a waste of much time, but the soul may also easily suffer shipwreck." Shipwreck of the soul by familiarity with the mother tongue! And the Bavarian Jesuit Kropf establishes in the eighteenth century as the first principle of the school that "the use of the mother tongue be never permitted." Read through the whole book (an orthodox Roman Jesuit one), from which I take these particulars — *Erläuterungsschriften zur Studienordnung der Gesellschaft Jesu*, 1898, Herder (pp. 229 and 417 for the above quotations) — you will not find the word Fatherland once mentioned! (While this chapter was being printed, I became acquainted with the excellent book of Georg Mertz, *Die Pädagogik der Jesuiten*, Heidelberg, 1898, in which the whole educational system is described from documents and with scientific impartiality. He who reads carefully this dry, jejune account will have no doubt that every nation which opens its schools to the Jesuits simply commits suicide. I do not in the least suspect the good intentions of the Jesuits and do not dispute the fact that they attain to a certain pedagogic success; but their whole system aims at the systematic destruction of individuality — personal as well as national. On the other hand, one must admit that this criminal attack upon all that is most sacred in humanity, this systematic development of a race which "out of the light strives to reach the darkness" is the strictly logical application of the Roman postulates; in rigid and rigidifying consistency lies the strength of Jesuitism).

158 STATE

coronatus imperator, Romanum gubernans imperium, has by his activity in the interests of culture and his Teutonic attitude of mind contributed more than any other to the unfettering of nationalities and to the gagging of the Roman idea; but by such inconsistencies the one infallible doctrine of the theocratic universal Church is in no way affected, and it is impossible that this doctrine and this influence should ever make themselves felt in any direction but the anti-national. For, I repeat, here it is not a question merely of this one definite ideal of Church and Imperium, but of a universal law of human nature and human actions.

In order that this law may be quite clearly apprehended, we will briefly consider the opposite philosophy or view of existence, "outwardly limited, inwardly limitless." It is only in the form of a being strictly limited outwardly, resembling no other man, but clearly revealing the law of its own special self, that the pre-eminent personality manifests itself; it is only as a strictly limited individual phenomenon that genius reveals to us the limitless world of its inner self. I impressed this point so forcibly in my first chapter (on Hellenic Art) that I do not need to discuss it here again in detail; in the second chapter, on Rome, we observed how the same law of strictest limitation outwards produced a nation of unrivalled inner strength. And I ask, where should we be more entitled, than at the sight of the Son of Man upon the Cross, to exclaim, "outwardly limited, inwardly limitless"? And what words would more clearly re-echo the

same truth across the gulf of time than these: The Kingdom of Heaven is not outward, in the world of limited forms, but inward, in your hearts, in the world of the Limitless? This doctrine is the very reverse of the Church doctrine. History as a science of observation teaches us that it is only those races which are limited, which have taken root in and grown up out of national individuality, that

159 STATE

have achieved great things. So soon as it strove to become universal, the strongest nation in the world — Rome — disappeared, and its virtues vanished with it. Everywhere it has been the same. The most vivid consciousness of race and the most constricted civic organisation were the necessary atmosphere for the immortal achievements of the Hellenes; the world-power of Alexander has only the significance of a mechanical spreading of Hellenic elements of culture. The original Persians were in poetry and religion one of the brightest, most energetic and most profoundly gifted races of history: when they had ascended the throne of a world-monarchy, their personality and with it their power disappeared. Even the Turks, when they became a great international power, lost their modest treasure of character, while their cousins, the Huns, by unscrupulously insisting upon the one sole national momentum, and by forcible fusion of their rich stock of sound German and Slavonic elements, are on the point of growing into a great nation before our eyes.

The consideration of these two points brings us to the conclusion that limitation is a general law of nature, quite as general as the striving after the Limitless. Man must go out into the Limitless — his nature imperatively demands it; to be able to do this, he must limit himself. Here the conflict of principles takes place: if we limit ourselves outwardly — in regard to race, Fatherland, personality — as strictly and resolutely as possible, then the inner kingdom of the Limitless will be opened to us, as it was to the Hellenes and the Brahman Indians; if, on the other hand, we strive after something which is unlimited — after an Absolute, an Eternal — we must build on the basis of a narrowly circumscribed inner life, otherwise success is impossible: every great Imperium proves this; it is proved by every philosophical and religious system which claims to be absolute and alone

160 STATE

valid; it is proved above all by that magnificent attempt to supply a universal cosmic idea and cosmic government, the Roman Catholic

Church.

THE STRUGGLE CONCERNING THE STATE

The struggle then in the State during the first twelve centuries of our era was fundamentally a struggle between these two principles of limitation, which are diametrically hostile in all spheres, and whose opposition to each other in the province of politics leads to a conflict between universalism and nationalism. The question here is, have independent nationalities a right to exist? About the year 1200 the future victory of the principle of national limitation, that is to say, of the principle that lays down outward limits, could no longer be doubted. It is true that the Papacy was at its zenith — so at least the historians tell us, but they overlook the fact that this “zenith” only signifies victory over the internal rival for the monarchy of the world, namely, the Emperor, and that this very rivalry within the imperial idea, and this very victory of the Pope have brought about the final downfall of the Roman system. For in the meantime peoples and princes had grown strong: the inner defection from ecclesiastical “limitations” had already begun to be very widespread, the outward defection from the would-be *princeps mundi* was carried out with enviable inconsistency by none other than the most pious princes. Thus St. Louis openly took the part of the excommunicated Frederick and declared to the Pope: “*Les roys ne tiennent de nullui, fors de Dieu et d'eux-mêmes*”; and he was followed by a Philippe le Bel who simply took prisoner an obstinate *Pontifex* and compelled his successor to reside in France under his eye and to confirm the special Gallican privileges which he desired. This conflict is different from that between

161 STATE

Emperor and Pope; for the princes contest the right of Roman universalism to exist; in secular matters they wish to be perfectly independent and in ecclesiastical matters to be masters in their own land. Furthermore, even in the days of his magnificence, the representative of the Roman hierocracy was compelled painfully to tack, and, for a time, in order to keep matters of faith as much as possible under his control, to sacrifice political claims one after the other; the so-called “Roman Emperor of the German nation” (surely the most idiotic *contradictio in adjecto* that was ever invented) was in a still worse plight; his title was a mere mockery, and yet he had to pay so dearly for it that to-day, at the close of the nineteenth century, his successor is the only monarch in Europe who stands at the head, not of a nation, but of a shapeless human conglomeration. On the other hand, the most powerful

modern State arose where the anti-Roman tendency had been so unambiguously expressed that we may say that “the dynastic and the Protestant ideas are so blended as to be scarcely distinguishable.” * In the meantime, in fact, the watchword had been issued, and it was: Neither Emperor nor Pope, but nations.

But, in truth, the conflict is not yet ended; for, though the principle of nationalities has prevailed, the power which represents the opposite principle has never disarmed, is to-day in certain respects stronger than ever, possesses a much better disciplined, more unconditionally submissive throng of officials than in any former century, and is only waiting for the hour when it can unscrupulously assert itself. I have never understood why Catholics of culture take pains to deny or to explain away the fact that the Roman Church is not only a religion but also a system of government, and that the Church as representative of God upon earth may *eo ipso* claim — and always has claimed — absolute power in all things

* Ranke: *Genesis des preussischen Staates*, ed. 1874, p. 174.

162 STATE

of this world. How is it possible to believe what the Roman Church teaches as truth and yet speak of an independence of the secular power — as, to take but one example out of any number, Professor Phillips does in his *Manual of Ecclesiastical Law*, § 297, although, in the same paragraph, on the preceding page, he has just said that “it is not the business of the State to determine what rights belong to the Church, nor to make the exercise of these dependent upon its consent”? But if the State does not determine the rights of the Church it follows of irrefutable logical necessity that the Church determines the rights of the State. And what is here said with astounding “scientific” simplicity is repeated in a hundred other books and in the ever-renewed assertions of high-placed prelates, and the Church is represented as an innocent lamb ignorant of civic affairs — which is impossible without systematic suppression of the truth. If I were a Roman Catholic, I should, God knows, show my colours differently, and take to heart the admonition of Leo XIII., that “we shall not venture to utter untruth or to conceal truth.” * And the truth

* In his Papal Brief *Saepenumero* of August 18, 1883. The warning is expressly addressed “to the historians,” and the Holy Father seems to have had before him a whole collection of the neo-Catholic books of the kind censured by me, for he says with a sigh that modern history seems to him to have become a *conjuratio hominum adversus veritatem*, and in this way any one who has any knowledge of the literature in question will heartily agree with him. *Nomina sunt odiosa*, but I remind the reader that in a note to the last chapter ([p. 132](#)) I called attention to the fact that even Janssen, whose

Geschichte des deutschen Volkes is so popular and so highly thought of, belongs to this “conspiracy against truth.” Thus, for example, he represents the wide dissemination of the Bible at the end of the fifteenth century as a service of the Roman Church, though he knows very well, first, that the reading of the Bible had for two centuries been strictly forbidden by Rome and that only the great confusion in the Church of that time led to a laxity of discipline; secondly, that at that very moment the middle classes and the lower nobility of all Europe were profoundly anti-Roman and for this reason devoted themselves with such zeal to the study of the Bible! How very relative this so-called “dissemination“ was is seen moreover from the one fact that Luther at twenty

163 STATE

is, that the Roman Church from the first — that is, therefore, from Theodosius who founded it — has always claimed unconditional, absolute authority over secular matters. I say that “the Church“ has claimed it, I do not say “the Pope“; for concerning the question who should actually exercise the secular and who the highest religious power, there have been at various times various views and many a dispute; but the doctrine has always been taught that this power is innate in the Church as a divine institution, and this doctrine forms as I have tried to show in the previous chapter (p. [98 f.](#)), so fundamental an axiom of the Roman religion that the whole structure must fall to pieces were the Church seriously to abandon the claim. This is in fact the most admirable and — when reflected in a beautiful mind — the holiest idea of the Roman Church; this religion wishes to provide not only for the future, but also for the present, and that not only because it looks upon earthly life as a preliminary discipline for everlasting life, but because the Roman Church, as the representative of God, wishes in his honour to make this temporal world a glorious

of age had never seen a Bible and had difficulty in finding one in the University library of Erfurt. This one example of falsification of history is typical; in the same way Janssen's book “ventures,” in a hundred places, “to utter untruth and to conceal truth,” and yet it is regarded as strictly scientific. What, then, must we say of that most modern literature which shoots up like fungi from putrid soil, the deliberate aim of which is systematically to blacken the character of all national heroes, from Martin Luther to Bismarck, from Shakespeare to Goethe. Such aims deserve nothing but contempt. A well-known proverb says that lies have short legs, and a less familiar one that one can see as far down the throat of a liar as of a teller of truth. May the peoples of Europe soon be able to see down the throats of this gang! But do not let our indignation mislead us into putting the magnificent universal idea of a Theodosius or a Charlemagne, of a Gregory I. and a Gregory VII., of an Augustine and a Thomas Aquinas, on a par with such modern meannesses. The true Roman idea is a genuine idea of culture, based finally upon the work and the traditions of the great imperial epoch from Tiberius to Marcus Aurelius; the ideal of the writers just mentioned is, as we know (see vol. i. [p. 569](#)), associated with the uncultured stone age, and the same is true of their tricky methods of combat.

forecourt leading to the divine world. As the Catechism of Trent says: *Christi regnum in terris inchoatur, in coelo perficitur*. (The kingdom of Christ attains perfection in heaven, but it begins on earth). * How superficial must thought be if it does not feel the beauty and the immeasurable power of such a conception! And in truth this is no dream of mine, I have not sufficient imagination for that. But I consult Augustine's *De Civitate Dei*, Book XX. chap. ix. and find: *Ecclesia et nunc est regnum Christi, regnumque coelorum*. Twice within a few lines Augustine repeats that the Church even now is the kingdom of Christ. He also, as in the book of *Revelation*, sees men seated upon thrones — and who are they? Those who now rule the Church. This view presupposes a political government, and even when the Emperor exercises it — even when he employs it against the Pope — he, the Emperor, is still a member of the Church, a *Deo coronatus*, whose power rests on religious premisses; so that we cannot speak of a real separation of State and Church, but at most (as I have already demonstrated in the preface to this chapter) of a dispute concerning competency within the Church. The religious basis of this view goes back to Christ himself; for, as I remarked in the third chapter of this book: the life and doctrines of Christ point unmistakably to a condition which can only be realised by community. † It is just at this point that the ageing Empire and youthful Christianity discovered, or thought they discovered, a certain affinity to each other. Without doubt each of the contracting parties was actuated by very different

* To prevent misunderstanding I wish to add that according to Lutheran doctrine also, the believer is even here in possession of everlasting life; but this is a view (as I have fully shown in chaps. v., vii. and x.), which differs *in toto* from the Jewish-Roman one, since it rests not on chronistic consecutiveness, but on present experience (as in the case of Christ).

† See vol. i. [p. 245.](#)

motives, the one by political, the other by religious ones; presumably they were both mistaken; the Empire can have had no idea that it was sacrificing its temporal power for ever, the pure Christianity of the old days cannot have thought that it was throwing itself into the arms of Heathendom, and would immediately be stifled by it; that, however, matters not; from their union, from their fusion and mutual blending the Roman Church originated. Now according to the definition of Augustine,

which is acknowledged to be orthodox, the Church embraces all human beings in the world, * and every man, be he “prince or serf, merchant or teacher, apostle or doctor,” has to regard his activity here on earth as an office assigned to him in the Church, *in hac ecclesia suum munus*. † I cannot see by what loophole a State or, still more so, a nation was to escape, and, establishing itself as an independent entity opposed to the Church, was to say to her, “You, henceforth, mind your own business, in the things of the world I shall rule as I like.” Such a supposition is illogical and senseless, it nullifies the idea of the Roman Church. This idea obviously admits of no limitation, either mentally or materially, and when the Pope, in his capacity as representative of the Church, as its *pater ac moderator*, claims the right to speak the decisive word in secular things, that is quite as justifiable and logical as the assertion of Theodosius, in his famous decree against heretics, that he, the Emperor, is guided “by heavenly wisdom,” or as the decision of dogmatic questions by Charlemagne

* *Ecclesia est populus fidelis per universum orbem dispersus*, adopted in i. 10, 2, of the *Catechismus ex decreto Concilii Tridentini*. But since from Theodosius onwards faith was to be compulsory and unbelief or heterodoxy high treason, since, moreover, schismatics and heretics are still “under the power of the Church“ (as above, i. 10, 9), this definition embraces all men without exception, *omnes humanae creaturae*, as Boniface correctly said in the passages quoted above.

† *Cat. Trid.*, i. 10, 25.

166 STATE

on his own authority. For the Church embraces everything, body and soul, earth and heaven, its power is unlimited and he who represents it — no matter who he be — has in consequence absolute authority. Gregory II. even, no grandiloquent prince of the Church, shows that the “secular power must be subordinate to the spiritual“ (*i.e.*, the Roman Church); to William the Conqueror he writes that the apostolic power is answerable to God for all things; in a letter of October 23, 1236 (in which he emphasises especially that the rights of the Emperor are only “transmitted“ by the Church), Gregory IX. says: “Just as the representative of Peter has control over all souls, so he possesses, in the whole world also, a Principality over the Temporal, and over men's bodies, and governs the Temporal with the rein of justice“; Innocent IV. asserts that the right of the Church to judge *spiritualiter de temporalibus* may not be impugned. And since all these words, unambiguous as they are, yet gave scope for much casuistic hair-splitting, the honest and able Boniface VIII. dissipated all misunderstanding by a bull, *Ausculata fili* of December 5, 1301, addressed to the King of France, in which he writes: “God has notwithstanding our lack of merit set us over Kings and

Empires and laid upon us the yoke of apostolic bondage, in order that we may in his name and according to his will uproot, tear down, destroy, scatter, build up and plant... Let no one therefore, beloved son, persuade thee that thou hast no superior and art not subject to the supreme hierarch of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Whoever holds this view is a fool; whoever obstinately asserts it is an unbeliever and not of the fold of the good Shepherd.“ Further on Boniface orders that several French bishops shall come to Rome, in order that the Pope may with their help determine what may help “to remedy the abuses and contribute to the salvation and the good administration of the Empire“: on this

167 STATE

the Roman Catholic bishop Hefele makes the true remark, “But whoever possesses the right to regulate, to uproot, to build and to see to good administration in an Empire is the real head of it.“ * It is similarly only consistent, since all men on earth are subordinate to the Church and are incorporated in it, that the final authority over all countries should also be vested in it. Over certain countries, as, for example, Spain, Hungary, England, &c., the Church at once claimed sovereign jurisdiction; † in the case of all the others it reserved as its right the confirmation and coronation of the Kings, it deposed them and nominated new Kings to fill the places of those deposed (as in the case of the Carolingians) — for, as Thomas Aquinas states in his *De regimine principum*, “Just as the body only derives strength and capacity from the soul, so the temporary authority of princes is derived from the spiritual authority of Peter and his successors.“ ‡ The kingly office is, in fact, as shown above, nothing more and nothing less than a *munus* within the Church, within the *civitas Dei*. For this reason, too, no heretic is a legitimate King. As early as 1535 Paul III. solemnly dispensed all English subjects from obedience to their King, § and in the year 1569 Pius V. made this measure still more stringent, in that the great Queen Elizabeth was not only deposed and

* *Konziliengeschichte*, vi. 331. The Latin text of the Church laws says: *ad evellendum, destruendum, dispergendum, dissipandum, aedificandum, atque plantandum*; later *ordinare ... ad bonum et prosperum regimen regni*. The former quotations are from the same work, v. 163, 164, 1003, 1131; vi. 325-327.

† The property-right over Hungary is based upon the pretended gift of King Stephen; Spain, England (and, it may be, France also) are regarded as included in the forged gift of Constantine, according to which “the kingly power in all the provinces of Italy, as also in the western regions“ (*in partibus occidentalibus*) should be conceded to the Papal stool (*cf.* Hefele, v. 11).

‡ I quote from Bryce: *Le Saint Empire Romain Germanique*, p. 134.

§ Hergenröther: Hefele's *Konziliengeschichte*, continuation, ix. 896.

deprived of “all her property,” but every Englishman also who would dare to obey her was threatened with excommunication. * In consequence of this the whole political development of Europe since the Reformation is not approved by the Church; it makes a virtue of necessity, but it does not acknowledge the events: it protested against the religious Peace of Augsburg, raised its voice with still greater solemnity against the Westphalian Peace and declared it “for all time null and void,” † it refused its assent to the findings of the Vienna Congress. Over the extra-European world also the Church has with praiseworthy consistency claimed sole authority, and by two bulls, on May 3 and 4, 1493, it has “in the name of God” presented to Spain all discovered or still-to-be-discovered lands west of the 25th degree of longitude (to the west of Greenwich), to Portuguese Africa, &c. ‡

* Green: [History of the English People \(Eversley ed.\) iv. 265, 270](#). This is not an abandoned standpoint, for it is only in our time that Felton, the man who had nailed this bull to the doors of the Bishop of London, was beatified by Leo XIII.!

† Phillips: *Lehrbuch des Kirchenrechts*, p. 807, and the bull mentioned there, *Zelo domus*. Indeed, not only the Roman Pope but also the Roman Emperor protested in this case, in that he claimed to possess “reserve rights,” but at the same time refused to explain what he meant by these; what he thus safeguarded was simply the never abandoned claim to *potestas universalis*, that is, absolute supreme power, in other words, the Emperor remained true to the Roman universal conception. (See the remarks on this in Siegel: *Deutsche Rechtsgeschichte*, § 100.)

‡ Pope Alexander VI. says in these bulls that the gift is presented “out of pure generosity” and “in virtue of the authority of Almighty God, conferred on him by Saint Peter” (*cf.* the note to [p. 141](#)). Absolute authority over everything temporal cannot go further, unless some one should arrogate the authority to make a gift of the moon. The bull *Inter cetera* of May 4, 1493, is found printed *in extenso* in Fiske's *Discovery of America*, 1892, ii. 580 f. In the same book, vol. i. p. 454, we find a detailed account of the accompanying circumstances, &c., as also a thorough discussion of the difficulties arising from the vagueness of the Papal text. For the *Pontifex maximus*, although professing to speak *ex certa scientia*, cedes to the Spaniards all discovered and still-to-be-discovered lands (*omnes insulas et terras firmas inventas et inveniendas, detectas et detegendas*) which lie west and

I intentionally limit myself to these few indications and quotations, taken from the books embraced by my modest library; I should only need to go to a public library to come upon the track of hundreds of proofs perhaps even more to the purpose; I remember, for example, that in later bulls the statement that the Pope possesses “plenitude of power over all

peoples, Empires and princes“ recurs with slight variations almost like a formula; but I am far from desiring to give a scientific proof; on the contrary, I should like to convince the reader that here it is not a question of what this or that Pope or Emperor, this or that Church assembly or legal authority has said (about which there has already been enough paper wasted and time lost), but that the constraining element lies in the idea itself, in the striving after the Absolute, the Limitless. Once we realise this our judgment is remarkably enlightened; we become juster towards the Roman Church and juster towards its opponents; we learn to look for the real political and, on the whole, morally decisive development in those countless places where, and on those countless occasions when, nationalism and, generally speaking, individualism revealed themselves and asserted themselves in opposition to universalism and absolutism. When Charles the Simple refused to take the oath of fealty to the Emperor Arnulf, he made a deep breach in the *Romanum imperium*, one so deep, indeed, that no later Emperor, the

south (*versus Occidentem et Meridiem*) of a definite longitude; but no mathematician has as yet been able to discover what geographical region lies “south“ of a “longitude“; and that the Pope really meant a longitude cannot be questioned, since he says with circumstantial simplicity: *fabricando et construendo unam lineam a polo Arctico ad polum Antarcticum*. Moreover, this gift of a grossly ignorant Curia exercised an influence which the Curia was far from foreseeing, for it constrained the Spaniards to reach farther and farther towards the west, till they found the Straits of Magellan, and compelled the Portuguese to discover the eastern passage to India around the Cape of Good Hope. More details on this point in the [section on “Discovery“](#) in the next chapter.

170 STATE

most important not excepted, could ever again attempt to resuscitate in all its fulness the true universal plan of Charlemagne. William the Conqueror, an orthodox prince and pious churchman, whose services to strict Church discipline are almost unrivalled, nevertheless replied to the Pope, when the latter claimed the newly conquered England as ecclesiastical property, and wished to invest him with it as a fief, “Never have I taken an oath of fealty, nor shall I ever do so.“ Such are the men who gradually broke the secular power of the Church. They believed in the Trinity, in the similarity of essence of Father and Son, in purgatory, in everything that the priests wished — but the Roman political ideal, the theocratic *civitas Dei*, was utterly alien to them; their power of conception was still too undeveloped, their character too independent, their mental nature too unbroken, indeed mostly too rudely personal, to enable them even to understand it. And Europe was full of such Teutonic princes. A considerable time before the Reformation, the insubordination of the small Spanish kingdoms had, in spite of Catholic bigotry, given the Curia

much trouble, and France, the eldest son of the Church, had succeeded in asserting its Pragmatic Sanction, which was the beginning of a clean separation between the ecclesiastical and the secular State.

This was the true struggle in the State.

And whoso realises this must see that Rome was beaten all along the line. The Catholic States have gradually emancipated themselves no less than the others. Certainly they have sacrificed certain important privileges in connection with the investiture of the bishops and so forth, but not all, and to make up for this, most of them have gone so far in regard to religious toleration that they recognise simultaneously several creeds as State religions and pay their clergy. The contrast to the

171 STATE

Roman ideal cannot possibly be formulated more incisively. In reference to the State, in consequence, a statistic of “Catholics“ and “Protestants“ has now no meaning. These words express little more than the belief in definite incomprehensible mysteries, and we may assert that the great practical and political idea of Rome, that Imperium transfigured by religion and faultlessly absolutist, is unknown to the great majority of Roman Catholics to-day, and if it were known, would find as little approval from them as from non-Catholics. A natural consequence of this — of this only, let it be noted — is that religious contrasts have also disappeared. * For as soon as Rome's ideal is merely a *credo*, it stands on the same footing as other Christian sects; each one of course believes that it possesses the one and only complete truth; not one, so far as I am aware, has abandoned Catholicism in this sense; the various Protestant doctrines are by no means essentially new, they are merely a return to the former state of the Christian faith, a discarding of the heathen elements that have crept in. Only a few sects do not acknowledge the so-called Apostles' Creed, which is not even derived from Rome, but from Gaul, and thus owes its introduction to the Empire, not to the Papacy. † The Roman Church, therefore, when regarded merely as a religious creed, is, at best, merely a *prima inter pares*, which even at the present day can no longer claim one-half of the Christian world as its own, and, unless a revolution takes place, will in a hundred years scarcely embrace a third. ‡

* Disappeared, I mean, everywhere except where the activity of the one sole society of Jesus has recently shown hatred and contempt of fellow-citizens who hold different views.

† See Adolf Harnack: *Das apostolische Glaubensbekenntnis*, 27th ed. (especially p. 14 f. “The Empire of Charlemagne has given Rome its symbol“).

‡ Here I intentionally make my estimate as moderate as possible. According to the

calculations of Ravenstein the number of Protestants has increased almost fivefold in the nineteenth century, while that of

172 STATE

Even though Luther, in faithful imitation of the Roman view and in contrast to Erasmus, teaches the doctrine of systematic intolerance, and Calvin publishes a work to demonstrate “*jure gladii coercendos esse haereticos*,” the layman who lives in a purely secular State will never understand that, never admit that, no matter to what creed he belongs. Our ancestors were not intolerant by nature, nor are they so now. Intolerance is a result solely of universalism: he who aims at something outwardly unlimited must make the inner limits all the narrower. The Jew — who might be called a born freethinker — had been persuaded that he possessed the whole indivisible truth, and with it a right to world-empire: for this he had to sacrifice his personal freedom, let his intellect be gagged and foster hatred instead of love in his heart. Frederick II., perhaps the least orthodox Emperor that has ever lived, had nevertheless led astray by the dream of a Roman universal empire, to ordain that all heretics should be declared infamous and outlawed, that their goods should be confiscated, and they themselves burned, or, should they recant, be punished with lifelong imprisonment; he at the same time ordered the princes, who had not respected his pretended imperial prerogatives, to be blinded and buried alive.

THE DELUSION OF THE UNLIMITED

Now if this struggle between nationalism and universalism, the struggle against the late Roman legacy —

the Catholics has not been doubled. The chief reason for this is the more rapid multiplication of Protestant peoples; but there is another fact, namely, that those who go over to Catholicism do not cover a tenth of those who leave it; and thus it is that in the United States, despite the constant immigration of Catholics and the increase of their total numbers, there is a rapid decrease relatively. The above estimate is therefore a very cautious one.

173 STATE

which occupies more than a thousand years and only then leaves free scope for the conflict concerning the inner shaping of the State — has been portrayed by me from a more general standpoint, I have done so

especially because I am keeping in view the nineteenth century. And though this is not the place to enter into details concerning that century, yet I should like at least to indicate this connection. For it would be a fatal error to suppose that the struggle was brought to an end by the wreck of the old political ideal. It is true that the opponents of universalism are no longer buried alive, nor are men burnt alive nowadays for asserting, like Hus (who followed Augustine), that Peter neither was nor is the head of the Church; Prince Bismarck, too, could issue laws and repeal laws without having actually to go to Canossa and stand there for three days before the gate in the shirt of the penitent. The old forms will never return. But the ideas of unlimited Absolutism are still very vigorous in our midst, not only within the old consecrated frame of the Roman Church, but also outside it. And wherever we see them at work — whether as Jesuitism or as Socialism, as philosophical systems or as industrial monopoly — there we must recognise (or we shall have to recognise it to our cost later) that the outwardly Unlimited demands the double sacrifice of personality and of freedom.

As regards the Church, we should indeed reveal little insight, were we in any way to depreciate the power of so wonderful an organism as the Roman hierarchy. No one can prophesy to what it may yet attain should its lucky star again be in the ascendant. When in the year 1871 the *excommunicatio major*, with all the canonical consequences attached to it, was pronounced against Döllinger, the police of Munich had to adopt special measures to protect his life; a single fact like this gives us a glimpse into abysses of fanatical univer-

174 STATE

salist delusion which might one day yawn beneath our feet in much greater dimensions. * But I should not like to lay much stress upon such things, nor upon the underhand methods of the above-mentioned conspiracy of persecuting chaplains and their creatures; it is in good not in evil that the source of all strength lies. In the idea of Catholicity, continuity, infallibility, divine appointment, all-embracing continuous revelation, God's Kingdom upon earth, the representative of God as supreme judge, every worldly career as the fulfilment of an ecclesiastical office — in all this there lies so much that is good and beautiful that honest belief in it must lend it strength. And this faith, as I think I have convincingly shown, permits no separation between Temporal and Eternal, between Worldly and Heavenly. In the very nature of this direction of will lies the Unlimited: it serves as basis to the structure which the will raises; every limitation is a disturbance, an obstruction, an evil to be overcome as soon as possible; for limitation — were it to be recognised as existing by right — could mean nothing less than the

sacrifice of the idea itself. Catholic means universal, that is, an all-embracing unity. Therefore every truly orthodox, intelligent Catholic is virtually — though not actually, nor at the present day — a universalist, and that means an enemy of nations and of all individual freedom. Most of them do not

* In fact the excommunicated person is, according to Catholic Church law, an outlaw: In Gratian (*Causa 23*, p. 5, c. 47, according to Gibbon) we find the statement: *Homicidas non esse qui excommunicatos trucidant*. But in former centuries (by Decree of Urban II.) the Church had imposed penances upon the murderer of one excommunicated “in case his motive was not an absolutely pure one.” Our beloved nineteenth century has, however, gone a step farther, and Cardinal Turrecremata, “the foremost supporter of Papal infallibility,” has expressed in his commentary on Gratian the opinion that, according to the orthodox doctrine, the murderer of an excommunicated man does not require to do penance! (cf. Döllinger, *Briefe und Erklärungen über die vatikanischen Dekrete*, 1890, pp. 103, 131, 140).

175 STATE

know this and many will indignantly deny it, but yet the fact remains; for the great, general ideas, the mathematical necessary inferences of thought and consequences of actions, are much more powerful than the individual with his goodwill and good intentions; here laws of nature prevail. Just as every schism must of necessity be followed by a further disruption into new schisms, because here the freedom of the individual is the primary cause, so every Catholicism exercises an irresistible power of integration; the individual cannot resist it any more than a piece of iron can resist the magnet. But for the great distance between Rome and Constantinople — great, having regard to the means of travel then available — the Oriental schism would never have taken place; but for the superhuman power of Luther's personality, the north of Europe would scarcely have succeeded in freeing itself from Rome. Cervantes, a faithful believer, is fond of quoting the remark, “Behind the Cross lurks the Devil.” That surely is meant to indicate that the mind, once launched on this path of absolute religion, of blind belief in authority, knows no limit and brooks no obstruction. And, as a matter of fact, this very Devil has since then ruined the noble nation of Don Quixote. And when we further consider that the universalist and absolutist ideas from which the Church originated were a product of general decline, a last hope and a real safety-anchor for a raceless, chaotic human Babel (see pp. [43](#), [71](#), [121](#)), we shall scarcely be able to refrain from thinking that from similar causes similar results would again ensue, and that, accordingly, in the present condition of the world, many things would tend once more to confirm the universal Church in its claims and plans. In view of this it would be only proper for those who with Goethe seek to attain “inner

limitlessness“ to emphasise as strongly as possible outward limitations, that is, free personality, pure race and

176 STATE

independent nations. And while Leo XIII. with perfect right (from his standpoint) refers our contemporaries to Gregory VII. and Thomas Aquinas, such men will point with equally good right to Charles the Simple and William the Conqueror, to Walther von der Vogelweide and Petrus Waldus, to that blacksmith who refused to obey the “alien“ Pope, and to the great silent movement of the guilds, of the city leagues, of the secular universities, which, at the beginning of the epoch of which I speak, began to make their influence felt throughout all Europe as a first token of a new, national, anti-universal shaping of society, a new, absolutely anti-Roman culture.

In this conflict it is not merely a question of the national secular State in opposition to the universal ecclesiastical State; wherever we meet universalism there anti-nationalism and anti-individualism are its necessary correlatives. Nor does it need to be conscious universalism, it is sufficient that an idea aims at something absolute, something limitless. Thus, for example, all consistently reasoned Socialism leads to the absolute State. To call Socialists point-blank “a party dangerous to the State,“ as is usually done, is only to give rise to one of those confusions of which our age is so fond. Certainly Socialism signifies a danger to the individual national States, as it does, on the whole, to the principle of individualism, but it is no danger to the idea of the State. It honestly admits its internationalism; its character is revealed, however, not in disintegration, but in a wonderfully developed organisation, copied, as it were, from a machine. In both points it betrays its affinity to Rome. In fact, it represents the same Catholic idea as the Church, although it grasps it by the other end. For that reason, too, there is no room in its system for individual freedom and diversity, for personal originality. *Ce qui lie tous les socialistes, c'est la haine*

177 STATE

de la liberté, ... as Flaubert says. * He who tears down the outward barriers, puts up inner ones. Socialism is imperialism in disguise; it will hardly be realisable without hierarchy and Primacy; in the Catholic Church it finds a pattern of socialistic, anti-individualistic organisation. An absolutely similar movement towards the Limitless, with the same inevitable consequence of a suppression of the Individual, is encountered

in the realm of great commercial and industrial undertakings. Read, for example, in the *Wirtschafts- und handelspolitische Rundschau* of 1897, the articles by R. E. May on the increase of syndicates and the consequent “international centralisation of production, as of capital“ (p. 34 f.). This development in the direction of limited liability companies and colossal production by syndicates means a war to the knife against personality, which can assert itself only within narrow limits — whether it be as merchant or as manufacturer. And this movement extends from the individual person, as is evident, to the personality of nations. In a recent farce a merchant is represented as proudly exclaiming to every new-comer, “Do you know? I am transformed into a Company.“ If this economic tendency remained without counterpoise, the peoples could soon say of themselves, “We are transformed into an international Company.“ And if I may at one mighty leap spring over to a province very far remote from the economic one, to seek for further examples of the aspirations of universalism in our midst, I should like to call attention to the great Thomistic movement, which was called forth by the Papal Encyclical of the year 1879, *Aeternis Patris*, and is now of such compass that even scientific books from a certain camp have already the hardihood to declare Thomas Aquinas the greatest philosopher of all times, to tear down everything which — to the everlasting praise of humanity —

* *Correspondence* iii. 269.

178 STATE

has since been thought by Teutonic thinkers, and thus to lead men back to the thirteenth century and once more to cast them into the intellectual and moral fetters which, in the obstinate struggle for freedom, they have since then gradually broken and thrown off. And what is it that they praise in Thomas Aquinas? His universality! The fact that he has established a comprehensive system, in which all contrasts are reconciled, all contradictory laws annulled, all questionings of the human reason answered. He is called a second Aristotle: “What Aristotle with but vague conception stammers, received perfectly clear and eloquent expression from Thomas Aquinas.“ * Like the Stagyrte, he knows everything, from the nature of the Godhead to the nature of earthly bodies and the qualities of the resurrected body; but, being Christian, he knows much more than Aristotle, for he possesses Revelation as a basis. Now surely no thinker will be inclined to make light of the achievements of a Thomas Aquinas; it would be presumption for me to venture to praise him, but I may confess that I have read accounts of his whole system with wonder and admiration and have

carefully studied certain of his writings. But what is the important matter for a practical man especially in connection with the aim of this chapter? It is that Thomas builds his system — which is “more universal than any other“ — upon two assumptions: philosophy must unconditionally submit and become *ancilla ecclesiae*, a handmaid of the Church; moreover, it must humble itself to the position of an *ancilla Aristotelis*, a handmaid of Aristotle. Ob-

* Fr. Abert (Professor of Theology in the University of Würzburg): *Sancti Thomae Aquinatis compendium theologiae*, 1896, p. 6. The sentence quoted is a panegyric paraphrase of an ancient judgment which was meant quite differently. With all respect for the achievements of Thomas, it is a monstrous error of judgment, if not a case of culpable misleading, to put him on an equality with Aristotle, the epoch-making systematiser and moulder (see vol. i. [p. 49](#)).

179 STATE

viously it is always the same principle: allow your hands and feet to be fettered and you will see miracles! Hang up before your eyes definite dogmas (which were decreed in the centuries of mankind's deepest humiliation by vote of majority, by bishops, many of whom could neither read nor write) and presuppose, in addition, that the first groping efforts of a brilliant, but, as has been proved, very one-sided Hellenic systematiser express the eternal, absolute and complete truth, and I shall give you a universal system! That is an attack, a dangerous attack upon the innermost freedom of man! Far from being inwardly limitless, as Goethe wished, he has now had two narrow bonds forged around his soul and his brain by an alien hand; that is the price which we have to pay for “universal knowledge.“ In any case, long before Leo XIII. issued his Encyclical, a universal system resting on similar principles had grown out of the Protestant Church, that of Georg Friedrich Wilhelm Hegel. A Protestant Thomas Aquinas: that tells us everything. And yet there had been an Immanuel Kant, the Luther of philosophy, the destroyer of spurious knowledge, the annihilator of all systems, who had pointed out to us “the limits of our thinking power“ and warned us “never to venture with speculative reason beyond the boundary of experience“; but, after assigning to us such strict and definite outward limits, he had thrown open, as no philosopher had done before him, the doors to the inner world of the Limitless and thus revealed to us the home of the free man. *

* More details regarding Thomas Aquinas and Kant in the [section on “Philosophy“](#) in the following chapter. For the sake of completeness it may be mentioned that we have a Jewish as well as a Protestant Thomas Aquinas, namely, Spinoza, the maker of a universal system, the “renewer of the old Hebraic Cabbala“ (*i.e.*, of the magic secret

doctrine), as Leibniz calls him. Spinoza has this also in common with the other two, that he has not enriched with a single creative thought either mathematics, his special province, or science, his hobby.

180 STATE

LIMITATION BASED ON PRINCIPLE

These cursory indications are merely intended to show in how many provinces the struggle between individualism and anti-individualism, nationalism and anti-nationalism (internationalism is another word for the same thing), freedom and non-freedom is still raging and will probably rage for ever. In the second book (not yet published) I shall have to enter more fully, in as far as they affect the present, into themes scarcely touched upon here. But I should not like in the meantime to be considered a pessimist. Seldom have the consciousness of race, national feeling, and suspicious safe-guarding of the rights of personality been so active and vigorous as in our time; a phase of feeling is passing over the nations at the close of the nineteenth century which reminds one of the dull cry of the hunted animal, when the noble creature at bay suddenly turns, determined to fight for its life. And in our case resolution means victory. For the great attractiveness of every Universalist idea is due to the weakness of men; the strong man turns from it and finds in his own breast, in his own family, in his own people, the Limitless, which he would not surrender for the whole cosmos with its countless stars. Goethe, from whom I derived the leading idea of this chapter, has in another passage beautifully expressed how the Limitless, the Catholic Absolute, is in consonance with a sluggish disposition:

Im Grenzenlosen sich zu finden,
Wird gern der Einzelne verschwinden,
Da lös't sich aller Überdruß;
Statt heissem Wünschen, wildem Wollen,
Statt läst'gem Fordern, strengem Sollen,
Sich aufzugeben ist Genuss. *

* Man is but too ready to pass out of sight and take refuge in the limitless, where all trouble is at an end. No more fervent wishing, no

181 STATE

Now from these nation-building Teutons of former generations we can learn that there is a higher enjoyment than to surrender, and that is, to

assert ourselves. A conscious national policy, economic movements, science, art, all this scarcely existed in the olden time, or even did not exist at all; but what we see dawning about the thirteenth century, this vividly throbbing life in all spheres, this creative power, this “importunate demanding“ of individual freedom, had not fallen from heaven, rather had the seed been sown in the previous dark centuries: the “wild willing“ had tilled the soil, the “fervent wishing“ had tended the delicate blooms. Our Teutonic culture is a result of toil and pain and faith — not ecclesiastical, but religious faith. If we go lovingly through those annals of our ancient forbears, which tell us so little and yet so much, what will strike us most is the almost incredible strength of the developed sense of duty; for the worst cause, as for the best, every one yields up his life unquestioningly. From Charlemagne, who after over-busy days spends his night in laborious writing exercises, to that splendid blacksmith who refused to forge fetters for the opponent of Rome, everywhere we find “the stern Shall.“ Did these men know what they wanted? I scarcely think so. But they knew what they did not want, and that is the beginning of all practical wisdom. * Thus Charlemagne,

more wild willing, no more importunate demanding! no more stern “shall.“ To yield is joy!

* I cannot refrain from quoting here an infinitely profound political remark of Richard Wagner: “We need only know what we do not wish, then we shall with the spontaneous necessity of nature attain quite surely to what we do wish, and the latter only becomes perfectly clear and conscious to ourselves when we have attained it: for the condition in which we have put aside what we do not wish is just the one which we desired to reach. It is thus that the people acts, and for that reason it acts in the only right way. You, however, consider it incapable, because it does not know what it wants: but what know you? Can you think and comprehend anything but what is present and therefore attained? You could imagine it, arbitrarily fancy it,

182 STATE

for example, indulged many a childish illusion in regard to what he wished, and committed many a fatal error; but in what he did not wish he always hit the nail on the head: no interference on the part of the Pope, no worshipping of images, no granting of privileges to the nobility, &c. In his willing Charles was in many ways a universalist and absolutist, in his non-willing he proved himself a Teuton. Exactly the same attracted us in the case of Dante ([p. 144 f.](#)): his political idea of the future was a cobweb of the brain, his energetic rejection of all temporal claims of the Church a benefit of far-reaching influence.

And so we see that here, in the State, as in all human things, everything depends on the fundamental characteristics of the mental attitude, not on cognition. The mental attitude (*Gesinnung* *) is the

rudder, it decides the direction and with the direction the goal — even though this should long remain invisible. The conflict in the State was now, as I hope I have shown, in the very first place such a struggle between two directions, *i.e.*, between the steersmen. As soon as the one had finally grasped the rudder firmly, the further development towards greater and greater freedom, more and more distinct nationalism and individualism, was natural and inevitable — just as inevitable as the contrary development of Caesarism and Papacy towards ever more restricted freedom.

Nothing is absolute in the world; even freedom and non-freedom denote only two directions, and neither the individual nor the nation can stand alone and perfectly independent; they surely belong to a whole, in which

but not know it. Only what the people has achieved can you know, till then may you be satisfied with recognising clearly what you do not want, denying what should rightly be denied, destroying what should be destroyed“ (*Nachgelassene Schriften*, 1895, p. 118).

* The root of *Sinn* denotes a journey, a way, a going; *Gesinnung* therefore means a direction in which a man moves.

183 STATE

every unit supports and is supported. However, on that evening of June 15, 1215, when the *Magna Charta* came into being — crafted, discussed, negotiated and signed on this one day by the “wild willing“ of Teutons — the direction was decided for all Europe. The representative of universalism, it is true — the representative of the doctrine that “to surrender is enjoyment“ — hastened to declare this law null and void and to excommunicate its authors all and sundry; but the hand kept firm hold of the rudder; the Roman Imperium was bound to sink, while the free Teutons made ready to enter into possession of the empire of the world.

184

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185

THE RISE OF A NEW WORLD

Die Natur schafft ewig neue Gestalten; was da
ist, war noch nie; was war, kommt nicht wieder.

GOETHE.

186

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187

NINTH CHAPTER

FROM THE YEAR 1200 TO THE YEAR 1800

The childhood shows the man,
As morning shows the day; be famous then
By wisdom; as thy empire must extend,
So let extend your mind o'er all the world.

MILTON.

A. THE TEUTONS AS CREATORS OF A NEW CULTURE

Wir, wir leben! Unser sind die Stunden,
Und der Lebende hat Recht.

SCHILLER.

TEUTONIC ITALY

The same feature of an indomitable individualism, which, in political as well as in religious affairs, conduced to the rejection of universalism and to the formation of nations, led to the creation of a new world, that is to say, of an absolutely new order of society adapted to the character, the needs, and the gifts of a new species of men. It was a creation brought about by natural necessity, the creation of a new civilisation, a new culture. It was Teutonic blood and Teutonic blood alone (in the wide sense in which I take the word, that is to say, embracing the Celtic,

Teutonic and Slavonic, or North European races *) that formed the impelling force and the informing

* See vol. i. [chap. vi.](#)

188 THE TEUTONS AS CREATORS OF A NEW CULTURE

power. It is impossible to estimate aright the genius and development of our North-European culture, if we obstinately shut our eyes to the fact that it is a definite species of mankind which constitutes its physical and moral basis. We see that clearly to-day: for the less Teutonic a land is, the more uncivilised it is. He who at the present time travels from London to Rome passes from fog into sunshine, but at the same time from the most refined civilisation and high culture into semi-barbarism — dirt, coarseness, falsehood, poverty. Yet Italy has never ceased for a single day to be a focus of highly developed civilisation; its inhabitants prove this by the correctness of their deportment and demeanour; what we have here is not so much a decadence that has recently set in, as men are apt to maintain, but rather a remnant of Roman imperial culture, regarded from the incomparably higher standpoint which we occupy to-day and by men who hold absolutely different ideals. How splendid was the glory of Italy, how it went ahead and held aloft the torch for other nations on the road to a new world, while it still contained in its midst elements outwardly latinised, but inwardly thoroughly Teutonic! The beautiful country, which had already under the empire degenerated into absolute sterility, possessed for many centuries a rich well of pure Teutonic blood: the Celts, the Langobardians, the Goths, the Franks, the Normans, had flooded nearly the whole land and remained, especially in the north and the south, for a long time almost unmixed, partly because they, as uncultivated and warlike men, formed a caste apart, but also because (as already marked on [p. 538](#), vol. i.) the legal rights of the “Romans” and of the Teutons remained different in all strata of the population until well into the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, in Lombardy, indeed, until past the beginning of the fifteenth; and this naturally added considerably to the

189 THE TEUTONS AS CREATORS OF A NEW CULTURE

difficulty of fusion. “Thus these various Teutonic tribes,” as Savigny points out, “lived with the main stock of the population (the remnant of the Roman Chaos of Peoples) locally mingling, but differing in customs and rights.” Here, where the uncultured Teuton, by constant contact

with a higher culture, first awoke to the consciousness of himself, many a movement first found the volcanic fire that burst into the formation of a new world: learning and industry, the obstinate assertion of civic rights, the early bloom of Teutonic art. The northern third of Italy — from Verona to Siena — resembles in its peculiar development a Germany whose Emperor might have lived on the other side of the high mountains. Everywhere German counts had taken the place of Roman provincial governors, and it was always only for a short time, till he was hastily called away, that a King resided in the land, while a jealous rival King, the Pope, was near at hand and ever rejoicing in intrigues. In this way the old Germanic tendency to form self-ruling cities, which is in the main an Indo-European characteristic, was able at an early period to develop in Northern Italy and become the ruling power in the land. The extreme north led the way; but Tuscany soon followed suit and profited by the Hundred Years War between Pope and Emperor to wrest the inheritance of Mathilda from both and to give to the world, in addition to a Pleiad of ever memorable cities, in which Petrarch, Ariosto, Mantegna, Correggio, Galilei and other immortals arose, the crown of all cities, Florence — formerly the townlet of a margrave, which was soon to represent the essence of anti-Roman, creative individualism — to be the birthplace of Dante and Giotto, of Donatello, Leonardo and Michael Angelo — the mother of the arts, from whose breast all the great men, even those who were born at a distance, even a Raphael, first drew the nurture of perfection.

190 THE TEUTONS AS CREATORS OF A NEW CULTURE

Now and now only impotent Rome could adorn herself anew: the diligence and the enterprise of the men of the north had poured heavy sums into the Papal coffers, while at the same time their genius awakened and put at the disposal of the declining metropolis, which in the course of a two thousand years' history had not had a single creative thought, the immeasurable treasures of western Teutonic inventive power. This was not a *rinascimento*, as the dilettantic belles-lettrists, in exaggerated admiration of their own literary hobbies, imagined, but a *nascimento* — the birth of something entirely new — which, as it immediately, leaving the paths of tradition, pursued its own path in art, at the same time unfurled its sails to explore the oceans from which the Greek and Roman “hero“ had shrunk in terror, and gave the eye its telescope to reveal to human perception the hitherto impenetrable mystery of the heavenly bodies. If we simply must see in this a Renaissance, it is not the rebirth of antiquity, and least of all the rebirth of inartistic, unphilosophic, unscientific Rome, but simply free man's regeneration from out the all-levelling Imperium: freedom of political,

national organisation in contrast to cut-and-dried common pattern; freedom of rivalry, of individual independence in work and creation and endeavour, in contrast to the peaceful uniformity of the *civitas Dei*; freedom of the senses of observation in contrast to dogmatic interpretations of nature; freedom of investigation and thought in contrast to artificial systems after the manner of Thomas Aquinas; freedom of artistic invention and shaping in contrast to hieratically fixed formulas; finally, freedom of faith in contrast to religious intolerance.

In beginning this chapter, and at the same time a new division of this work with reference to Italy, I must disclaim any scrupulous attention to chronology; it would be altogether inadmissible to assert in so many words

191 THE TEUTONS AS CREATORS OF A NEW CULTURE

that the *rinascimento* of free Teutonic individuality began in Italy; rather might it be said that the first imperishable blossoms of its culture made their appearance there; but I wanted to call attention to the fact that even here in the south, at the doors of Rome, the sudden outburst of civic independence, industrial activity, scientific earnestness, and artistic creative power was through and through Teutonic, and in that sense anti-Roman. A glance at that age (to which I shall recur) proves it, a glance at the present age equally so. In the meantime, two circumstances have led to a progressive decrease of the Teutonic blood in Italy: on the one hand, the unhampered fusion with the ignoble mixed population, on the other, the destruction of the Teutonic nobility in never-ending civil wars, in the conflicts between cities, in the blood-feuds and other outbursts of wild passion. We need only read the history of one of these cities, for example, Perugia, which in the upper ranks of its society was almost completely Gothic-Langobardic! It is scarcely comprehensible how with such ceaseless slaughter of whole families (which began as soon as the city became independent), single branches still retained something of their genuinely Teutonic character until well into the sixteenth century; after that the Teutonic blood was exhausted. * It is evident that the hastily acquired culture, the violent assimilation of an essentially foreign civilisation, the sudden revelation, moreover, of Hellenism which was in sharpest contrast to them yet mentally akin, perhaps too, the incipient fusion with a blood which was poison to Teutons ... it is evident that all these things had not merely conduced to a miraculous outburst of

* Goethe's unerring eye has perceived the race-relations here; of the Italian Renaissance he says: "It was as if the children of God had wedded the daughters of men," and he calls Pietro Perugino "an honest German soul" (*Ital. Reise*, 18/10/86 and 19/10/86).

genius, but had at the same time bred madness. * If any one ever wishes to prove an affinity between genius and madness, let him point to Italy of the *Trecento*, *Quattrocento* and *Cinquecento*! With all its permanent importance for our new culture, this “Renaissance“ in itself reminds us more of the paroxysm of death than of a phenomenon that guarantees vitality. A thousand glorious flowers burst forth as if by magic, where immediately before the uniformity of an intellectual desert had prevailed; a sudden blossoming everywhere; in giddy haste talents just awakened to activity storm the highest peak: Michael Angelo might almost have been a personal pupil of Donatello, and it was only by an accident that Raphael did not actually sit at Leonardo's feet. We get a vivid conception of this synchronism when we remember that the life of Titian alone extends from Sandro Botticelli to Guido Reni! But the flame of genius died down even more quickly than it had blazed up. When the heart was throbbing most proudly, the body was already in the fullness of corruption; Ariosto, born a year before Michael Angelo, calls the Italy of his time “a foul-smelling sewer“:

O d'ogni vizio fetida sentina,
Dormi, Italia imbriaica!
Orlando Furioso xvii. 76.

And if, hitherto, I have mentioned the plastic arts alone, I have done so for the sake of simplicity and because I wished to deal with the sphere which is the most familiar though the same truth holds good in all spheres. When Guido Reni was still quite young, Tasso died and with him Italian poetry; a few years later Giordano Bruno went to the stake, Campanella to the rack — the end of Italian philosophy — and shortly before Guido, Italian natural science closed with Galilei the career which it

* He who has not time for detailed historical studies should read the chapter on Perugia in John Addington Symonds' *Sketches in Italy*.

had so gloriously begun with Ubaldi, Varro, Tartaglia, and others, above all with Leonardo da Vinci. The course of history, north of the Alps, was altogether different: such a brilliant height was never reached, nor was there such a catastrophe. This catastrophe admits only one explanation: the disappearance of the creative minds, in other words, of the race that had produced them. One walk through the gallery of busts in the Berlin

Museum will convince us that in truth the type of the great Italians is absolutely extinct to-day. * Now and again they flash upon our memory when we review a troop of those splendid, gigantic labourers who build our streets and railways: the physical strength, the noble brow, the bold nose, the glowing eye; but they are only poor survivors of the shipwreck of Italian Teutonism. This disappearance is adequately explained by the facts adduced, as far as physique is concerned, but there is another important consideration, the moral suppression of definite tendencies of mind, and hence, so to speak, of the soul of the race; the noble was degraded into a worker of the soil, the ignoble became master and lorded it as he thought proper. The gallows of Arnold of Brescia, the stakes of Savonarola and Bruno, the instruments of torture by which Campanella and Galilei suffered, are only visible symbols of a daily, universal struggle against the Teuton, of a systematic uprooting of the freedom of the individual. The Dominicans, formerly *ex officio* Inquisitors, had now become reformers of the Church and philosophers; the Jesuits had carefully provided beforehand against such deviations from the Orthodox; he who acquires even a little information about their activity in Italy, from the sixteenth century onwards — from the history

* *“Les Florentins d'aujourd'hui ne ressemblent en rien à ceux de la Renaissance, ...”* says one of the most exquisite judges, Ujfalvi (*De l'Origine des familles, &c.*, p. 9).

194 THE TEUTONS AS CREATORS OF A NEW CULTURE

of the order, let us say, by its admirer, Buss — will no longer wonder at the sudden disappearance of all genius, that is to say, of everything Teutonic. Raphael had still had the boldness to raise in the middle of the Vatican (in the “Disputa”) an immortal monument to Savonarola, whom he fervently admired: Ignatius, on the other hand, forbade even the mention of the Tuscan's name. * Who could live in Italy to-day and move among its amiable, highly gifted inhabitants without feeling with pain that here a nation was lost and lost beyond all hope, because the inner impelling force, the greatness of soul, that would correspond to their talent are lacking? As a matter of fact, Race alone confers this force. Italy possessed it, so long as it possessed Teutons; yes, even to-day its population reveals, in those parts where Celts, Germans and Normans formerly were specially numerous, the thoroughly Teutonic industry, and gives birth to men who strive with the energy of despair to unite the country and guide it on to glorious paths: Cavour, the founder of the new Kingdom, was born in the extreme north; Crispi, who knew how to steer it past cliffs of danger, in the extreme south. But how can a people be again raised up, when the fountain of its strength has run dry? And what does it signify when a Giacomo Leopardi calls his people a “degenerate

race“ and holds up to them the example of their ancestors? † The ancestors of the great majority of the

* Raphael's enthusiastic admiration for Savonarola, for his master Perugino, and his friend Bartolomeo (see Eugene Müntz: *Raphaël*, 1881, p. 133) is almost of as much importance in fixing the race of these men as the fact that Michael Angelo never mentioned the Madonna, and only once in jest mentioned a Saint, so that one of the greatest authorities on him could call him “an unconscious Protestant.” In one of his sonnets Michael Angelo warns the Saviour not to come to Rome in person, where a trade is carried on in His divine blood.

E'l sangue di Cristo si vend' a giumelle
and where the priests would flay him to sell his skin.

† Cf. the two Sonnets: *All' Italia* and *Sopra il monumento di Dante*.

195 THE TEUTONS AS CREATORS OF A NEW CULTURE

Italians to-day are neither the sturdy Romans of ancient Rome, those patterns of simple manliness, indomitable independence and rigidly legal sentiment, nor these demigods in strength, beauty and genius, who on the morning of our new day, in one single swarm, soared up like larks greeting the dawn from the sun-kissed soil of Italy to the heaven of immortality; no, their genealogy goes back to the countless thousands of liberated slaves from Africa and Asia, to the jumble of various Italic peoples, to the military colonies settled among them from all countries in the world, in short, to the Chaos of Peoples which the Empire so ingeniously manufactured. And the present position of the country as a whole simply signifies a victory of this Chaos over the Teutonic element, which had been added at a later time and which had long maintained its purity. This is the reason, moreover, why that Italy — which three centuries ago was a torch of civilisation and culture — is now one of the nations that lag behind, that have lost their balance and cannot again find it. For two cultures cannot exist on an equal footing side by side; that is out of the question: Hellenic culture could not live on under Roman influence, Roman culture disappeared before the spread of the Egypto-Syrian; it is only where the contact is purely external, as in the case of Europe and Turkey, or *a fortiori* Europe and China, that no perceptible influence is exercised, and even here the one must in time destroy the other. Now such countries as Italy — I might at once add Spain — stand in a very close relation to us in the north: the great achievements of their past prove their former blood-relationship; they cannot possibly withdraw themselves from our influence, from our incomparably greater strength; but where they imitate us to-day, they do so not of an impelling need, not on account of an inner, but of an outer necessity; holding up before their gaze ancestors from

whom they are not descended, their own history and our example both lead them into false paths, and finally they are unable to preserve even that one thing which might continue theirs, a different, perhaps in many respects inferior, but at any rate, genuine originality. *

THE TEUTONIC MASTER-BUILDER

In naming Italy, I only wished to give an example, but I think I have at the same time provided a proof. As Sterne says: an example is no more an argument than the cleaning of a mirror is a syllogism, but it enables us to see better, and that is the important thing. Wherever the reader casts his eyes, he will find examples to prove the fact that the present civilisation and culture of Europe are specifically Teutonic, fundamentally distinct from all the un-Aryan ones and very essentially different from the Indian, the Hellenic and the Roman, directly antagonistic to the mestizo ideal of the anti-national Imperium and the so-called "Roman" system of Christianity. The matter is so perfectly clear that further discussion would surely be superfluous; besides, I can refer the reader to the three preceding chapters, which contain a large number of actual proofs.

This one fact had first to be laid down. For our world of to-day is absolutely new, and in order to comprehend it and form an estimate of its rise and present condition, the first fundamental question is: Who has created it? The new world was created by the same Teuton who after such an obstinate struggle discarded the old. He alone possessed that "wild willing" of which I spoke at the end of the last chapter, the

* The views here expressed — bitterly opposed and ridiculed on many hands — have in the meantime been brilliantly confirmed by the strictly anthropological, soberly scientific investigations of Dr. Ludwig Woltmann, which are now to be had for the first time in connected form: *Die Germanen und die Renaissance in Italien*, 1905.

determination not to surrender, but to remain true to self. He alone held the view which the Teuton Goethe expressed later:

Jedes Leben sei zu führen,
Wenn man sich nicht selbst vermisst;
Alles könne man verlieren,

Wenn man bliebe, was man ist. *

He alone — like Paracelsus of Hohenheim — chose as his motto in life the words: *Alterius non sit, qui suus esse potest* (Let him be no other's, who can be his own). Will this be censured as empty pride? Surely it is only the recognition of a manifest fact. Will the objection be offered that no mathematical proof is possible? Surely from all sides this fact is borne in upon us with the same certainty as that twice two makes four.

Nothing is more instructive in this connection than a reference to the manifest significance of purity of race. † How feebly throbs to-day the heart of the Slav, who had entered history with such boldness and freedom; Ranke, Gobineau, Wallace, Schvarcz, all historians qualified to give an opinion, testify to the fact that, though highly gifted, he is losing his real informing power and the constancy to carry out what he undertakes; anthropology solves the riddle, for it shows us (*see vol. i. pp. 505, 528*) that by far the greater number of the Slavs to-day have by mingling with another human race lost the physical — and naturally also the moral — characteristics of their ancestors, who were identical with the ancient Teutons. And yet there is still in these nations so much Teutonic blood that they form one of the greatest civilising forces in the continuous subjection of the world by Europe. Certainly near Eydtkuhnen we cross a boundary which is but too sadly obvious, and the hem

* Every life may be led, if only man's self be not missed; Everything may be lost, if we remain what we are.

† For all further details on this point I refer to vol. i. [chaps. iv.](#) and [vi.](#)

198 THE TEUTONS AS CREATORS OF A NEW CULTURE

of German culture which stretches along the Baltic, as well as the thousand districts in the interior of Russia, where the astonished traveller suddenly encounters the same strength of pure race, only make the contrast all the more striking; nevertheless, there is still a certain specifically Teutonic impulse here, in truth only a shadow, but it bears the stamp of blood-relationship and therefore produces something, in spite of all the resistance of the hereditary Asiatic culture.

In addition to its purity the Teutonic race reveals another feature of importance in the understanding of history: its diversity of form; of this the history of the world offers no second example. Both in the vegetable and the animal kingdoms we find among genera of a family and among the species of a genus a very varying “plasticity”: in the case of some the shape is, as it were, of iron, as though all the individuals were cast in one and the same unchanging mould; in other cases, however, we find variations within narrow limits, and in others again (think of the dog and

the hieracium!) the variety of form is endless; it is constantly producing something new; such creatures, moreover, are always distinguished by their tendency to unlimited hybridising, by which again races, new and pure through in-breeding (see vol. i. [p. 269](#)), are continually produced. The Teutonic peoples resemble the latter; their plasticity is extraordinary, and every crossing between their own different tribes has enriched the world with new models of noble humanity. Ancient Rome, on the other hand, had been an example of extreme concentration both in politics * and in the intellectual sphere: the city walls the boundaries of the Fatherland, the inviolability of law the boundaries of the intellect. Hellenism, so infinitely rich intellectually, rich too in the formation of dialects and of races with distinct customs, is much

* See vol. i. [chap. ii.](#)

199 THE TEUTONS AS CREATORS OF A NEW CULTURE

more closely related to Teutonism; the Aryan Indians also betray a close relationship by their remarkable talent for ever inventing new languages and by their clearly marked particularism; these two human races perhaps wanted only the historical and geographical conditions to develop with the same strength of uniformity, and yet at the same time of many-sidedness, as the Teutons. But considerations of this nature lead us into the domain of hypotheses: the fact remains that the plasticity of Teutonism is unique and incomparable in the history of the world.

It is not unimportant to remark — though I do so only as a parenthesis because I wish to avoid philosophising in connection with history — that the characteristic, indestructible individualism of the genuine Teuton is manifestly connected with this “plasticity“ of the race. A new tribe presupposes the rise of new individuals; the fact that new tribes are always ready to make their appearance also proves the constant presence of particular, distinctive individuals, impatiently champing the bit that curbs the free exercise of their originality. I should like to make the assertion that every outstanding Teuton is virtually the starting-point of a new tribe, a new dialect, a new view of life's problems.

*

It was by thousands and millions of such “individualists,“ that is, genuine personalities, that the new world was built up. †

And so we recognise the Teuton as the master-builder and agree with Jacob Grimm when he asserts that it is a gross delusion to imagine that anything great

* Cf. the details in the preceding chapter, [p. 151.](#)

† Some muddle-headed people of the present day confuse individualism and

“subjectivity,” and then advance some silly reproach of weakness and inconstancy, whereas we have here obviously to deal with the “objective” recognition and — in men like Goethe — the “objective” judgment of self, and from both of these we derive far-seeingness, sureness, and an unerring sense of freedom.

200 THE TEUTONS AS CREATORS OF A NEW CULTURE

can originate from “the bottomless sea of a universality.” *

Various, indeed, were the racial individualities of the Teutons, many the complicated crossings of their tribes: they were surrounded beyond the boundaries where their blood had been preserved in comparative purity, by branches related to them in various degrees of consanguinity: even in their midst there were groups and individuals who were half-Teutons, quarter-Teutons, and so forth; yet all these, under the indefatigable impulse of the central creative spirit, played their part in contributing something of their own to the sum of the accomplished task:

When Kings build, the carters are kept busy!

SO-CALLED HUMANITY

Now if we wish to judge rightly the history of the growth of this new world, we must never lose sight of the fact of its specifically Teutonic character. For as soon as we speak of humanity in general, as soon as we fancy that we see in history a development, a progress, an education, &c., of “humanity,” we leave the sure ground of facts and float in airy abstractions. For this humanity, about which men have philosophised to such an extent, suffers from the serious defect that it does not exist at all. Nature and history reveal to us a great number of various human beings, but no such thing as humanity. Even the hypothesis that all these beings, as the offshoots of one original stem, are physically related to each other, has scarcely so much value as Ptolemaeus' theory of the heavenly spheres; for the latter explained by demonstration something present and visible, while every speculation regarding a “descent” of man ventures upon a problem which, to begin

* *Geschichte der deutschen Sprache*, 2nd ed. p. 111.

201 THE TEUTONS AS CREATORS OF A NEW CULTURE

with, exists only in the imagination of the thinker, is not presented by experience and should consequently be submitted to a metaphysical

forum to be tested in regard to its admissibility. But even if this question of the descent of men and their relationship to one another were to leave the realm of phrases and enter that of the empirically demonstrable, it would hardly help us in forming our judgment of history; for every explanation by causes implicates a *regressus in infinitum*; it is like the unrolling of a map; we go on seeing something new — something new that belongs to that which is old — and even though the consequent widening of our sphere of observation may contribute to the enriching of our mind, still each individual fact remains as before, just what it was, and it is very doubtful whether our judgment is rendered essentially more acute by the knowledge of a more comprehensive connection — indeed, the reverse is just as possible. “Experience is boundless, because something new may always be discovered,” as Goethe remarks in his criticism of Bacon of Verulam and the so-called inductive method; on the other hand, the essence and purpose of judgment is limitation. Excellence in judgment depends upon acuteness, not upon compass; the exactitude of what the eye sees will always be more important than its extent; hence too the inner justification of the more modern methods of historical research, according to which explanatory, philosophising, general expositions are abandoned in favour of painfully minute investigation of individual facts. Of course, as soon as the science of history loses itself in endless data, all that it accomplishes is to “shovel observations backwards and forwards” (as Justus Liebig says in righteous indignation at certain inductive methods of investigation); * yet, on the other hand, it is certain that the accurate knowledge of a single case is more

* *Reden und Abhandlungen*, 1874, p. 248.

202 THE TEUTONS AS CREATORS OF A NEW CULTURE

serviceable to the judgment than the survey of a thousand that are shrouded in mist. In fact, the old saying: *non multa, sed multum*, proves to be universally true, and it also teaches us something which at the first glance we should hardly expect of it, namely, the right method of generalisation, which consists in never leaving the basis of facts, and not being satisfied, like children, with would-be “explanations” from causes (least of all in the case of abstract dogmas such as development, education, &c.), but in continuously endeavouring to give a more and more clear perception of the phenomenon itself in its autonomous value. If we wish to simplify great historical complexes and yet to summarise with strict correctness, we should, to begin with, take the indisputable concrete facts, without linking any theory on to them; the Why will soon demand its place, but it should come only second, not first; the Concrete

takes precedence. To arm ourselves with an abstract idea of humanity and with presuppositions derived from it, and then to face the phenomena of history and try to form a judgment on them is to start with a delusion; the actually present, individually limited, nationally distinct human beings make up all that we know about humanity; there we must stop. The Hellenic people, for example, is such a concrete fact. Whether the Hellenes were related to the peoples of Italy, to the Celts and Indo-Eranians, whether the diversity of their tribes, which we perceive even in the earliest times, corresponds to a diversity in the mingling in various degrees of men of different origin, or is the result of a differentiation brought about by geographical conditions, &c., all these are much debated questions, the answering of which some day — even should it be accomplished with certainty — would not in any way alter the great indisputable fact of Hellenism with its peculiar, unique language, its particular virtues and failings, its extra-

203 THE TEUTONS AS CREATORS OF A NEW CULTURE

ordinary talent and the strange limitations of its intellect, its versatility, industrial zeal and over-craftiness in business, its philosophic leisure and Titanic imaginative power. Such a fact in history is absolutely concrete, tangible, manifest and at the same time inexhaustible. Truly, it is not modest on our part not to be satisfied with something so inexhaustible; and we are nothing less than foolish if we do not value aright these primal phenomena (*Urphänomene*) — to use again an expression of Goethe's — but, in the delusion that we can “explain“ them by expansion, dissolve and dissipate them, till they are no longer perceptible to the eye. We do this, for example, when we trace back the artistic achievements of the Hellenes to Phoenician and other pseudo-Semitic influences and fancy that thereby we have contributed something to the explanation of this unique miracle; yet the ever inexhaustible and inexplicable primal phenomenon of Hellenism is in this way rather amplified but is in no way explained. For the Phoenicians carried the elements of Babylonian and Egyptian culture everywhere; why did the seed only spring up where Hellenes had settled? And why, above all, not among those very Phoenicians themselves, who surely should have reached a higher stage of refinement than the people to whom they — as is supposed — first transmitted the beginnings of culture? *

In this province we are simply floating on fallacies when we — as Sir Thomas Reid mockingly says — “explain“ the day by the night, because the one follows the other. They have no lack of answers, those people who have never grasped, that is, never comprehended as

* The discoveries in Crete, &c., have meanwhile once for all dissipated the whole myth of Phoenician influence; even so biased a witness as Salomon Reinach admits that “*ces découvertes portent le coup de grâce à toutes les théories qui attribuent aux Phéniciens une part prépondérante dans les très vieilles civilisations de l'Archipel ...*” (*Anthropologie*, 1902, Janv.-Févr., p. 39).

204 THE TEUTONS AS CREATORS OF A NEW CULTURE

an insoluble problem, the great central question of life — the existence of the individual being. We ask these omniscient worthies how it is that the Romans, near relatives of the Hellenes (as Philology, History, Anthropology permit us to suppose), were yet in almost every single talent their very opposites. In answer they refer to the geographical position. But even the geographical position is not very different, and the proximity of Carthage and of Etruria gave ample opportunity for stimuli as strong as those of the Phoenicians. And if the geographical situation is the decisive matter, why did ancient Rome and the ancient Romans so completely and irrevocably disappear? The most incomparable magician in this line was Henry Thomas Buckle, who “explains” the intellectual pre-eminence of the Aryan Indians by their eating rice. * In truth, a consoling discovery for budding philosophers! But two facts are opposed to this explanation. In the first place, “rice is the principal food of the greatest portion of the human race”; secondly, the Chinese are the greatest rice-eaters in the world, since they consume as much as three pounds of it a day. † But the pretty clearly defined complex of peoples

* *History of Civilisation in England*, vol. i. c. 2. The reader must read for himself the extremely ingenious train of reasoning with the details, collected with infinite pains, concerning the produce of the rice-fields, the amount of starch contained in the rice, the relation of carbon to oxygen in various foods, &c. The whole house of cards falls to pieces as soon as the author seeks to substantiate the irrefutability of his proof by further examples and for this purpose refers to Egypt. “The civilisation of Egypt being like that of India, caused by the fertility of the soil, and the climate being also very hot, there were in both countries brought into play the same laws and there naturally followed the same results.” So writes Buckle. But it would be difficult to imagine two more different cultures than the Egyptian and the Brahman; the similarities which one could of course point to are altogether external, just such as the climate can account for, but otherwise these peoples differ in everything — in political and social organisation and history, in artistic qualities, in intellectual gifts and achievements, in religion and thought, in the foundation of character.

† Ranke: *Der Mensch*, 2nd ed. i. 315 and 334. In Hueppe's

205 THE TEUTONS AS CREATORS OF A NEW CULTURE

that make up the Aryan Indians forms an absolutely unique

phenomenon among mankind; they possessed gifts such as no other race has ever possessed, and which led to immortal, incomparable achievements; at the same time their peculiar limitations were such that their individuality already contained in it their fate. Why did the principal food of the greatest portion of mankind have this effect only once, in point of space at one place, in point of time at one epoch? And if we wished to mention the very antithesis of the Aryan Indians, we should have to name the Chinese; the socialistic friend of equality in contrast to the absolute aristocrat; the unwarlike peasant in contrast to the born warrior; the utilitarian, above all others, in contrast to the idealist; the positivist, who seems organically incapable of raising himself even to the conception of metaphysical thought, in contrast to that born metaphysician upon whom we Europeans fix our eyes in admiration, never daring to hope that we could ever overtake him. And withal, as I have said, the Chinaman eats still more rice than the Indo-Aryan!

Nevertheless, in pursuing to the point of absurdity the mode of thought so common among us, I have had only one object in view, to reveal clearly, by cases of extreme error, whither it leads; once our distrust is aroused, we shall look back and perceive that even the most sensible and sure observations in regard to such phenomena as human races do not possess the value of explanations, but signify merely an extension of our horizon, whereas the phenomenon itself, in its concrete reality, remains as before the only source of all sound judgment and true understanding. I hope I have convinced the reader that there is a hierarchy of facts and that, as soon as we reverse them, we are building castles in the air. Thus, for example, the notion

Handbuch der Hygiene (1899), p. 247, the expert will find a humorous explanation of the hypothesis that rice is especially good for philosophers.

206 THE TEUTONS AS CREATORS OF A NEW CULTURE

“Indo-European“ or “Aryan“ is admissible and advantageous when we construct it from the sure, well investigated, indisputable facts of Indianism, Eranianism, Hellenism, Romanism, and Teutonism; for, in so doing, we never for a moment leave the ground of reality, we bind ourselves to no hypothesis, we build no unsubstantial sham bridges over the gulf of unknown causes of connection; on the other hand, we enrich our world of conception by appropriate systematic arrangement, and, while we unite what is manifestly related, we learn at the same time to separate it from the unrelated, and prepare the way for further perceptions and ever new discoveries. But whenever we reverse the process and take a hypothetical Aryan for our starting-point — a being of whom we know nothing at all, whom we construct out of the remotest,

most incomprehensible sagas, and patch together from linguistic indications which are extremely difficult to interpret, a being whom every one can, like a fairy, endow with all the gifts that he pleases — we are floating in a world of abstractions and necessarily pronounce one false judgment after the other, a splendid example of which we see in Count Gobineau's *Inégalité des races humaines*. Gobineau and Buckle are the two poles of an equally wrong method: the one bores like a mole in the dark ground and fancies that from the soil he can explain the flowers, though rose and thistle grow side by side; the other rises above the ground of facts and permits his imagination so lofty a flight that it sees everything in the distorted perspective of the bird's-eye view, and finds itself compelled to interpret Hellenic art as a symptom of decadence, and to praise the brigand age of the hypothetical aboriginal Aryan as the noblest activity of humanity!

The notion “humanity” is, to begin with, nothing more than a linguistic makeshift, a *collectivum*, by which the characteristic feature of the man, his personality, is

207 THE TEUTONS AS CREATORS OF A NEW CULTURE

blurred, and the guiding thread of history — the different individualities of peoples and nations — is rendered invisible. I admit that the notion humanity can acquire a positive purport, but only on condition that the concrete facts of the separated race-individualities are taken as a foundation upon which to build; these are then classified into more general racial ideas, which are again sifted in a similar fashion, and what after this hovers in the clouds high above the world of reality, scarcely visible to the naked eye, is “humanity.” This humanity, however, we shall never take as our starting-point in judging that which is human; for every action on earth originates from definite, not from indefinite man; nor shall we ever take it as our goal, for individual limitation precludes the possibility of a universally valid generalisation. Even Zoroaster uttered the wise words: “Neither in thoughts, nor desires, nor words, nor deeds, nor religion, nor intellectual capacity do men resemble one another; he who loves the light should have his place among the resplendent heavenly bodies, he who loves the darkness belongs to the powers of night.” *

I have been forcedly theorising in spite of myself. For a theory — the theory of the essentially one and uniform humanity † — stands in the way of all correct insight into the history of our time and of all times, and yet it has so thoroughly entered into our flesh and blood that it must, like a weed, be laboriously rooted out, before we can utter the plain truth with the hope of being understood. Our present civilisation and culture are specifically Teutonic, they are exclusively the work of

* See the book of *Zād-Sparam* xxi. 20 (contained in vol. 47 of the *Sacred Books of the East*).

† This theory is old; Seneca, for example, has a liking for referring to the ideal of humanity, of which individual men are, so to speak, more or less successful copies: "*Homines quidem pereunt, ipsa autem humanitas, ad quam homo effingitur, permanet*" (Letter 65 to Lucilius.)

208 THE TEUTONS AS CREATORS OF A NEW CULTURE

Teutonism. And yet this is the great central and primal truth, the "concrete fact," which the history of the last thousand years teaches us in every page. The Teuton was stimulated from all sides, but he assimilated these suggestions and transformed them into something of his own. Thus the impulse to manufacture paper came from China, but it was to the Teuton alone that this immediately suggested the idea of book-printing; * the study of antiquity and the excavation of old works of plastic art gave a start to artistic activity in Italy, but even sculpture departed from the first Hellenic tradition, by making its aim not the Characteristic but the Typical, the Individual, not the Allegorical; Architecture only borrowed certain details, Painting nothing at all from Classical antiquity. I give these merely as examples, for in all provinces the procedure of the Teuton was similar. Even Roman Law was at no time and in no place fully adopted. As a matter of fact by certain races, notably the Anglo-Saxons, who blossomed forth into such greatness — it was continually and deliberately rejected in spite of all regal and Papal intrigues. Whatever un-Teutonic forces came into play acted — as we saw in the case of Italy at the beginning of this chapter — principally as hindrance, as destruction, as a seduction from the course imposed by necessity upon this special type of mankind. On the other hand, where the Teutons by force of numbers or by purer blood predominated, all alien elements were carried with the current and even the non-Teuton had to become a Teuton in order to be and to pass for something.

Naturally one cannot take the word Teuton in the usual narrow sense; such a distinction is contrary to fact and makes history as obscure as if we looked at it through a cracked glass; on the other hand, if we have recognised the obvious original similarity of the peoples that have arisen from Northern Europe, and discovered that their

* Cf. below, [division 3, on "Industry."](#)

209 THE TEUTONS AS CREATORS OF A NEW CULTURE

diverse individuality is due to the incomparable plasticity which is still a

feature of the race, to the tendency of Teutonism towards ceaseless individualisation, we at once understand that what is at the present day called European culture is not in truth European, but specifically Teutonic. In the Rome of to-day we have seen that we are only partially in the atmosphere of this culture; the whole south of Europe, from which, unfortunately, the Chaos of Peoples was never rooted out, and where, as a consequence of the laws fully considered in [chapter iv.](#) (vol. i.) it is rapidly gathering strength again, simply swims against its will with the current; it cannot resist the power of our civilisation, but inwardly it scarcely any longer belongs to it. If we travel towards the east, we cross the boundary at a distance of about twenty-four hours' railway journey from Vienna; from there straight across to the Pacific Ocean not an inch of land is influenced by our culture. To the north of this line nothing but railways, telegraph posts and Cossack patrols testify to the fact that a purely Teutonic monarch, at the head of a people, the vigorous, creative elements of which are at least half-Teutons, has begun to stretch the hand of order over this gigantic district; but even this hand reaches only to the point where a civilisation entirely antagonistic to our own sets in, that of the Chinese, Japanese, Tonkinese, &c. Élisée Reclus, the famous geographer, assured me, just after he had finished the study of all the literature in China for his *Géographie Universelle*, that not a single European — not even those who, like Richthofen and Harte, had lived there for many years, no missionary who had spent all his life in the heart of the country — could say of himself, “*J'ai connu un Chinois.*” The personality of the Chinese is, in fact, impenetrable to us, just as ours is to him; a sportsman understands by sympathy more of the soul of his dog, and the dog more of his master's soul, than the master knows of the soul of the Chinaman with whom he goes shooting.

210 THE TEUTONS AS CREATORS OF A NEW CULTURE

All the silly talk about “humanity” does not help us over the difficulty raised by this prosaically certain fact. He, on the other hand, who crosses the broad ocean to the United States finds among new faces, with a national character that has acquired a new individuality, his own culture, and that, too, in a high stage of development, and it is the same with the man who, after travelling for four weeks, lands on the coast of Australia. New York and Melbourne are incomparably more “European” than the Seville or Athens of to-day — not in appearance, but in the spirit of enterprise, in capacity for achievement, in intellectual tendency, in art and science, in the general moral level, in short, in strength of life. This strength is the precious legacy of our fathers; once it was possessed by the Hellenes, once by the Romans.

It is only by thus recognising the strictly individual character of our

culture and civilisation that we can judge ourselves aright, ourselves and others. For the essence of individuality is limitation and the possession of a physiognomy of one's own; the "prodomus" of all historical insight is therefore — as Schiller beautifully expresses it — "to learn to grasp with faithful and chaste sense the individuality of things." One culture can destroy, but never permeate, the other. If we begin our works on history with Egypt — or, according to the most recent discoveries, with Babylonia — and then let mankind develop chronologically, we build up an altogether artificial structure. Egyptian culture, for example, is an altogether isolated, individual thing, about which we are no more able to form an estimate than about an ant-state, and all ethnographers assure us that the Fellahin of the Nile Valley to-day are physically and mentally identical with those of five thousand years ago; new races became masters of the land and brought a new culture with them; no development took place. And what are we, in the meantime, to do with the mighty culture of the Indo-Aryans? Is it not to be taken

211 THE TEUTONS AS CREATORS OF A NEW CULTURE

into account? But how is it to be placed among the others? For their finest epoch fell about the time when our Teutonic culture just started on its course. Do we find that in India that high culture has been further developed? And what about the Chinese, to whom we are perhaps indebted for as much stimulus as the Hellenes were to the Egyptians? The truth is, that as soon as we, following our propensity to systematise, try to produce an organic unity, we destroy the individual and with it the one thing which we concretely possess. Even Herder, from whom I differ so widely in this very discussion, writes: "In India, Egypt, China, also in Canaan, Greece, Rome, Carthage, there took place what never and nowhere will happen in the world again." *

THE SO-CALLED RENAISSANCE

I said above, for example, that it was the Hellenes and the Romans who certainly gave the greatest impulse, if not to our civilisation, at least to our culture; but we have not thereby become either Hellenes or Romans. Perhaps no more fatal conception has been introduced into history than that of the Renaissance. For we have associated with it the delusion of a regeneration of Latin and Greek culture, a thought worthy of the half-bred souls of degenerate Southern Europe, to whom culture was something which man can outwardly assimilate. For a *rinascimento* of Hellenic culture, nothing less would be necessary than the rebirth of the Hellenes; all else is mummery. Not only was the idea of the

Renaissance in itself a misfortune, but also to a great extent the deeds that sprang from this idea. For instead of receiving only a stimulus, we henceforth received laws, laws which put fetters upon our own individuality, obstructed it at every step and had for their object the degradation of the most

* *Ideen* iii. 12. 6.

212 THE TEUTONS AS CREATORS OF A NEW CULTURE

valuable thing which we possess, our originality, that is to say, the sincerity of our own nature. Roman Law, which was proclaimed as a classical dogma, became in the sphere of public life the source of shocking violence and loss of freedom. I do not mean to say that this law is not, even at the present day, a model of juristical technique, the eternal high school of jurisprudence (*see* vol. i. [p. 148 f.](#)); but the fact that it was forced upon us Teutons as a dogma was obviously a great misfortune for our historical development; for not only did it not suit our conditions, it was something dead, misunderstood, an organism the former living significance of which was only revealed after the lapse of centuries in our own days by the most searching study of Roman History: before we could really understand what his intellect had constructed, we had to call the Roman himself from the grave. The same thing happened in every sphere. Not only in philosophy were we to be handmaids (*ancillae*), namely, of Aristotle (*see* vol. ii. [p. 178](#)), but the law of slavery was also introduced into the whole realm of thought and creative activity. It was only in the industrial and economic spheres that vigorous progress was made, for here there was no classical dogma to retard; even natural science and the discovery of the world had a strenuous conflict to wage — all intellectual sciences, Poetry and Art as well, a more strenuous one still — a conflict which has not even yet been fought out to a perfectly successful issue, which would leave us absolutely unfettered. It is certainly not a mere accident that by far the greatest poet of the epoch of the so-called Renaissance, Shakespeare, and the most powerful sculptor, Michael Angelo, understood none of the ancient languages; just consider in what mighty independence a Dante would have stood before us, had he not borrowed his hell from Virgil and welded together his ideals of State from the spurious law of Constantinople and the *Civitas Dei* of Augustine!

213 THE TEUTONS AS CREATORS OF A NEW CULTURE

And why was it that this contact with past cultures, which should have brought unmixed blessing, became in many ways a curse? It was simply because we did not, and alas! do not even yet, comprehend the individuality of every manifestation of culture! The Tuscan aesthetes, for example, lauded the Greek tragedy as the eternal paragon of the drama, and did not perceive that not only are the conditions of our life very different from those of Attica, but that our gifts, our whole personality, with its light and shade, are absolutely distinct; hence it was that these would-be renewers of Hellenic culture produced all sorts of monstrosities and crushed the Italian drama in the bud. By this they only showed their utter ignorance both of Teutonism and of Hellenism. For what we should have learned from Hellenism was the significance for life of an art that had developed organically, and the significance for art of the unimpaired free personality; we took from it the very opposite, ready-made mechanical patterns and the despotism of false aesthetics. For it is only the conscious, free individual that can rise to the comprehension of the incomparableness of other individualities. The bungler fancies that every one is capable of all things; he does not understand that imitation is the most shameless stupidity. It was from such blundering misconceptions that the idea of fastening on to Greece and Rome, and of continuing their work, originated — an idea which — as we should be careful to remember — gives proof of an almost ridiculous under-estimation of the achievements of these great nations, while at the same time it shows a complete failure to realise our Teutonic strength and individuality.

214 THE TEUTONS AS CREATORS OF A NEW CULTURE

PROGRESS AND DEGENERATION

One other point deserves to be noticed. From the above it is easy for every one to observe to what extent it is that that pale abstraction of a universal “humanity,” devoid of physiognomy and character and capable of being kneaded into any shape, leads to the under-estimation of the importance of the individual element in single men and in peoples: this confusion is the cause of another and even more fatal mistake, the exposure of which demands more diligence and acuteness. For it is from this first error of judgment that the mutually complementary notions of a progress and a degeneration of humanity are derived, and neither of these notions is tenable on the ground of concrete historical facts. Morally, it is true, the conception of progress may be indispensable: it is the application of the divine gift of hope to the world at large; similarly the metaphysics of religion cannot do without the symbol of degeneration (see p. [31 f.](#)): but in both cases it is a question of inner states of mind

(fundamentally of transcendent presentiments), which the individual projects upon his surroundings; when applied to actual history, as though they were objective realities, they lead to false judgments and failure to recognise the most patent facts. *

* See vol. i. pp. [lxxviii](#). and [xcvi](#). Immanuel Kant has, as usual, hit the nail on the head by rejecting this “good-natured“ presupposition of the moralists, which the “history of all times too forcibly contradicts“ (*Religion*, beginning of chap. i.) and by comparing humanity, which is presumed to be progressing, to the sick man who had to call out in triumph, “I am dying of sheer improvement!“ (*Streit der Fakultäten*, ii.). In another passage he supplements this by writing, “No theory justifies man in holding the belief that the world is on the whole steadily improving; only purely practical reason may do so, for it dogmatically commands us to act according to such a hypothesis“ (*Über die Fortschritte der Metaphysik*, 2nd manuscript, Part II.) Thus by the conceptive progress we are justified in expressing, not an eternal fact, but the inner goal in view. If Kant had also emphasised the necessity of decline, instead of regarding the “clamour about con-

215 THE TEUTONS AS CREATORS OF A NEW CULTURE

For progressive development and progressive decline are phenomena which are connected with individual life and which can be applied to the general phenomena of nature only in an allegorical sense, not *sensu proprio*. Every individual person reveals progress and degeneration, every individual thing likewise — whatever its nature — the individual race, the individual nation, the individual culture; that is the price that must be paid for the possession of individuality. On the other hand, in the case of universal and not individual phenomena, the notions progress and degeneration have no meaning, being merely a wrong and roundabout way of expressing change and motion. For this reason Schiller describes the common “empirical“ idea of immortality (according to the teaching of the orthodox Christian Church) as a “demand that can only be put forward by an animal nature striving to attain to the Absolute.“ * Animal nature is here intended to be in contrast to individuality; for the law of individuality, as Goethe has taught us (*see the preceding chapter*), is outward limitation, and this denotes a limitation not only in space but also in time; whereas the Universal — which denotes, as here, the animal nature of man, in other words, man as animal in contrast to man as individual — has no necessary, but at most an accidental limitation. But where there is no limitation, one cannot, in the proper sense of the word, speak of progression forwards or backwards, but only of motion. For this reason no tenable notion can be derived even from the most consistent, and, therefore,

stantly progressing degeneration“ as empty talk (*Vom Verhältnis der Theorie zur Praxis im Völkerrecht*), nothing would have remained obscure, and from the contradiction of

action according to the hypothesis of progress, and of faith according to the hypothesis of decline, we should have seen clearly that it is something Transcendental, and not empirical history, that is at work here. — In his simple way Goethe silences a fanatic of so-called progress with the words, “It is circum-gression we must say“ (*Umschreibung müssen wir sagen*): *Gespräche*, i. 182.

* *Ästhetische Erziehung*, Letter 24.

216 THE TEUTONS AS CREATORS OF A NEW CULTURE

most shallow, Darwinism; for conforming to definite conditions is nothing more than a manifestation of equilibrium, and so-called evolution from simpler to more complicated forms of life may be quite as justifiably considered a decline as an advance; * it is in fact neither the one nor the other, but merely a manifestation of motion. This, too, is admitted by the philosopher of Darwinism, Herbert Spencer, in that he regards evolution as a kind of rhythmic pulsation, and explains very clearly that the equilibrium is at every moment the same. † In fact, it is inconceivable how the systole should form an “advance“ on the diastole, or the pendulum's movement to the right an “advance“ on its movement to the left. And yet clever men, carried away by the current of prevalent error, would fain have seen in evolution the guarantee, nay more, the proof of the reality of progress! What becomes of our logic when we cherish such absurdities must, however, be made clear by an example, for here I am swimming against the stream and must avail myself of every advantage.

John Fiske, the deservedly famous author of the history of the discovery of America, says in his thoughtful Darwinian work, *The Destiny of Man, viewed in the light of his origin*, ‡ that “the struggle for existence has succeeded in bringing forth that consummate product of creative activity, the human soul.“ Now in truth I do not know how the struggle can supply the sole effective cause of anything; this conception of the world's problems seems to me a little too summary, like all philosophy

* From the standpoint of consistent materialism the moneron is the most perfect animal, for it is the simplest and therefore most capable of resistance, and it is so organised that it can live in water, that is, on the greatest portion of the surface of our planet.

† See the chapter on “The Rhythm of Motion“ and the first two chapters on “Evolution“ in his *First Principles*.

‡ Boston, 1884. Such are our modern empiricists! They know the “origin“ and the “destiny“ of all things and may therefore well deem themselves wise. The Pope in Rome is more modest.

217 THE TEUTONS AS CREATORS OF A NEW CULTURE

of evolution; but the struggle so manifestly steels existing powers, draws out physical and mental gifts and develops them by exercise (even old Homer teaches our children this lesson), that I will not dispute the fact at present. Fiske goes on to say: "It is the wholesale destruction of life, which has heretofore characterised evolution ever since life began, through which the higher forms of organic existence have been produced" (p. 95 f); very well, we will admit it. But what about progress? Logically we should presuppose that it consisted in increase of wholesale murder, or was at least dependent upon it — a view which could reasonably be advanced on the strength of some phenomena of our time. But this is very wide of the mark! Fiske has a great advantage over such homely logic, for he knows not only the "origin" but also the "destiny" of man. He informs us that, "as evolution advances, the struggle for existence ceases to be a determining factor ... this elimination of strife is a fact of utterly unparalleled grandeur; words cannot do justice to such a fact." This celestial peace is now the goal of progress, indeed it is progress itself. For Fiske, who is a very clever man, feels rightly that nobody has hitherto known the meaning of this talismanic word "progress" — now we do know. "At length," says Fiske, "at length we see what human progress means." I am afraid I must beg to differ. For what is to become of our soul, which we acquired with such honest pains? We were just informed that the struggle for existence had "produced" the soul: will it henceforth arise without a cause? And even supposing that the hobby-horse of heredity should kindly take it upon its Centaur back and carry it a stage farther, would the sensation of the struggle not lead, according to orthodox Darwinism, to the degeneration of the object produced, * so that our soul, as a mere

* *Origin* c. xiv.; *Animals and Plants* c. xxiv.

218 THE TEUTONS AS CREATORS OF A NEW CULTURE

"rudimentary organ" (comparable to the well-known human tail-appendage) might be, in its uselessness, merely an object of wonder to the would-be Admirable Crichton of future days. And why, if the struggle has already produced something so splendid, should it now cease? Surely not from sickly, sentimental horror of bloodshed. "Death in battle," said Corporal Trim, and thereby he snapped his fingers — "death in battle I do not fear this much! but elsewhere I should hide from it in every crevice." And though it is, under Professor Fiske's guidance, a "joy to see how we have at last gained such glorious heights," yet I can imagine and hope for something much more glorious still than what the present offers, and I shall never admit that the cessation of the struggle

would mean an advance; it is just here that the hypothesis of evolution has accidentally got hold of a truth — the importance of the struggle for existence; it would really be foolish to sacrifice it, merely in order to “see what human progress means.”

This error is due, as I have already said, to failure to realise a very simple and essential philosophical fact, that Progress and Degeneration can only be applied to the Individual, never to the Universal. To be able to speak of a progress of humanity, we should require to view the whole revelation of man upon earth from such a distance that everything, which for us constitutes history, would disappear; perhaps it would then be possible to conceive humanity as an individual phenomenon, to compare it with other analogous phenomena — *e.g.*, upon other planets — and to observe it in progress and decline: but such hypothetical stargazing has no practical value for us or for our time. The desire to bring our Teutonic culture into organic connection with the Hellenic as an advance or a decline is scarcely more reasonable than Buckle's already mentioned comparison

219 THE TEUTONS AS CREATORS OF A NEW CULTURE

of dates and rice; indeed, it is less sensible, for dates and rice are recognised to be essentially different, to be something universal and unchangeable; whereas in the other comparison we overlook what differentiates and do not reflect that the Individual is something Never-recurring, and for that reason Complete and Absolute. Can we assert that Michael Angelo is an advance on Phidias, Shakespeare on Sophokles? or that they represent a falling off? Does any one believe that any trace of sense is to be derived from such a statement? Certainly not. But the point which people do not grasp is this, that the same holds good with regard to the collective national individualities and manifestations of culture, to which these remarkable men gave extraordinarily vivid expression. And so we go on making comparisons: the great gaping herd believes as firmly in the constant “progress of humanity” as a nun in the Immaculate Conception; the greater and more thoughtful spirits — from Hesiod to Schiller, from the symbolism of the aboriginal Babylonians to Arthur Schopenhauer — have at all times rather had a presentiment of decline. If applied to history, both ideas are untenable. We have but to cross the border of civilisation to feel at once, from the load that falls from our head and shoulders, from the delight that is everywhere so obvious, how dearly we pay for so-called progress, Methinks a Macedonian shepherd of to-day leads a no less useful and much worthier and happier life than a factory worker in Chaux-de-Fonds, who from his tenth year to the day of his death, for fourteen hours a day, mechanically fashions some one particular wheel for watches. Now if the ingenuity

which leads to the invention and perfection of the watch robs its maker of the sight of the great time-measurer, the great giver of life and health, the sun, it is obvious that this advance, however wonderful it may be, is bought at the price of a

220 THE TEUTONS AS CREATORS OF A NEW CULTURE

corresponding retrogression. The same holds good everywhere. To save the notion of progress, it has been compared to a “circular motion in which the radius grows longer.” * But this robs the idea of all meaning; for every circle is in all essential qualities the same as every other, greater or smaller extent cannot possibly be regarded as greater or lesser perfection. But the opposite idea — that of a degeneration of man — is just as untenable, as soon as we apply it to concrete history. Thus, for example, the remark of Schiller, which I quoted in the general introduction to this book, “What single man of recent times stands forth, man against man, to contend with the individual Athenian for the prize of humanity?” can only claim a very limited validity. Every student of Schiller knows what the noble poet means; in what sense he is right, I have myself attempted to indicate; † and yet the statement provokes downright contradiction, indeed manifold contradiction. What is this “prize of humanity”? Once more it is that abstract idea of humanity which confuses the judgment! Among the free citizens of Athens (and Schiller can only mean these) there were twenty slaves to every man: in such circumstances, to be sure, leisure could be found for physical culture, the study of philosophy and the practice of art; our Teutonic culture, on the other hand (like the Chinese — for in such things it is not progress but innate character that reveals itself), was from the first an enemy of slavery; again and again this perfectly natural relationship sets in and ever and again we cast it off with horror. How many are there among us — from the King to the organ-grinder — who are not constrained to do their very best the livelong day, by the sweat of their brows? But is not work in itself at least as ennobling as bathing and boxing? ‡

* So Justus Liebig: *Reden und Abhandlungen*, 1874, p. 273, and others.

† Vol. i. [p. xcvi](#), and pp. [33 to 40](#).

‡ Apart from the fact that the performances of modern athletes, as

221 THE TEUTONS AS CREATORS OF A NEW CULTURE

I should not have long to search for “the single man of recent times“

whom Schiller challenges: I should take Friedrich Schiller himself by the hand and place him in the midst of the greatest Greeks of all ages: stripped in the gymnasium the ever-ailing poet would certainly cut a poor figure, but his heart and intellect, the more they were freed from the worry of the conditions of life, would rise in all the greater sublimity; and without fear of contradiction I would boldly assert: this single modern man is superior to you all by his knowledge, his striving, his ethical ideal; as a thinker he is far above you, and as a poet almost of equal rank with you. What Hellenic artist, I ask, can be called Richard Wagner's equal in creative force and power of expression? And where did all Hellenism produce a man worthy to contend with a Goethe for the prize of humanity? There we come upon a further contradiction, which is provoked by Schiller's assertion. For if our poets are not in every respect equal to the greatest poets of Athens, that is not the fault of their talent, but of those who surround them, who do not understand the value of art; but Schiller supports the view that while we as individuals cannot rival the Greeks, our culture as a whole is superior to theirs. A decided mistake, behind which the phantom "humanity" again lurks. For though an absolute comparison between two peoples is (at least in my opinion) inadmissible, no objection can be offered to drawing a parallel between the individual stages of development; and if we do this, we shall perceive that the Hellenes, in spite of the painful defects of their individuality, stand on an altitude of supreme eminence and reveal a peculiar harmony of greatness, from which their culture derives its incomparable charm, whereas we Teutons are still in process of development, self-contradictory, uncertain of

it has been proved, are superior to those of the ancients. (*Cf.* especially the various works of Hueppe.)

222 THE TEUTONS AS CREATORS OF A NEW CULTURE

ourselves, surrounded and at many points saturated to the core by incongruous elements, which tear down what we construct and estrange us from our own true nature. In Greece a national individuality had after a stern struggle fought its way to the daylight; in our case all is still ferment; the highest manifestations of our intellectual life stand side by side isolated, regarding each other with almost hostile eyes, and it will only be after hard work that we shall succeed as a united whole in reaching that stage upon which Hellenic, Roman, Indian and Egyptian cultures once stood.

HISTORICAL CRITERION

If we then free ourselves from the delusion of a progressive or retrogressive humanity, and content ourselves with the realisation of the fact that our culture is specifically North-European, *i.e.*, Teutonic, we shall at once gain a sure standard by which to judge our own past and our present, and at the same time a very useful standard to apply to a future which has yet to come. For nothing Individual is limitless. So long as we regard ourselves as the responsible representatives of all humanity, the more clear-seeing minds must be driven to despair by our poverty and obvious incapacity to pave the way for a golden age; at the same time, however, all shallow-brained phrase-makers turn us from those earnest aims which we might attain, and undermine what I should like to call historical morality, in that, shutting their eyes, blind to our universal limitation, and totally failing to realise the value of our specific talents, they dangle before our eyes the Impossible, the Absolute: natural rights, eternal peace, universal brotherhood, mutual fusion, &c. But if we know that we Northern Europeans are a definite individuality, responsible, not for humanity, but certainly for our own personality, we shall love and value

223 THE TEUTONS AS CREATORS OF A NEW CULTURE

our work as something individual, we shall recognise the fact that it is by no means complete, but still very defective, and, above all, far from being sufficiently independent; no vision of an "absolute" perfection will mislead us, but we shall, as Shakespeare wished, remain true to ourselves, and be satisfied with doing our very best within the limits of the Teuton's power of achievement; we shall deliberately defend ourselves against the un-Teutonic, and seek not only to extend our empire farther and farther over the surface of the globe and over the powers of nature, but above all unconditionally to subject the inner world to ourselves by mercilessly overthrowing and excluding those who are alien to us, and who, nevertheless, would fain gain the mastery over our thought. It is often said that politics can know no scruples; nothing at all can know scruples; scruples are a crime against self. Scruple is the soldier who in the battle takes to his heels, presenting his back as a target to the enemy. The most sacred duty of the Teuton is to serve the Teutonic cause. This fact supplies us with an historical standard of measurement. In all spheres that man and that deed will be glorified as greatest and most important which most successfully advance specific Teutonism or have most vigorously supported its supremacy. Thus and thus only do we acquire a limiting, organising, absolutely positive principle of judgment. To refer to a well-known instance; why is it that, in spite of the admiration which his genius inspires, the personality of the great Byron has something repulsive in it for every thorough Teuton? Treitschke has

answered this question in his brilliant essay on Byron: it is “because nowhere in this rich life do we encounter the idea of duty.” That is an unsympathetic, un-Teutonic feature. On the other hand, we do not object in the least to his love-affairs; in them we rather see a proof of genuine race; and we observe with satisfaction that Byron — in contrast to Virgil, Juvenal,

224 THE TEUTONS AS CREATORS OF A NEW CULTURE

Lucian and their modern imitators — was in truth licentious, but not frivolous. Towards women he is gallant. This we welcome as Teutonic. In politics also this point of view will prove valid. We shall praise, for example, princes, when they oppose the claims of Rome — not because we are carried away by any dogmatically religious prejudice, but because we see in every rejection of international imperialism a furtherance of Teutonism; we shall blame them when they proceed to regard themselves as absolute rulers appointed by the grace of God, for by this they reveal themselves as plagiarists of the wretched Chaos of Peoples, and destroy the old Teutonic law of freedom, thus fettering at the same time the best powers of the people. In many cases, it is true, the situation is a very complicated one, but there, too, the same ruling principle clears everything up. Thus, for example, Louis XIV. by his shameful persecution of the Protestants brought about the subsequent decline of France. This was an act of incalculably far-reaching consequence for the anti-Teutonic cause, and he accomplished it in his capacity as a pupil of the Jesuits, who had brought him up in such crass ignorance that he could not even write his own language correctly, and knew nothing of history. * And yet this ruler proved himself in many respects a thorough Teuton; for example, in his courageous defence of the distinct rights and fundamental independence of the Gallican Church in opposition to the arrogant claims of Rome — there has seldom, I think, been a Catholic King who on every occasion paid so little regard to the person of the Pope; and another proof is his great organising activity. † One might also cite Frederick the Great of

* Cf. Letter xv. in the correspondence between Voltaire and Frederick the Great.

† It always gives me satisfaction to read again Buckle's philippic against Louis XIV. (*Civilisation* ii. 4) but Voltaire (to whom Buckle refers) gives a much fairer picture in his *Siècle de Louis XIV.* (See especially chap. xxix: on the King's power of work, his knowledge of men and organising ability).

225 THE TEUTONS AS CREATORS OF A NEW CULTURE

Prussia, who could not safeguard the interests of all Teutonism in Central Europe except as an absolutely autocratic military leader and statesman, but withal was so thoroughly liberal in his sentiments that many an advocate of the French Revolution might well have taken a lesson from this monarch. At the same time another political example of the value of this cardinal principle occurs to me: he who regards the development and prosperity of Teutonism as the decisive criterion will not be long in doubt which document deserves most admiration, the *Déclaration des droits de l'homme* or the *Declaration of Independence* of the United States of North America. I shall return to this point again. In other spheres than that of politics the conception of the individual nature of the Teutonic spirit proves equally valid. The daring exploration of the earth not only gave new scope for a spirit of enterprise such as no other race ever possessed or yet possesses, but also cleared our minds of the close atmosphere of the Classical libraries and restored them to themselves; when Copernicus tore down the firmament of Heaven that had hemmed us in, and with it the Heaven of the Egyptians which had passed over into Christianity, immediately the Heaven of the Teuton stood revealed: "men have at all times and in all places thought that the heavens were many hundreds of thousands of miles from this earth ... but the true Heaven is everywhere, even in the place where you stand and walk." * Printing was used first of all to disseminate the Gospel and to oppose the anti-Teutonic theocracy. And so on, *ad infinitum*.

INNER CONTRASTS

There is yet a word to be said, and one of great importance, if we would clearly recognise and distinguish what is thoroughly Teutonic. In the matters which I have

* Jacob Böhme: *Aurora* 19.

226 THE TEUTONS AS CREATORS OF A NEW CULTURE

just mentioned, as in a thousand others, we discover everywhere that specific characteristic of the Teuton, the close association — as though they were twin brothers, walking hand in hand — of the Practical and the Ideal (*see* vol. i. p. [550](#).) At all points we shall encounter similar contradictions in the Teuton, and shall learn to value them equally highly. For when we realise that we have to deal with something individual, we shall, in forming our judgment, refrain above all from taking into consideration the logical notions of abstract theories about

Good and Evil, Higher and Lower, and direct our attention simply to the individuality; but an individuality is always best recognised from its inner contrasts; where it is uniform, it is also without shape, without individuality. Thus, for example, the Teutons are characterised by a power of expansion possessed by no race before them, and at the same time by an inclination to concentration which is equally new. We see the expansive power at work — in the practical sphere, in the gradual colonisation of the whole surface of the globe; — in the scientific sphere, in the revelation of the infinite Cosmos, in the search for ever remoter causes; — in the ideal sphere, in the conception of the Transcendent, in the boldness of hypotheses, and in sublime artistic flights which lead to more and more comprehensive means of expression. At the same time, however, we are inclined to return within more and more narrowly circumscribed limits, carefully cut off from everything external by ramparts and trenches; we return to the idea of blood-relationships of the Fatherland, of the native district, * of the village of our birth, of the inviolable home (*my home is my castle*, as in Rome), of the closest family circle; finally we return to the innermost central point of the individual, who now, purified and elevated to consciousness of absolute isolation, faces the outer world as an

* Beautifully described by Jacob Grimm in his *Memoirs*, where he tells how the inhabitants of Hessen-Nassau “look down with a kind of contempt“ upon those of Hessen-Darmstadt.

227 THE TEUTONS AS CREATORS OF A NEW CULTURE

invisible, independent being, a supreme lord of freedom, as was the case with the Indians; this is that concentration which in other spheres reveals itself as division of countries into small Principalities, as limitation to a special “field,” whether in science or industry, as inclination to form sects and schools as in Greece, as poetical effects of the innermost nature, *e.g.*, the woodcut, engraving, chamber music. In character these contrasted qualities which are held in coherence by the higher individuality of the race, signify a spirit of enterprise allied to conscientiousness, or they lead — if misguided — to speculation (on the Stock Exchange or in philosophy, it is all the same), to narrow-minded pedantry and pusillanimity.

I cannot on this occasion be expected to attempt an exhaustive description of Teutonic individuality; everything individual — however manifest and recognisable beyond all doubt it may be — is inexhaustible. As Goethe says, “Words cannot clearly reveal the Best,” and if personality is the highest gift which we children of earth receive, then truly the individuality of our definite race is one of those “best“ things. It alone

carries along all separate personalities, as the ship is borne by the flood, and without it (or when this flood is too shallow easily to float anything great) even the strongest character must lie helpless and impotent, like a barque stranded and capsized. Already in the sixth chapter, with a view to stimulate interest, I have mentioned some characteristics of the Teuton; in the second part of this chapter many others will reveal themselves, but here, too, my sole object will be to stimulate, to impel the reader to open his eyes and see for himself.

228 THE TEUTONS AS CREATORS OF A NEW CULTURE

THE TEUTONIC WORLD

It is the clear realisation of what the Teutons have achieved that will prove instructive. This is, I think, the task that remains for me to accomplish in this chapter. To discuss the gradual "Rise of a New World" means, for me, to describe the gradual rise of the Teutonic world. But the most important portion of the task has, in my opinion, been already accomplished by the enunciation and verification of this great central proposition that the new world is a specifically Teutonic world. In fact, I consider that this view is so important and so decisive for all comprehension of the Past, the Present and the Future, that I shall once more for the last time summarise the facts.

The civilisation and culture, which, radiating from Northern Europe, to-day dominate (though in very varying degrees) a considerable part of the world, are the work of Teutonism; what is not Teutonic consists either of alien elements not yet exorcised, which were formerly forcibly introduced and still, like baneful germs, circulate in the blood, or of alien wares sailing, to the disadvantage of our work and further development, under the Teutonic flag, under Teutonic protection and privilege, and they will continue to sail thus, until we send these pirate ships to the bottom. This work of Teutonism is beyond question the greatest that has hitherto been accomplished by man. It was achieved, not by the delusion of a "humanity," but by sound, selfish power, not by belief in authority, but by free investigation, not by contentedness with little, but by insatiable ravenous hunger. As the youngest of races, we Teutons could profit by the achievements of former ones; but this is no proof of a universal progress of humanity, but solely of the pre-eminent capabilities of a definite human species, capabilities which

229 THE TEUTONS AS CREATORS OF A NEW CULTURE

have been proved to be gradually weakened by influx of non-Teutonic blood, or even (as in Austria) of anti-Teutonic principles. No one can prove that the predominance of Teutonism is a fortunate thing for all the inhabitants of the earth; from the earliest times down to the present day we see the Teutons, to make room for themselves, slaughtering whole tribes and races, or slowly killing them by systematic demoralisation. That the Teutons with their virtues alone and without their vices — such as greed, cruelty, treachery, disregarding of all rights but their own right to rule (vol. i. [p. 541](#)), &c. — would have won the victory, no one will have the audacity to assert, but every one must admit that in the very places where they were most cruel — as, for instance, the Anglo-Saxons in England, the German Order in Prussia, the French and English in North America — they laid by this very means the surest foundation of what is highest and most moral.

Armed with this various store of knowledge, all flowing from one central fact, we are now, I think, in a position, with understanding and without prejudice, to regard the work of the Teutons, and to observe how, from about the twelfth century, when it began to assume definite form as isolated endeavour, it has gone on developing to the present day with unflagging zeal; we may even hope, by the irrefutability of our standpoint, to be able to some extent to surmount our greatest disadvantage, namely, the fact that we are still in the midst of a development of which we consequently only see a fragment. But my work keeps the nineteenth century alone in view. God willing, I shall at some later time not indeed describe this century in full detail, but examine and test with some thoroughness its collective achievement; in the meantime I am seeking in this book to discover in their essential outlines the Foundations of the achievements and aspirations of our nineteenth century. That and nothing more. I cannot possibly think of sketching, even in outline, the

230 THE TEUTONS AS CREATORS OF A NEW CULTURE

history of the culture of Celts, Teutons and Slavs up to the eighteenth century, any more than it occurred to me to attempt to give an historical account, when I was discussing the struggle in religion and in the State during the first thousand years of our era. It is outside the plan of my book, and beyond my competence. I might, therefore, almost close this volume, now that I have clearly established the most essential of all the foundations, Teutonism. I should do so if I knew a book to which I might refer my friend and colleague, the unlearned reader, for information regarding the development of Teutonism up to the year 1800, planned as I would have it — comprehensive and yet absolutely individualised. But I

know none. It is obvious that a political history does not suffice; that would be like a physiologist contenting himself with the knowledge of osteology. Still less suitable for the purpose in question are the histories of culture that have lately come into vogue, in which poets and thinkers are represented as leaders, while political creative work is almost totally disregarded; that is like describing a body without paying any attention to the fundamental bone-structure. And the books of this kind that are to be taken seriously treat mostly only of definite periods, as Karl Grün's *16. und 17. Jahrhundert*, Burckhardt's *Renaissance*, Voltaire's *Siècle de Louis XIV.*, &c., or limited spheres, like Buckle's *Civilisation in England* (really in Spain, Scotland and France), Rambaud's *Civilisation Française*, Henne am Rhy's *Kulturgeschichte der Juden*, &c., or again, special domains of culture, like Draper's *Intellectual Development of Europe*, or Lecky's *Rationalism in Europe*, &c. The literature on this subject is very extensive, but among it all I find no work which represents the development of collective Teutonism as that of a living, individual entity, in which all manifestations of life — politics, religion, economics, industry, arts, &c. — are organically connected. Karl Lamprecht's comprehensively

231 THE TEUTONS AS CREATORS OF A NEW CULTURE

planned *German History* would come nearest to what I desire, but it is unfortunately only a "German" History, and treats therefore only of a fragment of Teutonic life. It is just in the case of such a work that we see how fatal is the failure to distinguish between Teutonic and German; it confuses everything. For when only the Germans are regarded as the direct heirs of the Teutons, we conceal the fact that the non-German north of Europe is almost pure Teutonic in the narrowest sense of the word, and fail to observe that it was precisely in Germany, the centre of Europe, that the fusion of the three branches — Celts, Teutons and Slavs — took place, a fact which explains the distinct national colour and the richness of the gifts of this people; moreover, we lose sight of the predominantly Teutonic character of France prior to the Revolution, and also of the organic explanation of the manifest affinity that was to be found in former centuries between the character and achievements of Spain and Italy and those of the north. Both the Past and the Present thereby become a riddle. And as we do not get a universal view of the great connection, we gain no thorough insight into the life of all those details which Lamprecht sets before us with such love and insight. Many think that his treatment is too comprehensive, and therefore difficult to understand; but it is, on the contrary, the narrowness of the point of view that hinders comprehension; for it would be easier to describe the development of collective Teutonism than that of one fragment of it. We

Teutons have certainly, in the course of time, developed into national individualities marked by absolutely distinct characteristics; moreover, we are surrounded by various half-brothers, but we form a unity of such strong coherence, each part of which is so absolutely essential to the other, that even the political development of the one country exercises an influence on all the others and is in turn influenced by them, but its civilisation and culture can in

232 THE TEUTONS AS CREATORS OF A NEW CULTURE

no way be described as something isolated and autonomous. There is a Chinese civilisation, but there is no such thing as a French or a German civilisation; for that reason their history cannot be written.

Here then is a gap to be filled up. And as I can neither close my discussion of the Foundations of the Nineteenth Century with a yawning gulf, nor presume to be competent to fill in so deep a chasm, I shall now attempt to throw a light, bold bridge — a makeshift bridge — over it. The material has been collected long ago by the most eminent scholars; I shall not attempt to murder their methods, but shall refer the student to their works for information; here we require only the quintessence of the thoughts which can be derived from the historical materials, and that only in so far as they are directly connected with the present age. The indispensability of a connection between the point reached in the preceding chapters and the Nineteenth Century may excuse my boldness; the necessity for taking into account the possible compass of a two-volumed work, and the natural *presto-tempo* of a finale must account for the want of substantiality in my makeshift structure.

233

B. HISTORICAL SURVEY

Dich im Unendlichen zu finden,
Musst unterscheiden und dann verbinden.

GOETHE.

THE ELEMENTS OF SOCIAL LIFE

It is impossible to give a comprehensive view of a large number of facts unless we classify them, and to classify means first of all to distinguish and then to unite. Our purpose, however, will not be served by any kind of artificial system, and all purely logical ones are of this nature: this is

obviously the case in the classification of plants, from Theophrastus to Linnaeus, and it is equally so in the attempts to group artists in schools. Some arbitrary treatment, it is true, is inevitable in systematic classification, for System is an evolution of the thinking brain and serves the special needs of the human understanding. It is therefore essential that this ordering understanding should take into consideration not merely units but as large a number of phenomena as possible, and that the eye should see as keenly and accurately as possible: in this way the result of its activity will combine a maximum of observation with a minimum of subjective additions. We admire the acuteness and the knowledge of men like Ray, Jussieu, Cuvier, Endlicher: above all we should admire their sharpness of sight, for it is the subjection of thought to intuition that distinguishes them; the intuitive (*i.e.*, perceptive) grasp of the whole with them forms the basis of the classification of the parts. Goethe's warning first to distinguish and then to unite, we must therefore supplement by the observation that only he who surveys a Whole is capable of making distinctions within it. It was in this way that the immortal Bichat founded modern Histology — in this connection a most instructive

234 HISTORICAL SURVEY

example. Till his time human anatomy was merely a description of the separate parts of the body, as they are distinguished by their various functions; he was the first to demonstrate the identity of the tissues of which the individual organs, however various, are built up, and this rendered rational anatomy possible. Just as no great advance was made until his time, for the simple reason that the individual organs of the body had been regarded as the unities to be distinguished, so we too toil and moil over the individual organs of Teutonism, that is to say, its nations, and overlook the fact that we are here face to face with a unity, and that, in order to understand the anatomy and physiology of this collective entity, we must first recognise the unity as such, but then “isolate the various tissues and investigate each of them, no matter in what organ it is found, in order finally to study each single organ in its peculiar characteristics.” * Now in order to gain a vivid conception of both the present and the past of Teutonism we should need a Bichat to classify the whole material and then to place it rightly, *i.e.*, naturally classified, before our eyes. And since no such man is at present to be found, let us do the best we can for ourselves. We must, of course, refrain from all those extremely prevalent but false analogies between the animal body and the social body, and learn the general method from men like Bichat: first of all to fix our eye upon the whole, then upon its elementary parts, disregarding for the moment all that is intermediate.

The various manifestations of our life can be classified, I think, under three comprehensive heads: Knowledge, Civilisation, Culture. These are

in a way “elements,” but of so complex a nature that it would be well to break them up further at once, and the following

* *Anatomie Générale*, §§ 6 and 7 of the preceding *Considérations*. In the above sentence I have freely summarised Bichat's views.

235 HISTORICAL SURVEY

Table may be regarded as an attempt to give a very simple classification:

Knowledge:

1. Discovery
2. Science

Civilisation:

3. Industry
4. Economy
5. Politics and Church

Culture:

6. *Weltanschauung*, or Philosophy, including Religion and Ethics
7. Art

Bichat's fundamental anatomical Table became a lasting possession of science, but gradually it was very much simplified and by this means there was a great gain in perspicuity; in the case of my Table the opposite procedure may probably have to be followed: my desire to simplify has, perhaps, prevented me from recognising a sufficient number of elements. Bichat, of course, by his classification, laid the foundation of a comprehensive work and a whole science; I, on the other hand, am merely setting down in all modesty, in this my last chapter, a thought which has been of service to myself and may be so to others; but I do not claim that it possesses scientific importance.

But before making a practical use of my classification I must briefly explain it. This will obviate misunderstandings and serve to meet objections. Moreover, I can only prove the value of the division into Knowledge, Civilisation and Culture if we are agreed as to the significance of the individual elements.

I take Discovery to mean the enriching of knowledge by concrete facts: in the first place we have to consider the discovery of ever greater portions of our planets, that is, the practical extension in space of the material of our knowledge and creative activity. But every other extension of the boundaries of our know-

236 HISTORICAL SURVEY

ledge is likewise discovery: the study of the cosmos, the revelation of the infinitely small, the excavation of buried ruins, the discovery of hitherto unknown languages, &c. — Science is something essentially different: it is the methodical elaboration of that which has been discovered into conscious, systematic knowledge. Without something discovered, that is, without concrete material — given by experience, accurately determined by observation — it would be merely a methodological phantom; vanishing it would leave us with only its mantle as mathematics and its skeleton as logic. It is just science, however, that is the greatest promoter of discovery. When Galvani's laboratory attendant saw the leg-muscles of a sensitised frog quiver, he had discovered a fact; Galvani himself had not noticed it at all; * but when this great scientist was told of the fact, there flashed through his brain a brilliantly intellectual thought, something altogether different from the gaping astonishment of the attendant or the unknown current that passed along the frog's leg: to him with his scientific training was revealed the vision of extensive connections with all kinds of known and still unknown facts, and this spurred him on to endless experiments and variously adapted theories. From this example the difference between science and discovery is obvious. Aristotle had already said, “first collect facts, then unite them by thought“; the first is discovery, the second science. Justus Liebig, whom I quote in this chapter with the greatest pleasure, since he stands for all that is most thorough in science, writes as follows: “All (scientific) investigation is deductive or aprioristic. Empirical inquiry in the ordinary sense does not exist at all. An experiment which is not led up to by a theory, *i.e.*, by an idea, stands to natural investigation in the same

* Galvani tells this with an honesty worthy of imitation in his *De viribus electricitatis in motu musculari commentatio*.

237 HISTORICAL SURVEY

relation as jingling with a child's rattle does to music.“ * This applies to every science, for all science is natural science. And although the boundary-line is frequently difficult to draw — *i.e.*, difficult for the man who has not been present at the work in the laboratory — yet it is absolutely real and leads, in the first place, to the recognition of the important fact that nine-tenths of the so-called scientists of the nineteenth century were merely laboratory assistants who either, without having any prior idea, discovered facts by accident, that is to say, collected material, or slavishly followed the ideas proclaimed by the few pre-eminent men — (a Cuvier, a Jacob Grimm, a Bopp, a Robert Bunsen, a Robert Mayer, a Clerk Maxwell, a Darwin, a Pasteur, a Savigny, an

Edward Reuss, &c.) — and did some useful work, thanks solely to the light and leading of such men. We must never lose sight of this “lower“ boundary of science. Nor must the upper boundary be forgotten. For as soon as the mind ceases, as in Galvani's case, to co-ordinate observed facts by a “prior idea“ and thus to organise them into knowledge which is the result of human thought — but raises itself beyond the material which discovery has provided to free speculation — we are dealing no longer with science but with philosophy. This transition is so great that it is like springing from one planet to another; here we have two worlds as wide apart as the difference between the tone and the air-wave, between the expression and the eye; in them the irremediable, insuperable duality of our nature manifests itself. In the interests of science, which cannot grow to be an element of culture without philosophy, in the interests of philosophy, without which science is like a monarch without a people, it is desirable that every educated person should be clearly conscious of this boundary.

* *Francis Bacon von Verulam und die Geschichte der Naturwissenschaften*, 1863.

238 HISTORICAL SURVEY

But there has been and still is an infinite amount of sinning in this very respect; the nineteenth century was a witches' kitchen of notions jumbled together, of unnatural endeavours to unite science and philosophy, and those who made this attempt could, like the witches' brood in *Faust*, say of themselves:

If lucky our hits,
And everything fits,
'Tis thoughts, and we're thinking. *

The thoughts of course are in accordance, for there is no such thing as lucky hits; things never fit. So much with regard to the meaning of Science. As for Industry, I should personally be inclined to include it in the group Knowledge, for of all human vital activities it stands in the most direct dependence upon knowledge; it is, like Science, based at all points upon discovery, and every “industrial“ invention signifies a combination of known facts by means of a “prior“ idea, as Liebig said. But I am afraid of provoking needless contradiction, since industry is, on the other hand, the very closest ally of economic development, and accordingly a decisive factor of all civilisation. No power in the world can hold back an accomplished fact of industry. Industry is almost like a blind power of nature: it cannot be resisted, and although it may seem to have the submissive obedience of a tamed animal, yet no one knows to what it may lead. The development of the technique of explosives, of rifles, of steam-engines are examples and proofs. As Emerson pointedly says, “Engineering in our age is like a balloon that has flown away with the aeronauts.“ † On the other hand, the example of printing is of itself

enough adequately to show how direct is the reacting influence of industry upon knowledge and science. By Economy I understand the whole economic condition of a people; even when

* Bayard Taylor's translation.

† *English Traits*: Wealth.

239 HISTORICAL SURVEY

conditions of culture are high, it is frequently a very simple affair, as, for example, in the earliest days in India; often it develops to extreme complexity, as in ancient Babylon and among us Teutons. This element forms the centre of all civilisation; its influence extends upwards as well as downwards, and stamps its character upon all manifestations of social life. Certainly discoveries, science and industry contribute mightily to the shaping of the economic conditions of life, but they themselves both draw the possibility of their rise and continuance from the economic organism and are furthered or hindered by it. Thus it is that the nature, direction and tendency of a definite economic system can exercise upon the collective life of the people a stimulating influence of unparalleled greatness, or may paralyse it for ever. All Politics — our dogmatic friends may say what they like — are based finally upon economic conditions: politics, however, are the visible body, economic conditions the unseen ramification of veins. This changes but slowly, but if it has once changed — if the blood circulates more sluggishly than formerly, or if, on the contrary, it begets new anastomoses and brings new vigour to every limb — then politics too must follow suit, whether they will or not. However much appearances may deceive us, a civic community never springs into prosperity because of, but in spite of its politics. Politics alone can never offer to a civic community a perpetual guarantee of vigour — for proof look to later Rome and Byzantium. England is supposed to be the political nation above all others, but if we look more closely we shall find that all this political mechanism is intended to fetter the specifically political power, and to give free rein to the other unpolitical, living forces, especially the economic: *Magna Charta* itself denotes the annihilation of political justice in favour of free jurisdiction. All politics are in their essence merely

240 HISTORICAL SURVEY

reaction, and in fact reaction against economic movements; it is only secondarily that they grow to a threatening force, though never to one that is finally decisive. * And though there is nothing in the world so difficult as to discuss general economic questions, without talking nonsense — so mysteriously do the Norns (Acquiring, Keeping, Utilising) weave the destiny of nations and their individual members — we can

nevertheless easily realise the importance of economy as the predominant and central factor of all civilisation. Politics imply not only the relation of one nation to the others, and not merely the conflict within the State between the circles and persons that seek to obtain influence, but also the whole visible and, so to speak, artificial organisation of the social body. In the second chapter of this book (vol. i. p. [143](#)) I have defined law as arbitrariness in place of instinct in the relations of men to each other; now the State is the essence and embodiment of collective, indispensable and yet arbitrary agreements, while Politics are the State at work. The State is, as it were, the carriage, politics the driver; but this driver is at the same time cartwright and constantly mending his vehicle; occasionally he upsets it and must build a new one, but he possesses for this purpose no material but the old, and thus the new vehicle is, but for trifling external details, usually a mere repetition of the former — unless indeed economic progress has in the meantime contributed some material that was not there before. In this tabular list Church is classed with politics: no other course was open to me; if the State is the essence of all arbitrary agreements, then the “Church,” as we usually and officially understand the word, is the most

* I take the word “reaction” not in the sense of our modern party appellations, but in the scientific sense, that is, a movement which is the result of a stimulus; but the difference is not so very great: our so-called “reactionaries” resemble more closely than they imagine the spontaneously quivering frog-legs of Galvani's experiment.

241 HISTORICAL SURVEY

perfect example of super-refined arbitrariness. For here it is not merely a question of the relations between man and man; the organising tendency of society lays its grip upon the inner personality of the individual and prevents him even there — as far as it can — from obeying the necessity of his nature; for it forces upon him as Law an arbitrarily established, minutely defined confession of Faith, and, in addition, a fixed ceremonial for the lifting up of his heart and soul to God. To prove the need for Churches would be to carry owls to Athens, but this will not shake our conviction that we have here laid our finger upon the sorest spot of all politics, upon the spot where they reveal their most perilous side. In other ways politics might commit many really criminal mistakes, but in this respect there is very great temptation to commit the most serious of all crimes, the real “sin against the Holy Spirit,” I mean, Violence to the inner man, the robbery of personality. My next group I have entitled “*Weltanschauung*” * (perception of the problems of life) not “Philosophy,” for this Greek word (loving wisdom) is a miserably pale and cold vocable, and here we require above all colour and warmth. Wisdom! What is wisdom? I hope I shall not be compelled to quote Socrates and the

Pythian priestess to justify my rejection of a Greek word. The German language has here, as it frequently has, infinite depth; it feeds us with good thoughts which are bountifully provided, like the mother's milk for the child. *Welt* meant originally not the earth, not the Cosmos, but mankind. † Though the eye roam through space, though thought may follow it like the elves who

* There is no equivalent in English. "Personal philosophy" comes nearest to it: one might almost paraphrase the word as "way of looking at life's problems." The author's meaning is sufficiently clear from the context. Elsewhere I have rendered the word by the very comprehensive English term "philosophy."

† A collective noun formed from *wër*, man, and *ylde*, men (Kluge: *Etymologisches Wörterbuch*).

242 HISTORICAL SURVEY

ride on sunbeams and girdle the earth without effort, yet man can only arrive at knowledge of himself, his wisdom will ever be only human wisdom; his *Weltanschauung*, however macrocosmically it extends itself in the delusion of embracing the All, will ever be but the microcosmic image in the brain of an individual man. The first part of this word *Weltanschauung* throws us imperatively back upon our human nature and its limits. Absolute wisdom (as the Greek formula would have it), any absolute knowledge however small, is out of the question; we can only have human knowledge, only what various men at different times have thought that they knew. And now, what is the human knowledge? The German word answers the question: to deserve the name knowledge, it must be *Anschauung* (intuitive perception). As Arthur Schopenhauer says: "In truth, all truth and all wisdom rest finally on intuitive perception." And because this is so, the relative value of a *Weltanschauung* depends more upon power of seeing than upon abstract power of thinking, more upon the correctness of the perspective, upon the vividness of the picture, upon its artistic qualities (if I may so express my meaning), than upon the amount seen. The difference between the intuitively Perceived and the Known is like the difference between Rembrandt's "Landscape with the Three Trees" and a photograph taken from the same point. But the wisdom that lies in the word *Weltanschauung* is not yet exhausted; for the Sanskrit root of *schauen* means *dichten* (to invent poetically); as Rembrandt's example proves, *schauen*, far from being a passive reception of impressions, is the most active exercise of the personality; in intuitive perception every one is of necessity a poet, otherwise he "perceives" nothing at all, but merely reflects what he sees, after the mechanical fashion of an

243 HISTORICAL SURVEY

animal. * Hence the original meaning of the word *schön* (related to *schauen*) is not “beautiful,” but “clearly visible, brightly lighted.” This very clearness is the work of the observing subject; nature is not clear in itself, it remains, in the first instance for us, as Faust complains, “noble and dumb”; similarly the image in our brain is not illuminated from without: to see it accurately a bright torch must be kindled within. Beauty is man's addition: by it nature grows into art, and chaos into intuitive perception. Here Schiller's remark concerning the Beautiful and the True holds good:

Es ist nicht draussen, da sucht es der Thor;
Es ist in dir, du bringst es ewig hervor. †

The ancients, it is true, thought that Chaos was a past, outworn stage of the world. As even Hesiod writes:

First of all Chaos arose;

so we are to suppose that there followed a gradual development to more and more perfect form, but, in the face of cosmic nature, this is evidently an absurd conception, since nature is obviously nothing if not the rule of law, without which it would remain utterly unrecognisable; but where Law prevails, there is no Chaos. No, it is in the head of man — nowhere else — that Chaos exists, until in fact it is shaped by “intuitive perception” into clearly, visible, brightly illuminated form; and it is this creative shaping that we have to describe as *Weltanschauung*. ‡ When Professor Virchow and others boast that our age “needs no philosophy,” inasmuch as it is the “age of science,” they are simply extolling the gradual return from form to chaos. But

* Cf. the thorough discussion at the beginning of chap. i. on “Man becoming man” (vol. i. [pp. 14-27](#)).

† It is not without; that is where the fool seeks it; It is within, thou art ever bringing it to light.

‡ For its close relation to art, see vol. i. [p. 15](#).

244 HISTORICAL SURVEY

the history of science convicts them of falsehood; for science was never more intuitive than in the nineteenth century, and that can never be except with the support of a comprehensive philosophy; in fact the two provinces have been so much confused that men like Ernst Haeckel actually became founders of religious theories — that Darwin is constantly striding along with one foot resting upon pure matter and the other upon alarmingly daring philosophical assumptions — and that nine-tenths of living scientists believe as firmly in atoms and ether as a painter of the Trecento in the tiny naked soul that flits away from the mouth of the dead. If robbed of all philosophy man would be bereft of all culture, a great two-footed ant. Concerning Religion I have already said so much in this book, pointing on more than one occasion to its

importance as philosophy or as an element of philosophy, that I may venture to omit all that I might still have to say upon the subject. Genuine, experienced philosophy cannot be separated from genuine, experienced religion; the words denote not two different things, but two tendencies of mind, two moods. Thus, for example, in the case of the contemplative Indians, we see how religion almost completely merges into philosophy, while cognition consequently forms its central point; whereas in the case of men of action (Saint Paul, Saint Francis, Luther) faith is the axis of their whole philosophy, and philosophical cognition is like an almost disregarded peripheric boundary-line. The difference which here appears so startling does not in reality reach any great depth. The really fundamental difference lies between the idealistic and the materialistic way of viewing life's problems — whether as philosophy or religion. * In the section on the rise and growth of Teutonic philosophy up to Kant these various relations will, I hope, become perfectly clear,

* See vol. i. [p. 230](#), vol. ii. [p. 19](#), &c.

245 HISTORICAL SURVEY

and it will be seen, in particular, that ethics and philosophy are inseparably bound together. The connections in the downward direction, between Philosophy and Science, between Religion and Church, are obvious; the relationship with Art has already been mentioned. Regarding Art, the meaning that must be assigned to the word in our Indo-European world, and its great importance for Culture, Science and Civilisation, I must refer the reader to the whole first chapter.

I think that the meaning of the terms employed in my tabular list is now clear. It must be admitted at once that in so summary a method much remains uncertain; but the loss is not great; on the contrary brevity constrains us to think accurately. Thus, perhaps, I may be asked under what heading medicine falls, since some have regarded it as an art rather than a science. But there is here, I think, a wrong use of the word art, a mistake made also by Liebig when he asserts that “99 percent of natural investigation is art.” Liebig bases his assertion upon the fact that imagination is an important factor in all higher scientific work, and secondly, that mechanical inventions are of decisive importance in every advance of knowledge: but imagination is not art, it is merely its instrument, and the implements that serve science, though artificial, belong absolutely and obviously, in their origin and purpose, to the sphere of industry. And the frequently emphasised advantage of the intuitive glance in the case of the doctor only establishes a relationship with art, which occurs in every sphere of life; medicine is and remains a science. Education, on the other hand, when regarded as a matter of schools and instruction, belongs to “Politics and Church.” By its minds are moulded and firmly woven into the many-coloured web of convention;

there is nothing which State and Church desire so ardently as the possession of the schools, and nothing

246 HISTORICAL SURVEY

about which they quarrel so obstinately as they do about their claims to the right of influencing them. In the same way every manifestation of social life can, without artificial forcing, be fitted into my short tabular list.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSES

Whoever will take the trouble to pass in review the various civilisations which are known to us, will find that their remarkable divergence is due to differences in the relations between Knowledge, Civilisation (in the narrower sense) and Culture, and, to be more minute, is determined by too great insistence upon neglect of one or the other of the seven elements. No study is more likely to throw alight upon our own peculiar individuality.

We find in Judaism, as always, a very extreme and therefore instructive example. Here Knowledge and Culture, that is to say, the terminal points, are wanting; in no province have the Jews made discoveries; science is under a ban except where medicine has been a paying industry; art is absent; religion a rudiment; philosophy a digest of misunderstood Helleno-Arabian formulas and spells. On the other hand, the comprehension of economic relations was abnormally developed; in the sphere of industry they had little inventive talent, but they exploited its value in the cleverest manner; politics were unexampled in their simplicity, because the Church usurped the monopoly of all arbitrary decisions. I do not know who it was — I think it was Gobineau — that called the Jews an anti-civilising power; on the contrary, they were, like all Semitic half-castes, Phoenicians, Carthaginians &c., exclusively a civilising power. Thence the peculiarly unsatisfactory character of these Semitic peoples, for they have neither root nor blossom: their civilisation is neither based upon a knowledge slowly acquired by themselves and consequently really

247 HISTORICAL SURVEY

their own, nor does it grow into an individual, natural, necessary culture. We find the very opposite extreme in the Indo-Aryans, for here civilisation seems to be reduced, so to speak, to a minimum; industry carried on by Pariahs, economy left as simple as possible, politics never launching forth upon great and daring schemes; * on the other hand, remarkable diligence and success in the sciences (at least in some) and a tropical

growth of culture (philosophy and poetry). Regarding the richness and complexity of Indo-Aryan philosophy and the sublimity of Indo-Aryan ethics I need say nothing more — in the course of this whole work I have kept the eye of the reader fixed upon them. In art the Indo-Aryans did not possess anything like the creative power of the Hellenes, but their poetical literature is the most extensive in the world; in many examples it is of the sublimest beauty and of such inexhaustible richness of invention that the Indian scholars had to divide the drama into thirty-six classes with a view to creating order in this one branch of poetical production. † In the present connection, however, the most important observation is the following. In spite of their achievements in the sphere of mathematics, grammar &c., the culture of the Indians considerably surpassed not only their civilisation but also their knowledge; hence they were what we call “top-heavy,” all the more so, since their science was almost purely formal and lacking in the element of discovery, that is to say, it lacked the real material, or at least did not acquire new material to nourish the higher qualities and to keep the faculties constantly exercised. Here we notice something which will force itself again and again upon our attention, that Civilisation is a relatively indifferent central mass, while close relations of mutual correlation

* Or only very late — indeed, when it was too late.

† See Rajah Sourindro Mohun Tagore: *The Dramatic Sentiments of the Aryas* (Calcutta, 1881).

248 HISTORICAL SURVEY

exist between Knowledge and Culture. The Indian who possesses very little capacity for empirical observation of nature, possesses likewise (and, as I hope to show, for that very reason) little artistic creative power; on the other hand, we see the abnormal development of pure brain activity conducing on the one hand to an unexampled richness of imagination and on the other to an equally unrivalled brilliancy of the logical and mathematical faculties. Again, the Chinese would provide us with an altogether different example, if we had time at present to extricate this wain from the mud in which our national psychologists have so firmly embedded it; for the fairy tale that the Chinese were once different from what they are now — inventive, creative, scientific — and suddenly some thousand years ago changed their character and remained thenceforth absolutely stationary, is one which others may swallow: I will not. This people to-day lives a most thriving, active life, shows no trace of decline, swarms and grows and prospers; it was always the same as it is to-day, otherwise nature would not be nature. And what is its character? Industrious, skilful, patient, soulless. In many respects this human species bears a striking resemblance to the Jewish, especially in the total absence of all culture, and the one-sided

emphasising of civilisation; but the Chinaman is much more industrious, he is the most indefatigable farm-labourer in the world, and in all manual work he has infinite skill; besides, he possesses, if not art (in our sense) at least taste. It becomes, it is true, more questionable every day whether the Chinaman possesses even moderate inventive talent, but he at least takes up anything that is conveyed to him by others, so far as his unimaginative mind can see any practical value in it, and thus he possessed, long before us, paper, printing (in primitive form), powder, the compass, and many other things. * His learning keeps pace with his

* It is now proved that paper was invented neither by the Chinese

249 HISTORICAL SURVEY

industry. While we have to be contented with encyclopaedias in sixteen volumes, the fortunate, or shall I say unfortunate, Chinese possess printed encyclopaedias of one thousand volumes! * They possess more complete historical annals than any people in the world, a literature of natural history which surpasses ours in extent, whole libraries of moral handbooks, &c., *ad infinitum*. And what good does it all do them? They invent (?) powder and are conquered and ruled by every tiny nation; two hundred years before Christ they possess a substitute for paper, and not long after paper itself, and up to the present they have not produced a man worthy to write

nor by the Arabians, but by the Aryan Persians (see the [section on "Industry"](#)); but Richthofen — whose judgment is of great value owing to its purely scientific acuteness and independence — inclines to the belief that nothing which the Chinese possess "in the way of knowledge and methods of civilisation" is the fruit of their own intellect, but is all imported. He points to the fact that, as far as our information reaches back, the Chinese never knew how to use their own scientific instruments (see *China*, 1877, i. 390, 512 f., &c.), and he comes to the conclusion (p. 424 f.) that the Chinese civilisation owes its origin to former contact with Aryans in Central Asia. In connection with the view which I am advocating, his detailed proof that the remarkably great cartographical achievements of the Chinese only go so far as the political administration had a practical interest in perfecting them, deserves our best attention (*Chinai*. 389); all further progress was excluded, since pure science is a cultural idea. M. von Brandt, a reliable authority, writes in his *Zeitfragen*, 1900, pp. 163-4: "The supposed inventions of the Chinese in early antiquity — porcelain, powder, the compass — were introduced to China at a late period from other countries." Moreover, it is becoming clearer and clearer from the works of Ujfalvi that races which we (in company with the Anthropologists) must describe as "Aryan," formerly were spread over all Asia and dwelt even far in the interior of China. The Sacans (originally an Aryan tribe) were driven out of China only about 150 years before Christ. (Cf. Ujfalvi's *Mémoire sur les Huns blancs* in the periodical *L'Anthropologie*, 1898, pp. 259 f. and 384 f., as also an essay by Alfred C. Haddon in *Nature* of Jan. 24, 1901, and the supplementary essay of the sinologist Thomas W. Kingsmill on *Gothic Vestiges in Central Asia* in *Nature*, April 25, 1901.)

* This is the lowest computation. Karl Gustav Carus asserts in his *Über ungleiche Befähigung der verschiedenen Menschheitsstämme für höhere geistige Entwicklung*, 1849, p. 67, that the most comprehensive Chinese encyclopaedias number 78,731

volumes, of which about fifty would go to one volume of our ordinary dictionary.

250 HISTORICAL SURVEY

upon it; they print practical encyclopaedias of many thousand volumes and know nothing, absolutely nothing; they possess detailed historical annals and no history at all; they describe in admirable fashion the geography of their own country and have long possessed an instrument like the compass, but they never go on voyages of exploration, and have never discovered an inch of land. Nor have they ever produced a geographer capable of widening their horizon. One might call the Chinaman the human machine. As long as he remains in the villages which the community itself manages, occupied with irrigation, mulberry culture, rearing of children &c., the Chinaman inspires us almost with admiration; within these narrow limits, of course, natural impulse, mechanical skill and industry are sufficient; but whenever he crosses these boundaries, he actually becomes a comical figure; for all this feverish industrial and scientific work, this collecting of material and studying and book-keeping, these imposing public examinations, this elevation of learning to the highest throne, this fabulous development under State support of industrial and technical art, lead to absolutely nothing; that which we have here, in the life of the community, called culture — the soul — is lacking. The Chinese possess moralists, but no philosophers; they possess mountains of poems and dramas — for with them, as with the French of the eighteenth century, writing poetry is the fashion and part of a gentleman's education — but they never possessed a Dante or a Shakespeare. *

* The worthlessness of Chinese poetry is well known, only in the shortest forms of didactic poetry has some pretty work been produced. Regarding music and the musical drama Ambros says in his *Geschichte der Musik*, 2nd ed. i. 37: "China really gives one the impression that the culture of other peoples is reflected in a mirror that caricatures." After diligent research in the literature of its philosophy I cannot believe that China possesses a single real philosopher. Confucius is a kind of Chinese Jules Simon: a noble-minded, unimaginative, moral philosopher, politician and pedant. Incomparably more interesting is his antithesis Láo-tze and the school of so-called Táoism which

251 HISTORICAL SURVEY

This example is obviously extremely instructive, for it proves that culture is not in itself a necessary product of knowledge and civilisation, not a consecutive evolution, but depends upon the nature of the personality, upon the

groups itself around him. Here we encounter a really original, captivating philosophy, but it, too, aims solely at practical life and is incomprehensible unless we understand its direct relation to the special civilisation of the Chinese with its fruitless haste and

ignorant learning. For Tàoism, which is represented to us as metaphysics, theosophy or mysticism, is quite simply a nihilistic reaction, a desperate revolt against the Chinese civilisation, which is rightly felt to be useless. If Confucius is a Jules Simon of the Celestial Empire, Lâo-tze is a Jean Jacques Rousseau. "Away with your great knowledge and your learning and the people will be a hundred times happier; discard your spurious charity and your moralising, and the people will once more, as before, display childlike love and human kindness; give up your artificial institutions and cease hungering after riches, and there will be no more thieves and criminals" (*Tào Teh King* i. 19, 1). This is the tone of the whole, obviously a moral, not a philosophical one. This results on the one hand in the construction of Utopian States, in which we shall no longer be able to read and write, but shall live happily in undisturbed peace, without any trace of hateful civilisation, at the same time inwardly free, for, as Kwang-tze (an eminent Tàoist) says: "Man is the slave of all that he invents and the more he gathers round him, the less free are his movements" (xii. 2, 5); or, on the other hand, this train of thought leads to a view which has probably never been proclaimed with such force and conviction — to the doctrine that the greatest motive power lies in rest, the richest knowledge in lack of learning, the most powerful eloquence in silence, and the most unerring certainty in unpremeditated action. "The highest achievement of man is to know that we do not know; to fancy that we know is a sign of disease" (*Tào Teh King* ii. 71, 1). It is difficult briefly to summarise this mood — for I cannot call it anything else — simply because it is a mood and not a constructive thought. These interesting writings must be read, so that we may gradually, by patient application, overcome the repellent form and penetrate to the heart of those sages who mourn for their poor Fatherland. We shall not find metaphysics, in fact no philosophy at all, not even materialism in its simplest form, but much information regarding the appalling nature of the civilised and learned life of the Chinese and a practical moral insight into human nature, which is as profound as that of Confucius is shallow. This negation marks the highest point of what is attainable by the Chinese spirit. (The best information is to be found in the *Sacred Books of China*, vols. iii., xvi., xxvii., xxviii., xxxix. and xl. of Max Müller's *Sacred Books of the East*; vols. xxxix. and xl. contain the Tàoist books. Brandt's small work, *Die Chinesische Philosophie und der Staats-Confucianismus*, 1898, may serve as an introduction. I do not know of any one who has given an account of the real nature of Tàoist philosophy.)

252 HISTORICAL SURVEY

individuality of the people. The Aryan Indian, with materially limited knowledge and inadequately developed civilisation, possesses a Titanic culture of eternal importance; — the Chinaman, with a detailed knowledge of gigantic dimensions and an over-refined, feverishly active civilisation, possesses no culture at all. And just as we have failed after three centuries to impart knowledge to the negro or to civilise the American Indian, so we shall fail in our endeavour to graft culture upon the Chinaman. Each of us in fact remains what he is and was; what we erroneously call progress is the unfolding of something already present; where there is nothing, the King loses his rights. This example reveals another point with particular clearness, and I should like to emphasise it in order to supplement what I formerly said about the Indians: that without culture, *i.e.*, without that tendency of mind to an all-uniting, all-illuminating philosophy, there can be no real knowledge. We can and should keep science and philosophy apart; certainly; but it is obvious

that without profound thought no possibility of extensive science can arise; an exclusively practical knowledge, directed to facts and industry, lacks all significance. * This is an important fact and it is supplemented by another drawn from our experience of the Indo-Aryans, that, conversely, when the supply of the material of knowledge stops, the higher life of culture comes likewise to a standstill, and becomes ossified — this being due, in my opinion, to the shrivelling up of creative power; for the mystery of existence remains ever the same, whether we contemplate much or little, and at every moment the extent of the Inscrutable corresponds exactly to that of the Investigated; but questioning wonder and with it creative imagination are dulled by the Familiar

* As Jean Jacques Rousseau pointedly says: *Les sciences règnent pour ainsi dire à la Chine depuis deux mille ans, et n'y peuvent sortir de l'enfance* (Lettre à M. de Scheyb, 15.7.1756).

253 HISTORICAL SURVEY

and unchanging. Let me give a proof of this. Those great myth-inventors, the Sumero-Accadians, were brilliant workers in the sphere of natural observation and of mathematical science; their astronomical discoveries reveal remarkable precision, *i.e.*, prosaically sure observation; but prosaic though they might be, the discoveries evidently stimulated the imagination powerfully, and so in the case of this people we see science and myth-building going hand in hand. The practical talents of this people are proved by their fundamental economic and political institutions, which have come down to us; the division of the year according to the position of the sun, the institution of the week, the introduction of a duodecimal system for commerce in weighing, counting, &c.; but all these thoughts testify to an unusual power of creative imagination, and we may conclude from the remnants of their language that they were peculiarly predisposed to metaphysical thought. * We see in how manifold ways the threads are interwoven — how absolutely decisive is the nature of the special racial individuality with its contrasts and unalterable character.

Unfortunately I cannot continue this investigation further, but I think that even these extremely meagre indications will provide subject for much reflection, and lead to the recognition of many facts which are of importance for us at the present time. Now if we again take up our tabular list and look around to find a really harmonious man, beautifully and freely developed in all directions, there is no one in the past but the Hellene whom we shall be able to name. With him all the elements of human life shine in the fullest splendour; discovery, science, industry, economy, politics, philosophy, art; in every province he stands the test. Here we see before us a really “complete man.” He did not “develop” from

the Chinaman, who even when Athens

* See vol. i. [p. 420, note 3.](#)

254 HISTORICAL SURVEY

was at the zenith of her glory was toiling with superfluous diligence; * he is not an “evolution“ of the Egyptian, although he felt a quite unnecessary reverence for the latter's supposed wisdom; he does not signify an “advance“ upon the Phoenician peddler, who first acquainted him with certain rudiments of civilisation; no, it was in barbarous regions, under definite, probably hard conditions of life, that a noble human race made itself still nobler, and — for this is even historically demonstrable — by crossing with related but individualised branches of the main stock, acquired talents of a most various nature. This human being at once revealed himself as the man that he was to be and to remain. He developed quickly. † The inherited discoveries, inventions and thoughts of the world had led in the case of the Egyptians to a dead, hieratic science, united to an absolutely practical, unimaginative, honest religion; in the case of the Phoenicians to commerce and idolatry; in the case of their neighbours the Hellenes, exactly the same impulses led to science and culture, without the just demands of civilisation having to suffer. The Hellene alone possesses this many-sidedness, this perfect plasticity, which has found artistic expression in his statues; hence he deserves greater admiration and reverence than any other man, and he alone can be held up as a pattern — not for imitation but for emulation. The Roman, whose name is in our schools linked to that of the Hellene, is almost more one-sided in his development than the Indian; while in the case of the latter culture had gradually consumed all vital

* More than two thousand years before Christ begin the historical annals of the Chinese. (Addendum: This is a wide-spread error; at most eight hundred years before Christ.)

† In a lecture delivered before the British Association on September 21, 1896, Flinders Petrie expresses the opinion that the oldest Mycenaean works of art, for example the famous golden cups with the steers and cows (from about the year 1200 B.C.). were in respect of faithful observation of nature and mastery of workmanship equal to any late work of the so called period of splendour. (With regard to this Pelasgian-Achaean culture, cf. Hueppe: *Rassenhygiene der Griechen*, p. 54 f.)

255 HISTORICAL SURVEY

powers, in the former every other gift had been from the first suppressed by political cares — the work of legislation and the work of statecraft. He was so fully occupied with the task of civilisation that he had no strength left for knowledge or for culture. * In the course of his whole history the Roman discovered nothing, invented nothing; and here too we see the

aforementioned law once more at work, that mysterious law of the correlation of knowledge and culture; for when he had become master of the world and began to feel the monotony of a life devoid of culture, it was too late; the welling fountain of originality, that is, of freely creative power, had absolutely dried up in him. His strong, one-sided political work presses heavily enough upon us even to-day, and deludes us into attaching to political things a predominant and independently informing significance, which they are far from possessing, and which they claim only to the prejudice of life.

THE TEUTON

This digression from China to the Sumero-Accadians leads, as I think, to a fairly clear conception of our own personality and its necessary development. For we may utter it without hesitation; the Teuton is the only human being who can be compared to the Hellene. In him, too, the striking and specifically distinctive character is the simultaneous and equal development of knowledge, civilisation and culture. The many-sided and comprehensive nature of our capacities distinguishes us from all contemporary and all former races — with the single exception of the Hellenes; a fact which, by the way, is an argument in favour of the presumption that we are closely related to them. But that is why a comparative distinction is in this case of the greatest value. Thus, for example, we may surely assert that culture was the

* See vol. i. pp. [34 and 35](#).

256 HISTORICAL SURVEY

predominant element in the Greeks; they possessed the most perfect and most original poetry, out of which the rest of their art grew, and that, too, at a time when their civilisation still bore the stamp of the love of splendour — the appreciation of beauty in spite of the elements of dependency and barbarism — a time when their thirst for knowledge was scarcely awakened. At a later period their science suddenly made a great and ever-memorable advance, and that, too, needed the direct and happy stimulus of sublime philosophy (here again the correlation!). With these unrivalled achievements of the Hellenes their civilisation lagged far behind. Athens, it is true, was a manufacturing city (if this expression does not offend too dainty ears), and the world would never have had a Thales or a Plato had not the Hellenes as economists and crafty, enterprising merchants won for themselves wealth and leisure; they were in every sense a practical people; yet in politics — without which no civilisation can last — they did not reveal any particular talent, such as the Romans did; Law and State were in Athens the shuttlecock of the

ambitious; nor must we overlook the phenomenon of the directly anti-civilising measures of the most durable Greek State, Sparta. It is obvious that with us Teutons matters are essentially different. Our politics, it is true, have remained, even to the present day, clumsy, rude, awkward; yet we have proved ourselves the greatest State-builders in the world — and this would lead us to suppose that here, as in so many things, it was imitation rather than lack of ability that stood in our way. Goethe asks with a sigh: “Who is fortunate enough to become conscious in early life of his own self and its proper connection apart from outside forms?” * Not even the Hellenes, and we much, much less. Our gifts have developed better, because more independently, in the whole economic sphere (commerce, trade,

* *Wilhelm Meister's Lehrjahre*, Book vi.

257 HISTORICAL SURVEY

agriculture perhaps least of all) and reached a splendour hitherto unknown; it has been the same with industry, which quickly followed suit. What are Phoenicians and Carthaginians with their caravans and their miserable ware-houses and sweating system, in comparison with a Lombardic or a Rhenish city-league, in which shrewdness, industry, invention and — last but not least — honesty go hand in hand? * In our case, therefore, civilisation, the whole sphere of real civilisation, forms the central point; a good characteristic, in so far as it promises durability, but a somewhat perilous one, in that we run a risk of becoming Chinese, a risk which would become a very real one if the non-Teutonic or scarcely Teutonic elements among us were ever to gain the upper hand. † For our unquenchable desire for knowledge would at once be enlisted in the service of mere civilisation, and thereby — as in China — fall under the ban of eternal sterility. The only safeguard against this is culture, which confers on us dignity and greatness, immortality, indeed — as the ancient Greeks were wont to say — Divinity. But in our gifts culture does not possess the predominant importance which the Hellenes assigned to it. For its importance in Hellenism I refer to my remarks in the first chapter. No one can say of us that art moulds our life, or that philosophy (in its noblest sense as a way of viewing life's problems) plays as great a part in the lives of our leading men as it did in Athens, not to speak of India. And the worst feature of the case is, that that element of culture which, to judge from countless manifestations of Celto-Slavo-

* See vol. i. p. [112 f.](#)

† The German in particular shows in many respects a dangerous tendency to become Chinese, for instance, in his mania for collecting, in his piling up of material upon material, in his inclination to neglect the spirit for the letter, &c. This tendency was noticed long ago, and Goethe laughingly told Soret of a globe belonging to the time of

Charles V., which bore, as a gloss upon China, the inscription: "The Chinese are a people resembling the Germans very much!" (Eckermann, 26.4.1823).

258 HISTORICAL SURVEY

Teutonism, is most highly developed among us (and at the same time an ample substitute for the artistic and metaphysical talent which the majority of us lack), I mean Religion, has never been able to tear off the straitjacket which — immediately upon our entrance into history — was forced upon it by the unworthy hands of the Chaos of Peoples. In Jesus Christ the absolute religious genius had entered the world; no one was so well adapted to hear this divine voice as the Teuton; the present spreaders of the Gospel throughout Europe are all Teutons; and the whole Teutonic people, as the example of the rude Goths shows (vol. i. p. [553](#)), seizes upon the words of the Gospel, repelling all foolish superstition, as we see from the history of the Arians. And yet the Gospel soon disappears and the great voice is silent; for the children of the Chaos will not abandon the sacrifice by proxy which the better spirits among the Hellenes and the Indians had long ago rejected, and the pre-eminent Prophets of the Jews had centuries before laughed out of court; all kinds of cabalistic magic and metamorphosis of matter from the late, impure Syro-Egypt came to be added; and all this, embellished and supplemented by Jewish chronicle, is henceforth the "religion" of the Teutons! Even the Reformation does not cast it off, and so becomes involved in an irreconcilable contradiction with itself; this throws the preponderance of the importance of the Reformation into a purely political sphere, that is to say, into the class of forces which are merely civilising, whereas all that it accomplishes in the sphere of culture is an inconsistent affirmation (redemption by faith — and yet retention of materialistic superstition) and a fragmentary negation (rejection of a portion of the dogmatic accretions and retention of the rest). * In the

* Luther especially never frees himself in this connection from the toils of religious materialism; he — the hero of faith — "eliminates faith so much from the Lord's Supper" that he teaches the doctrines that even the unbeliever breaks with his teeth the body of Christ. He therefore accepts what Berengar and so many other strict Roman

259 HISTORICAL SURVEY

want of a true religion that has sprung from, and is compatible with, our own individuality, I see the greatest danger for the future of the Teuton; this is his vulnerable heel; he who wounds our Achilles there will lay him low. Look back at the Hellene! Led by Alexander, he showed himself capable of conquering the whole world; but his weak point was politics; being gifted with extravagant talents even in this respect, he produced the foremost doctrinaires of politics, the most ingenious founders of States, the most brilliant orators on State affairs; but the success which

he achieved in other spheres failed him in this: — he created nothing great and lasting; that was why he fell; it was solely his pitiful political condition that delivered him over to the Romans; with his freedom he lost his vital power; the first harmoniously complete human being was a thing of the past, and naught but his shadow now walked upon the earth. I think that in respect of religion we Teutons are in a similar case. A race so profoundly and inwardly religious is unknown to history; we are not more moral than other people, but much more religious. In this respect we occupy a position between the Indo-Aryan and the Hellene; our inborn metaphysical and religious need impels us to a much more artistic (*i.e.*, more illuminating) philosophy than that of the Indian, to a much more spiritual and therefore profounder one than that of the Hellenes, who surpass us in art. It is this very standpoint which deserves to be called religion, to distinguish it from philosophy and from art. If we tried to enumerate the true saints, the great preachers, the merciful helpers, the mystics of our race, if we were to inquire how many have suffered torture and death for their faith, if we were to investigate the important part played by religious conviction in all the most

Catholics had bravely opposed a few centuries before, and what would have filled not only the earliest Christians but even men like Ambrosius and Augustine with horror. (*Cf. Harnack: Grundriss der Dogmengeschichte, § 81.*)

260 HISTORICAL SURVEY

important men of our history, we should find the task endless; our whole glorious art in fact develops round religion as its centre, just as the earth revolves round the sun; it develops only partly and outwardly round this and that special Church, but everywhere and inwardly around the longing, religious heart. And in spite of this vigorous religious life we show from the first the most absolute want of unity in religious matters. What do we find to-day? The Anglo-Saxon — impelled by his unerring vital instinct — clings to some traditional Church, which does not interfere in politics, in order that he may at least possess religion as the centre of his life; the Norseman and the Slav dissolve themselves into a hundred weakly sects, well aware that they are being led astray, but incapable of finding the right path; we see the Frenchman languishing in dreary scepticism or the most foolish humbug of fashion; the Southern Europeans have now fallen a prey to the most unvarnished idolatry, and are consequently no longer classed among cultured races; the German stands apart and waits for a God to descend once more from Heaven, or chooses in despair between the religion of Isis and the religion of imbecility called “Force and Matter.”

In the various sections I shall have to return to many points to which I have here alluded; in the meantime it is sufficient if, in paving the way for a further comparative characterisation of our Teutonic world, I have

revealed its most pre-eminent quality, and at the same time its most perilous weakness.

A few pages back I invoked the Bichat of the future; now we reach a point where we can offer him some indications concerning the historical development of the Teutonic world up to the year 1800. That we shall do by glancing successively at each of the seven elements which we adopted in order to get a more comprehensive view of the whole field.

261

1. DISCOVERY (From Marco Polo to Galvani)

THE INBORN CAPACITY

To the sum of what is to be known there is obviously no limit. In science — in contrast to the material of knowledge — a stage of development might certainly be conceived at which all the great laws of nature should have been discovered; for we have to deal with a question of a relation between phenomena and the human reason, and so of something which, in consequence of the special nature of our reason, is strictly limited, and, as it were, “individual” — inasmuch as it is accommodated to and pertinent to the individuality of the human race. Science would in this case find an inexhaustible scope within itself, only in a more and more refined analysis. On the other hand, all experience proves that the realm of phenomena and of forms is infinite and can never be completely investigated. No geography, physiography or geology, however scientific, can tell us anything at all about the peculiarities of a yet undiscovered country; a newly discovered moss, a newly discovered beetle, is an absolutely new thing, an actual and permanent enrichment of our conceptive world, of the material of our knowledge. Naturally, for our own human convenience, we shall at once assign beetle and moss to some established species, and if no pinching and squeezing will accomplish this, we shall for the sake of classification invent a new “species,” incorporating it, if possible, in a well-known “order”; nevertheless the beetle in question and the moss in question remain, as before, something perfectly individual, something that could not be invented or reasoned out, a new unexpected embodiment, so to speak, of the cosmic plan, and this embodiment we now possess, whereas formerly we lacked it. It is the same with all phenomena. The refraction of light by the prism, the presence of

262 DISCOVERY

electricity everywhere, the circulation of the blood ... every discovered fact means an enrichment. “The individual manifestations of the laws of

nature," says Goethe, "all lie like Sphinxes, rigid, unyielding, silent outside of us. Every new phenomenon perceived is a discovery; every discovery a possession." This makes the distinction within the sphere of knowledge between discovery and science very clear; the one has to deal with the Sphinxes that lie without us, the other means the elaboration of these perceptions into the new form of an inner possession. * That is why we can very well compare the raw material of knowledge, *i.e.*, the mass of the Discovered, to the raw material of property, that is, money. So long ago as the year 1300 the old chronicler Robert of Gloucester wrote: "For the more that a man can, the more worth he is." He who knows much is rich, he who knows little is poor. But this very comparison, which, to begin with, will seem somewhat commonplace, serves excellently to teach us how to lay our finger on the critical point as regards knowledge; for the value of money depends altogether on the use which we are able to make of it. That riches give power and poverty cripples, is a truism; the most stupid observes it daily in himself and in others, and yet Shakespeare, one of the wisest of men, wrote:

If thou art rich, thou'rt poor.

And, as a matter of fact, life teaches us that no simple, direct relation prevails between riches and power. Just as hyperaemia or superfluity of blood in the organism proves a hindrance to vital activity and finally even causes death, so we frequently observe how easily great riches

* Goethe repeatedly lays great stress upon the distinction between "without us" and "within us"; here it is very useful in distinguishing between discovery and science; but as soon as we transfer it to the purely philosophical or even purely scientific sphere, we must be very cautious: see the remarks at the beginning of the [section on "Science."](#)

263 DISCOVERY

can paralyse. It is the same with knowledge. I have shown in a previous section how the Indians were ruined by anaemia of the material of knowledge; they were, so to speak, starved idealists; the Chinese, on the other hand, resembled bloated upstarts, who had no idea how to employ the huge capital of knowledge which they have collected — being without initiative, imagination or idea. The common proverb, "Knowledge is power," is not, therefore, absolutely valid, it depends upon the person who knows. It might be said of knowledge, even more than of gold, that in itself it is nothing at all, absolutely nothing, and just as likely to injure a man and utterly ruin him as to elevate and ennoble him. The ignorant Chinese peasant is one of the most efficient and happy men in the world, the learned Chinaman is a plague, he is the cancer of his people; that is why that wonderful man, Lâo-tze — who has been so shamefully misunderstood by our modern commentators, reared as they have been on phrases of "humanity" — was absolutely right in saying: "Alas, if we [the Chinese] could only give up our great knowledge and do away with

learning, our people would be a hundred times more prosperous.“ * Thus here again we are thrown back upon individuality, natural capacities, inborn character. A minimum of knowledge suffices one human race, more is fatal, for it has no organ to digest it; in the case of another the thirst for knowledge is natural, and the people pines away when it can convey no nourishment for this need; it also understands how to elaborate in a hundred ways the continual stream of the material of knowledge; not only for the transformation of outward life, but for the continual enrichment of thought and action. The Teutons are in this case. It is not the amount of their knowledge that deserves admiration — for all knowledge constantly remains relative — but the fact that they possessed the rare capacity to acquire it, that is,

* *Tào Teh King* xix. 1.

264 DISCOVERY

ceaselessly to discover, ceaselessly to force the “silent Sphinxes“ to speak, and in addition the capacity to absorb, so to say, what had been taken up, so that there was always room for new matter, without causing hypertrophy.

We see how infinitely complex every individuality is. But I hope that from these few remarks, in union with those in the preceding part of this chapter, the reader will without difficulty grasp the peculiar importance of knowledge for the life of the Teuton, knowledge of course in its simplest form, as the discovery of facts. He will also recognise that in many ways this — in a certain sense purely material — gift is connected with his higher and highest capacities. Only remarkable philosophical gifts and only an extremely active economic life can render the consumption, digestion, and utilisation of so much knowledge possible. It is not the knowledge that has created the vigour; the great superfluity of vigour has ceaselessly striven to acquire ever wider knowledge, in exactly the same way as it has striven to acquire more and more possession in other spheres. This is the true inner source of the victorious career of the zeal for knowledge, which from the thirteenth century onwards never flags. He who grasps this fact will follow the history of discoveries not like a child, but with understanding.

THE IMPELLING POWERS

When we contemplate this phenomenon which is so characteristically individualistic, we are at once bound to be impressed by the connection of the various sides of the individuality. I have just said that our treasure of knowledge is due to our keenness to possess; I had no intention to attach any evil signification to this word; possession is power, power is freedom. Moreover, all such keenness implies not merely a longing to

increase our power by lay-

265 DISCOVERY

ing hold of what lies outside of ourselves, but also the longing for renunciation of self. Here, as in love, the contrasts go hand in hand; we take, in order to take, but we also take in order to give. And precisely as we recognised in the case of the Teuton an affinity between the founder of states and the artist, * so a certain noble striving after possession is closely related to the capacity to create new things out of what is possessed, and to present them to the world for its enrichment. But in spite of all we must not overlook one fact in the history of our discoveries, what a great part has been played quite directly and undisguisedly by the craving for gold. For at the one end of the work of discovery there stands, as the simple broad basis of everything else, the investigation of the earth, the discovery of the planet which is the abode of man; it was this that first taught us with certainty the shape and nature of our planet, and at the same time the fundamental facts concerning man's position in the cosmos; from it we first learnt full details concerning the various races of men, the nature of rocks, the vegetable and animal world; at the extreme other end of the same work stands the investigation of the inner constitution of visible matter, what we to-day call chemistry and physics, an extremely mysterious and, till a short time ago, doubtful interference with the bowels of nature, savouring of magic, but at the same time a most important source of our present knowledge and our present power. † Now in the opening up of these two spheres of knowledge, in the voyages of discovery and in alchemy as well, the direct search for gold was for centuries the impelling power. Besides this motive and above it, we certainly always find in the great individual pioneers something else — a pure ideal power; a Columbus is ready at any moment to die for his idea, an

* See vol. i. [p. 543.](#)

† The great importance of alchemy as the source of chemistry is now universally recognised; I need only refer to the books of Berthelot and Kopp.

266 DISCOVERY

Albertus Magnus is vaguely pursuing the great problems of the world; but such men would not have found the needful support nor would bands of followers, indispensable for the toilsome work of discovery, have joined them, had not the hope of immediate gain spurred them on. The hope of finding gold led to keener observation, it doubled the inventive power, it inspired the most daring hypotheses, it conferred infinite endurance and contempt of death. After all it is much the same to-day: the States, it is true, no longer scramble for the yellow metal, as the

Spaniards and Portuguese of the sixteenth century did, yet the gradual discovery of the world and its subjection to Teutonic influence depends solely upon whether it will pay. Even a Livingstone has after all proved a pioneer for capitalists in search of high interest, and it is they who first carry out what the individual idealist could not accomplish. Similarly, modern chemistry could not dispense with expensive laboratories and instruments, and the State maintains these, not out of enthusiasm for pure science, but because the industrial inventions that spring therefrom enrich the country. * The South Pole, which still defies the twentieth century, would be discovered and overrun in six months if people thought that rocks of pure gold rise there above the waves.

As the reader can see, I have no wish to represent ourselves as better and nobler than we are; honesty is the best policy, as the proverb says; and this holds good even here. For from this observation regarding the power of gold we are brought to recognise a fact which, once our attention is called to it, we shall find confirmed on all sides: that the Teuton has a peculiar capacity to make a good use of his shortcomings; the ancients would have said that he was a favourite of the

* To say nothing of the discovery of new kinds of powder for cannons and explosives for torpedoes.

267 DISCOVERY

Gods; I think that I see in this a proof of his great capacity for culture. A commercial company, with an eye only to good interest and not always proceeding conscientiously, subjugates India, but its activity is kept alive and ennobled by a whole succession of stainless military heroes and great statesmen, and it was the officials of this company who — fired by noble enthusiasm and qualified for their task by a learning acquired by great self-sacrifice — enriched our culture by the revelation of the old Aryan language. We are thrilled with horror when we read the history of the annihilation of the Indians in North America: everywhere on the side of the Europeans there is injustice, treachery, savage cruelty; * and yet how decisive was this very work of destruction for the later development of a noble, thoroughly Teutonic nation upon that soil! A comparative glance at the South American bastard colonies convinces us of this. † That boundless passion displayed in the pursuit of gold leads to the recognition of yet another fact, one that is essential for the history of our discoveries. Passion may, indeed, influence very various parts of our being — that depends upon the individual; characteristic of our race are daring, endurance, self-sacrifice; great power of conception, which causes the individual to become quite wrapt up in his idea. But this element of passion does not by any means reveal itself merely in the sphere of egotistical interest: it confers on the artist power to work on amid poverty and neglect; it provides statesmen, reformers and martyrs;

it has also given us our discoverers. Rousseau's remark: "*Il n'y a*

* Take as an example the total annihilation of the most intelligent and thoroughly friendly tribe of the Natchez by the French on the Mississippi (in Du Pratz: *History of Louisiana*) or the history of the relations between the English and the Cherokees (Trumbull: *History of the United States*). It is always the same story: a fearful injustice on the part of the Europeans provokes the Indians to take vengeance, and for this vengeance they are punished, that is, slaughtered.

† See vol. i. [p. 286](#).

268 DISCOVERY

que de grandes passions que fassent de grandes choses," is probably not so universally true as he thought, but it is absolutely true of us Teutons. In our great journeys of discovery, as in our attempts to transform substances, the hope of gain has been the great incentive, but in no other sphere, unless it be in that of medicine, has this succeeded. Here then, was the passionate impulse dominant — an impulse likewise towards possession, but it was the possession of knowledge, purely as knowledge. Here we have a peculiar and specially to be venerated aspect of the purely ideal impulse; to me it seems closely related to the artistic and the religious impulse; it explains that intimate connection between culture and knowledge, the puzzling nature of which I have so often illustrated by practical examples. * To believe that knowledge produces culture (as is frequently taught to-day) is senseless and contradicts experience; living wisdom, however, can only find a place in a mind predisposed to high culture; otherwise knowledge remains lying on the surface like manure on a stony field — it poisons the atmosphere and does no good. Concerning this passionate character of genius as the fundamental cause of our victorious career of discoveries, one of the greatest discoverers of the nineteenth century, Justus Liebig, has written as follows: "The great mass of men have no idea what difficulties are involved in works which really extend the sphere of knowledge; indeed, we may say that man's innate impulse towards truth would not suffice to overcome the difficulties which oppose the accomplishment of every great result, if this impulse did not in individuals grow into a mighty passion which braces and multiplies their powers. All these works are undertaken without prospect of gain and without claim to thanks; the man who accomplishes them has seldom the good fortune to live to see them put

* See pp. [247](#) and [251](#).

269 DISCOVERY

to practical use; he cannot turn his achievement into money in the market of life, it has no price and cannot be ordered or bought." *

This perfectly disinterested “passion“ we find, in fact, everywhere in the history of our discoveries. † To the reader whose knowledge in this branch is not very extensive, I should recommend the study of Gilbert, a man who, at the end of the sixteenth century (when Shakespeare was writing his dramas), by absolutely endless experiments laid the foundation of our knowledge of electricity and magnetism. At that time no one could dream of the practical application of this knowledge even in distant centuries; indeed these things were so mysterious that up to Gilbert's time they had either not been heeded and observed, or only used for philosophical hocus-pocus. And this one man, who had only the old and well-known observations in connection with rubbed amber and the magnet to start from, experimented so indefatigably and extracted from nature her secret with such natural genius that he established, once for all, all the fundamental facts in reference to magnetism, recognised electricity (the word was coined by him) as a phenomenon different from magnetism, and paved the way for its investigation.

NATURE AS TEACHER

Now we may connect with the example of Gilbert a distinction which I briefly established in drawing up my

* *Wissenschaft und Landwirtschaft* ii. at the end.

† An excellent example of the “disinterested passion“ peculiar to the pure Teuton is provided by the English peasant Tyson, who died in 1898. He had emigrated to Australia as a labourer, and died the greatest landed proprietor in the world, with a fortune reckoned at five million pounds. This man remained to the last so simple that he never possessed a white shirt, much less a pair of gloves; only when absolutely necessary did he pay a brief visit to a city; he had an insurmountable distrust of all churches. Money in itself was a matter

270 DISCOVERY

Table of subjects, and which I again cursorily touched upon when mentioning Goethe's distinction between what is without and what is within us; practice will show its importance more clearly than theory, and it is essential for a rational view of the history of Teutonic discoveries: I mean the distinction between discovery and science. Nothing will make this clearer to us than a comparative glance at the Hellenes. The capacity of the Hellenes for real science was great, in many respects greater than our own (think only of Democritus, Aristotle, Euclid, Aristarchus, &c.); their capacity for discovery, on the contrary, was strikingly small. In this case, too, the simplest example is at the same time the most instructive. Pytheas, the Greek explorer — the equal of any later traveller in daring, intuition and understanding * — stands quite alone; he was ridiculed by all, and not a single one of those philosophers who could tell us such beautiful things concerning God, the

soul, atoms and the heavenly sphere, had the faintest idea of the significance which the simple investigation of the surface of the earth must have for man. This shows a striking lack of curiosity and absence of all genuine thirst for knowledge, a total blindness to the value of facts, purely as such. And do not suppose that in their case “progress“ was a mere question of time. Discovery can begin every day and anywhere; the necessary instruments — mechanical and intellectual — are derived spontaneously from the needs of the investigation. Even to our own day the most faithful observers are usually not the most learned men, and frequently they are exceedingly weak in the theoretical summarising of their

of indifference to him: he valued it only as an ally in his great lifework, the struggle with the desert. When asked about his wealth he replied, “It is not having it but fighting for it that gives me pleasure.“ A true Teuton! worthy of his countryman Shakespeare:

Things won are done, joy's soul lies in the doing.

* See vol. i. [p. 52.](#)

271 DISCOVERY

knowledge. Thus, for example, Faraday (perhaps the most remarkable discoverer of the nineteenth century) grew up almost without higher education as a bookbinder's apprentice; his knowledge of physics he derived from encyclopaedias which he had to bind, that of chemistry from a popular summary for young girls; thus prepared he began to make those discoveries upon which almost the whole technical part of electricity is to-day based. * Neither William Jones nor Colebrooke, the two discoverers of the Sanscrit language at the end of the eighteenth century, were philologists by profession. The man who accomplished what no other scholar had been able to do, who discovered how to steal from plants the secret of their life, the founder of the physiology of plants, Stephen Hales (1761), was a country minister. We only need in fact to watch Gilbert, whom we mentioned above, at work: all his experiments in electricity of friction might have been carried out by any clever Greek two thousand years before; he invented his own apparatus; in his time there were no higher mathematics, without which a complete comprehension of these phenomena is to-day scarcely thinkable. No, the Greek observed but little and never without bias; he immediately plunged into theory and hypothesis, that is, into science and philosophy; the passionate patience which the work of discovery demands was not given to him. We Teutons, on the other hand, possess a special talent for the investigation of nature, and this talent does not lie on the surface, but is most closely bound up with the deepest depths of our being. As theorists we have apparently no great claim to importance: the philologists confess that the Indian Pānini surpasses the greatest Grammarians of to-day; † the jurists say that the ancient Romans were

* See Tyndall: *Faraday as a Discoverer* (1890); and W. Grosse: *Der Äther* (1898).

† See vol. i. [p. 431](#).

272 DISCOVERY

very superior to us in jurisprudence; even after we had sailed round the world we would not believe that it was round till the fact had been fully proved to us and hammered into us for centuries, whereas the Greeks, who knew only the insignificant Mediterranean, had long ago demonstrated the fact by way of pure science; in spite of the enormous increase of our knowledge, we still cannot do without Hellenic “atoms,” Indian “ether,” Babylonian “evolution.” As discoverers, however, we have no rivals. So that historian of Teutonic civilisation and culture, whom I invoked above, will here have to draw a subtle and clear distinction, and then dwell long and in detail upon our work of discovery.

Discovery demands above all childlike freedom from bias — hence those large childlike eyes which attract us in a countenance such as Faraday's. The whole secret of discovery lies in this, to let nature speak. For this self-control is essential: the Greeks did not possess it. The preponderance of their genius lay in creative work, the preponderance of ours lies in receptivity. For nature does not obey a word of command, she does not speak as we men desire, or utter what we wish to hear; we have by endless patience, by unconditional subjection, by a thousand groping attempts to find out how she wills to be questioned and what questions she cares to answer, what not. Hence observation is a splendid discipline for the formation of character: it exercises endurance, restrains arbitrariness, teaches absolute truthfulness. The observation of nature has played this part in the history of Teutonism; it would play the same part to-morrow in our schools, if only the pall of medieval superstition would at length lift, and we came to understand the fact that it is not the repetition by rote of antiquated wisdom in dead, misunderstood languages, nor the knowledge of so-called “facts” and still less science, but the “method” of acquiring all knowledge —

273 DISCOVERY

— namely observation — that should be the foundation of all education, as the one discipline which at the same time forms the mind and the character, confers freedom but not licence, and opens up to every one the source of all truth and all originality. For here again we observe knowledge and culture in contact and begin better to understand how discoverers and poets belong to the one family: for only nature is really original, but she is so everywhere and at all times. “Nature alone is infinitely rich, and she alone forms the great artist.” *

The men whom we call geniuses, a Leonardo, a Shakespeare, a Bach, a Kant, a Goethe, are finely organised observers; not, of course, in the

sense of brooding and burrowing, but in that of seeing, storing up and elaborating what they have seen. This power of seeing, that is, the capacity of the individual man to adopt such an attitude towards nature that, within certain limits prescribed by his individuality, he may absorb her ever creative originality and thus become qualified to be creative and original himself — this power of seeing can be trained and developed. Certainly only in the case of a few extraordinary men will it display freely creative activity, but it will render thousands capable of original achievements.

If the impulse to discovery by investigation is innate in the Teuton in the manner described, why was it so long in awakening! It was not long in awakening, but was systematically suppressed by other powers. As soon as the migrations with their ceaseless wars gave even a moment's peace, the Teuton set to work, thirsting after knowledge and diligently investigating. Charlemagne and King Alfred are well-known examples (see vol. i. [p. 326 f.](#)); even of Charlemagne's father, Pepin, we

* Goethe: *Werther's Leiden*, Letter of May 26 of the 1st year. Cf. what is said in vol. i. [p. 267.](#)

274 DISCOVERY

read in Lamprecht, * that he was “full of understanding, especially for the natural sciences.” † Important are the utterances of such a man as Scotus Erigena, who (in the ninth century) said that nature can and should be investigated; that only thereby does she fulfil her divine purpose. ‡ Now what was the fate of this man who in spite of his desire for knowledge was extremely pious and characteristically inclined to fanatical mysticism? At the command of Pope Nicholas I. he was driven from his chair in Paris and finally murdered, and even four centuries later his works, which in the meantime had been widely circulated among all really religious, anti-Roman Teutons of various nations, were hunted for everywhere by the emissaries of Honorius II. and burned. The same happened whenever a desire for knowledge began to assert itself. Precisely in the thirteenth century, at the moment when the writings of Scotus Erigena were being committed so zealously to the flames, there was born that incomprehensibly great mind Roger Bacon, § who sought to fill men with ardour for discovery, “by sailing out to the west, in order to reach the east,” who constructed the microscope and in theory planned the telescope, who first demonstrated the importance of scientific knowledge of languages studied in a strictly philological manner, &c., &c., and who above all established for good the importance of the observation of nature as the basis of all real knowledge, and spent his whole fortune on physical experiments. Now what encouragement did this man receive, though he was better qualified than any one before or after him to provide the spark that would make the intellectual capacities

* *Deutsche Geschichte* ii. 13.

† In passing let me make the addition which is so important for our Teutonic individuality, “for the natural sciences and music.”!

‡ *De Divisione Naturae* v. 33; *cf.*, too, p. 129 above.

§ Of him Goethe says (in his *Gespräche* ii. 46): “The whole magic of nature, in the finest sense of the word, is revealed to him.”

275 DISCOVERY

of all Teutons burst into bright flames? At first he was merely forbidden to write down the results of his experiments, that is to say, to communicate them to the world; then the reading of the books already issued was punished with excommunication, and his papers — the results of his studies — were destroyed; finally he was condemned to a cruel imprisonment, in which he remained for many years, till shortly before his death. The struggle which I have exemplified by these two cases lasted for centuries and cost much blood and suffering. Essentially, it is exactly the same struggle as that described in my eighth chapter: Rome against Teutonism. For, no matter what we may think of Roman infallibility, every unbiased person will admit that Rome has always with unerring instinct known how to hinder what was likely to further Teutonism, and to give support to everything whereby it was bound to be most seriously injured.

However, to rob the matter of all sting which might still wound, we will follow it back to its purely human kernel: what do we find there? We find that actual, concrete knowledge, that is, the great work of toilsome discovery, has one deadly enemy, omniscience. The Jews are a case in point (vol. i. [p. 401](#)); if a man possesses a sacred book, which contains all wisdom, then all further investigation is as superfluous as it is sinful: the Christian Church took over the Jewish tradition. This fastening on to Judaism, which was so fatal for our history, is being accomplished before our very eyes; it can be demonstrated step by step. The old Church Fathers, taking their stand expressly upon the Jewish Torah, are unanimous in preaching contempt of art and of science. Ambrosius, for example, says that Moses had been educated in all worldly wisdom, and had proved that “science is a pernicious folly, upon which we must turn our backs, before we can find God.” “To study astronomy and

276 DISCOVERY

geometry, to follow the course of the sun among the stars and to make maps and charts of lands and seas, means to neglect salvation for things of no account.” * Augustine allows the study of the course of the moon, “for otherwise we could not fix Easter correctly”; in other respects he considers the study of astronomy a waste of time, in that it takes the attention away from useful to useless things! He likewise declares that all

art belongs “to the number of superfluous human institutions.” † However, this still purely Jewish attitude of the ancient Church Fathers denotes an “infancy of art;” it was in truth sufficient to keep barbarians stupid as long as possible; but the Teuton was only outwardly a barbarian; as soon as he came to himself, his capacity for culture developed absolutely of itself, and then it was necessary to forge other weapons. It was a man born in the distant south, a Teuton of German extraction who had joined the ranks of the enemy, Thomas Aquinas, who was the most famous armourer; in the service of the Church he sought to quench his countrymen's ardent thirst for knowledge by offering them complete, divine omniscience. Well might his contemporary, Roger Bacon, speak in mockery of “the boy who taught everything, without having himself learned anything” — for Bacon had clearly proved that we still utterly lacked the bases of the simplest knowledge, and he had shown the only way in which this defect could be remedied — but what availed reason and truthfulness? Thomas — who asserted that the sacred Church doctrine, in alliance with the scarcely less sacred Aristotle, was quite adequate to answer once for all every conceivable question (see p. [178](#)), while all further inquiry was superfluous and criminal — was declared a saint, while Bacon was thrown into prison. And the omniscience of Thomas did actually succeed

* *De officiis ministrorum* i. 26, 122—123.

† *De doctrina christiana* i. 26, 2, and i. 30, 2.

277 DISCOVERY

in completely retarding for three whole centuries the mathematical, physical, astronomical and philological researches which had already begun! *

We now understand why the work of discovery was so late in starting. At the same time we perceive a universal law which applies to all knowledge: it is not ignorance but omniscience that forms a fatal atmosphere for every increase of the material of knowledge. Wisdom and ignorance are both merely designations for notions that can never be accurately fixed, because they are purely relative; the absolute difference lies altogether elsewhere, it is the difference between the man who is conscious of his ignorance and the man who, owing to some self-deception, either imagines that he possesses all knowledge, or thinks himself above all knowledge. Indeed, we might perhaps go further and assert that every science, even genuine science, contains a danger for discovery, in that it paralyses to some extent the untrammelled naturalness of the observer in his attitude to nature. Here, as elsewhere (see p. [182](#)), the decisive thing is not so much the amount or the nature of knowledge as the attitude of the mind towards it. † In the recognition of this fact lies the whole importance of

* This is the philosopher whom the Jesuits to-day elevate to the throne (see p. [177](#)) and whose doctrines are henceforth to supply the foundation for the philosophical culture of all Roman Catholics! We can see how freely the Teutonic spirit moved, before these fetters were imposed by the Church, from the fact that at the University of Paris in the thirteenth century theses like the following were defended, "The sayings of the Theologians are based on fables," "There is no increase of knowledge because of the pretended knowledge of the Theologians," and "The Christian religion prevents increase of knowledge." (Cf. Wernicke: *Die mathematisch-naturwissenschaftliche Forschung*, &c., 1898, p. 5).

† Hence Kant's profound remark on the importance of astronomy: "The most important thing surely is that it has revealed to us the abyss of our ignorance, which, but for that science, we could never have conceived to be so great, and that reflection upon this must produce a great change in the determination of the final purposes of our employment of reason." (*Critique of Pure Reason*, note in the section entitled "Concerning the Transcendental Ideal.")

278 DISCOVERY

Socrates, who was persecuted by the mighty of his time for the very same reason as were Scotus Erigena and Roger Bacon by the authorities of their age. I have no intention of making the attitude of the Roman Catholic Church a reproach levelled at it especially and alone. It is true that the Catholic Church is always the first to attract our attention, if only because of the decisive power which it possessed a few centuries ago, but also for the splendid consistency with which it has always, up to the present day, maintained the one logical standpoint — that our system of faith is based on Judaism — but even outside this Church we find the same spirit as the inevitable consequence of every historical, materialistic religion. Martin Luther, for example, makes the following terrible remark, "The wisdom of the Greeks, when compared to that of the Jews, is absolutely bestial; for apart from God there can be no wisdom, nor any understanding and insight." That is to say, the ever glorious achievements of the Hellenes are "bestial" in comparison with the absolute ignorance and uncultured rudeness of a people which has never achieved anything at all in any single field of human knowledge or activity! Roger Bacon, on the other hand, in the first part of his *Opus majus*, proves that the principal cause of human ignorance is "the pride of a pretended knowledge," and there he truly hits the nail on the head. * The lawyer Krebs (better known as Cardinal Cuxanus and famous as the man who brought to light the Roman decretal swindle) maintained the same thesis two centuries

* According to him there are four causes of ignorance — faith in authority, the power of custom, illusions of sense and the proud delusion of an imagined wisdom. Of the Thomists and Franciscans, considered the greatest scholars of his age, Bacon says: "The world has never witnessed such a semblance of knowledge as there is to-day, and yet in reality ignorance was never so crass and error so deep-rooted" (from a quotation in Whewell: *History of the Inductive Sciences*, 3rd ed. p. 378).

279 DISCOVERY

later in his much-discussed work *De docta ignorantia*, in the first book of which he expounds the “science of not-knowing“ as the first step towards all further knowledge.

As soon as this view had gained so firm a hold that even Cardinals could give utterance to it without falling into disfavour, the victory of knowledge was assured. However, if we are to understand the history of our discoveries and our sciences, we must never lose sight of the fundamental principle here established. There has been, it is true, a shifting of the relations of power since that time, but not of principles. Step by step we have had not only to wrest our knowledge from nature, but to do so in defiance of the obstacles everywhere planted in our path by the powers of ignorant omniscience. When Tyndall in his famous address to the British Association in Belfast in the year 1874 demanded absolute freedom of investigation, he raised a storm of indignation in the whole Anglican Church and also in all the Churches of the dissenters. Sincere harmony between science and Church we can never have, in the way in which it prevailed in India: it is absolutely impossible to harmonise a system of faith derived from Judaism, christianistic and absolutist, with the inquiring, investigating instincts of the Teutonic personality. We may fail to understand this, we may deny it for reasons of interest, we may seek to hush it up in the interest of other far-reaching plans, nevertheless it remains true, and this truth forms one of the causes of the deep-seated discord of our age. That is also the reason why so very little of our great work of discovery has been consciously assimilated by the nations. They see, of course, some results of research, such as those which have led to innovations which could be exploited by industry; but obviously it does not in the least matter whether our light is derived

280 DISCOVERY

from tallow candles or electric globes; the important matter is, not how we see, but who sees. It will only be when we shall have so completely revolutionised our methods of education that the training of each individual from the first shall resemble a Discovery, instead of merely consisting in the transmission of ready-made wisdom, that we shall really have thrown off the alien yoke in this fundamental sphere of knowledge and shall be able to move on towards the full development of our best powers.

If we turn our gaze from such a possible future back to our still poverty-stricken present, we shall be able also to look even further back, and to realise intelligently what obstacles the work of discovery, the most difficult of all works, encountered at every step. But for the lust of gold

and the inimitable simplicity of the Teutons success would have been impossible. They even knew how to turn to account the childish cosmogony of Moses. * Thus, for example, we observe how the theologians of the University of Salamanca with the help of a whole arsenal of quotations from the Bible and the Church Fathers proved that the idea of a western route over the Atlantic Ocean was nonsense and blasphemy, and thereby persuaded the Government not to assist Columbus; † but Columbus himself, pious man as he was, did not lose heart; for he too relied, in his calculations, not so much upon the map of Toscanelli and the opinions of Seneca, Pliny, &c., as upon Holy Scripture and especially the apocalyptic book of *Ezra*, where he found the statement that water covers only the seventh part of the earth. ‡ Truly a thoroughly Teutonic way of turning

* As happens again in the case of Darwinism to-day.

† Fiske: *Discovery of America* c. v.

‡ This is naturally only an application of the favourite division into the sacred number seven, derived from the (supposed) number of the planets. Compare the second book of *Ezra* in the Apocrypha, vi. 42

281 DISCOVERY

Jewish apocalyptic writings to account! If men had then had any idea that water, instead of covering a seventh of the surface of the earth — as the infallible source of all knowledge taught — covered almost exactly three-fourths, they would never have ventured out upon the ocean. In the later history of geographical discovery also several such pious confusions were of great service. Thus it was the gift to Spain (mentioned on [p. 168](#)) of all lands west of the Azores by the Pope as absolute lord of the world, that literally compelled the Portuguese to discover the eastern route to India by the Cape of Good Hope. When, however, this was achieved, the Spaniards were at a disadvantage; for the Pope had bestowed upon the Portuguese the whole eastern world, and now they had found Madagascar and India, with its fabulous treasures in gold, jewels, spices, &c., while America, to begin with, offered little; and thus the Spaniards knew no peace till Magalhães had accomplished his great achievement and reached India by the western route. *

and 52 (also called the fourth book of *Ezra*, when the canonical book of *Ezra* and the book of *Nehemiah* are regarded as the first and second, as was formerly the custom). It is a most noteworthy fact that Columbus is indebted for all his arguments for a western route to India, as well as for his knowledge of this passage from *Ezra*, to the great Roger Bacon. It is some consolation that this poor man, who was persecuted to death by the Church, exercised decisive influence not only upon mathematics, astronomy and physics, but also upon the history of geographical discoveries.

* Magalhães saw land, *i.e.*, completed the proof that the earth is round, on March 6, 1521, the very day on which Charles V. signed the summons of Luther to Worms.

282 DISCOVERY

THE UNITY OF THE WORK OF DISCOVERY

I do not propose to enter into details. There certainly remains a great deal to discuss, which the reader will not be able to supplement from histories or encyclopaedias; but as soon as the whole living organism stands clearly before our eyes — the special capacity, the impelling forces, the obstacles due to the surroundings — then the task here assigned to me is completed, and that is, I think, now the case. For it has not been my object to chronicle the past, but to illumine the present. And for that reason I should like to direct attention with special emphasis to one point only. It utterly confuses our historical perception when geographical discoveries are separated, as they usually are, from other discoveries; in the same way further confusion arises, when those discoveries which affect especially the human race — discoveries in ethnography, language, the history of religion, &c. — are put in a class by themselves, or assigned to philology and history. The unity of science is being recognized more and more every day — the unity of the work of discovery, that is, of the collecting of the material of knowledge, demands the same recognition. Whatever be discovered, whether it be a daring adventurer, an ingenious man engaged in industry, or a patient scholar that brings it to the light of day, it is the same gifts of our individuality that are at work, the same impulse towards possession, the same passionate spirit, the same devotion to nature, the same art of observation; it is the same Teuton of whom Faust says:

Im Weiterschreiten find' er Qual und Glück
Er! unbefriedigt jeden Augenblick. *

Every single discovery, no matter in what sphere,

* In further progress let him find pain and happiness, he! unsatisfied at every moment.

283 DISCOVERY

furtheres every other, however remote from it. This is particularly manifest in geographical discoveries. It was avarice and religious fanaticism at the same time that induced the European States to interest themselves in discovery; but the chief result for the human intellect was, to begin with, the proof that the earth is round. The importance of this discovery is simply inestimable. It is true that the Pythagoreans had long ago supposed, and that scholars at various times had asserted that the earth was spherical; but it is a mighty advance from theoretical speculations such as this to an irrefutable, concrete, tangible proof. From the Papal gifts to the Spaniards and Portuguese of the year 1493

(see p. 168) we see clearly enough that the Church did not really believe that the earth was spherical: for to the west of every single degree of latitude lies the whole earth! I have already pointed out (p. 7 note) that Augustine considered the idea of Antipodes absurd and contrary to Scripture. At the close of the fifteenth century the orthodox still accepted as authoritative the geography of the monk Cosmas Indicopleustes, who declares the view of Greek scholars to be blasphemy and imagines the world to be a flat rectangle enclosed by the four walls of heaven; above the star-spangled firmament dwell God and the angels. * Though we may smile at such conceptions now, they were and are prescribed by Church doctrine. In reference to hell, Thomas Aquinas, for example, expressly warns men against the tendency to conceive it only spiritually; on the contrary, it is *poenas corporeas* (corporal punishments) that men will have to endure: likewise the flames of hell are to be understood literally, *secundum litteram intelligenda*; and this surely implies the conception of a place — to wit, “underneath the earth.” † A round earth, hovering in

* Fiske: *Discovery of America*, chap. iii.

† *Compendium Theologiae*, chap. clxxix. I have no doubt that Thomas Aquinas believed also in a definite localisation of heaven

284 DISCOVERY

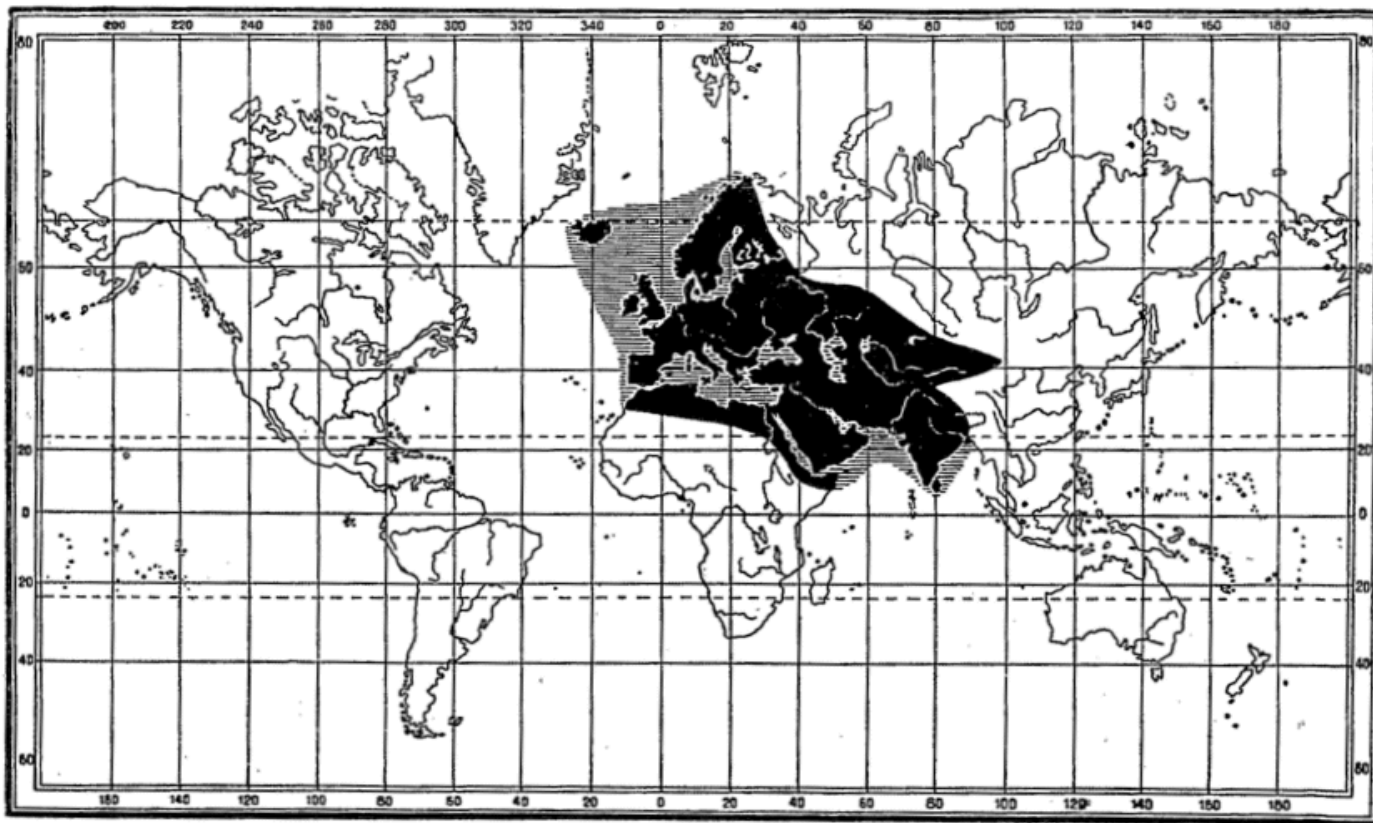
space, destroys the tangible conception of hell just as thoroughly as and much more convincingly than Kant's transcendentality of space. Scarcely one of the daring seafarers quite firmly believed in the earth as a sphere, and Magalhães had great difficulty in pacifying his comrades when he sailed across the Pacific Ocean, as they daily feared they would reach the “edge” of the world and fall direct into hell. And now the matter had been concretely proved; the men who had sailed out towards the west came back from the east. That was for the time being the completion of the work begun by Marco Polo (1254—1323); he had been the first to announce with certainty that an ocean lay extended to the east of Asia. * At one blow rational astronomy had become

though he appears to have laid less stress on it. Conrad of Megenberg, a very scholarly and pious man, canon of the Ravensberg Cathedral and author of the very first Natural History in German, who died exactly a hundred years after him, says expressly in the astronomical part of his work, “The first and uppermost heaven (there are ten of them) stands still and does not revolve. It is called in Latin *Empyreum*, in German *Feuerhimmel*, because it glows and glitters in supernatural brightness. There God dwells with the Chosen” (*Das Buch der Natur* ii. 1). The new astronomy, based on the new geography, therefore actually destroyed “the dwelling of God,” on which till then even scholarly and free-thinking men had believed, and robbed the physico-theological conceptions of all convincing reality.

* The map given on the next page will enable the reader to understand more clearly the work of geographical discovery which began in the thirteenth century. The black portion shows how much of the world was known to Europeans in the first half of the thirteenth century, *i.e.*, before Marco Polo; all that is left white was absolutely *terra*

incognita. The comparison is striking and the diagram is a symbol of the activity of the Teutons in discovery in other spheres as well. If we were to take former ages and non-European peoples into consideration, the black portion would require to be modified considerably; the Phoenicians, for instance, knew the Cape Verde Islands, but they had since then been lost to view so completely that the old accounts were regarded as fables; the Khalifs had been in constant intercourse with Madagascar and even knew — it is said — the sea-route to China by way of India; there were Christian (Nestorian) bishops of China in the seventh century, &c. — We cannot but suppose that some few Europeans, at the Papal Court and in trade centres, had vaguely heard of these things even in the thirteenth century; but, as I wished to show what was really known and had been actually seen, my map

285 DISCOVERY



286 DISCOVERY

possible. The earth was round; consequently it hovered in space. But if so, why should not sun, moon and planets do the same? Thus brilliant hypotheses of the Hellenes were once more honoured. * Previous to Magalhães such speculations (*e.g.*, those of Regiomontanus) had never gained a firm footing; whereas, now that there was no longer any doubt about the shape of the earth, a Copernicus immediately appeared; for speculation was now based on sure facts. But hereby the remembrance

of the telescope which Roger Bacon had suggested was at once awakened, and the discoveries upon our planet were continued by discoveries in the heavens. Scarcely had the motion of the earth been put forward as a probable hypothesis, when the revolution of the moons around Jupiter was observed by the eye. † History shows us what an enormous impulse physics received from the complete revolution of cosmic conceptions. It is true that

rather contains too much than too little. Of the coast of India, for example, Europeans had then no definite knowledge at all; three centuries later, as we see from the map of Johann Ruysch, their conceptions were still uncertain and erroneous; of inner Asia they knew only the caravan routes to Samarkand and the Indus. A few years before Marco Polo two Franciscan monks reached Karakorum, the capital of the Great Khan, and brought back the first minute accounts of China — though only from hearsay. In the *Jahresberichte der Geschichtswissenschaft* (xxii. 97) Helmolt supplements this note as follows: “Since 638 an Imperial Chinese edict permitted the Nestorians to carry on missionary work in China; an inscription of the year 781 (described in Navarra: *China und die Chinesen*, 1901, p. 1089 f.) mentions the Nestorian patriarch Chanan-Ischu, and tells us that since the beginning of missionary activity in China seventy missionaries had gone there; to the south of the Balkhash lake the tombstones of more than 3000 Nestorian Christians have been found.” See also the lecture of Baelz: *Die Ostasiaten*, 1901, p. 35 f. About the end of the tenth century there were thousands of Christian churches in China.

* In the dedication of his *De Revolutionibus*, Copernicus mentions these views of the ancients. When the work was afterwards put on the Index, the doctrine of Copernicus was simply designated *doctrina Pythagorica* (Lange: *Geschichte des Materialismus*, 4th ed. i. 172).

† The motion of these moons is so easy to observe that Galilei noticed it at once and mentioned it in a letter dated January 30, 1610.

287 DISCOVERY

physics begin with Archimedes, so that we must acknowledge that the Renaissance was of some little service here, but Galilei points out that the depreciation of higher mathematics and mechanics was due to the want of a visible object for their application, * and the chief thing is that a mechanical view of the world could only force itself upon men when they perceived with their eyes the mechanical structure of the cosmos. Now for the first time were the laws of falling bodies carefully investigated; this led to a new conception and analysis of gravitation, and a new and more accurate determination of the fundamental qualities of matter. The impetus to all these studies was given by the imagination, powerfully stirred as it was by the vision of constellations hovering in space. The great importance of continual discoveries for stimulating the imagination, and consequently also for art, has been alluded to already (vol. i. [p. 267](#)); here we gain a sight of the principle at work. We see how one thing leads to another, and how the first impulse to all these discoveries is to be sought in the voyages of discovery. But soon this central influence extended its waves farther and farther, to the deepest

depths of philosophy and religion. For many facts were now discovered which directly contradicted the apparent proofs and doctrines of the sacrosanct Aristotle. Nature always works in an unexpected way; man possesses no organ to enable him to divine what has not yet been observed, be it form or law; this gift is denied to him. Discovery is always revelation. These revelations, these answers wrung from the “silent Sphinxes“ to riddles hitherto wrapt in sacred gloom, worked in the brains of men of genius and enabled them not only to anticipate future discoveries but also to lay the foundation of an absolutely new view of life's problems —

* This is at any rate the interpretation which I have given to a quotation in Thurot, *Recherches historiques sur le principe d'Archimède*, 1869, but at present I am unfortunately unable to verify the accuracy of my memory and the correctness of my view.

288 DISCOVERY

a view which was neither Hellenic nor Jewish, but Teutonic. Thus Leonardo da Vinci — a pioneer of all genuine science — already proclaimed *la terra è una stella* (the earth is a star), and added elsewhere by way of explanation, *la terra non è nel mezzo del mondo* (the earth is not in the centre of the universe); and with a sheerly incredible power of intuition he gave utterance to the ever memorable words, “All life is motion.“ * A hundred years later Giordano Bruno, the inspired visionary, saw our whole solar system moving on in infinite space, the earth with its burden of men and human destinies a mere atom among countless atoms. This was truly very far from the cosmogony of Moses and the God who had chosen the small people of the Jews, “that he might be honoured“; and it was almost equally as far from Aristotle with his pedantic and childish teleology. We had to begin to rear the edifice of an absolutely new philosophy, which should answer to the requirements of the Teutonic horizon and the Teutonic tendency of mind. In that connection Descartes, who was born before Bruno died, acquired an importance which affected the history of the world, in that he, exactly as his ancestors, the daring seafarers, insisted on systematically doubting everything traditional and on fearlessly investigating the Unknown. I shall return to this later. All these things resulted from the geographical discoveries. Naturally they cannot be regarded as effects following causes, but certainly as events which had been occasioned by definite occurrences. Had we possessed freedom, the historical development of our work of discovery might have been different, as we see clearly enough from the example of Roger Bacon; however, *natura sese adjuvat*; all paths but that of geo-

* I find the passage quoted thus in several places, but the only remark of the kind which I know in the original is somewhat different: *Il moto è causa d'ogni vita* (Motion is

the cause of all life) (in J. P. Richter's edition of the *Scritti letterari di Leonardo da Vinci*, ii, 286, Fragment No. 1139). The former quotations are taken from Nos. 865 and 858.

289 DISCOVERY

graphical discoveries had been forcibly closed against us; this remained open, because all Churches love the perfume of gold, and because even a Columbus dreamt of equipping an army against the Turks with the treasure to be won; thus geographical discovery became the basis of all other discoveries, and so at the same time the foundation of our gradual intellectual emancipation, which, however, is even now far from being perfect.

It would be easy to prove the influence which the discovery of the world exercised upon all other branches of life, upon industry and trade, and so at the same time upon the economic moulding of Europe, upon agriculture by the introduction of new vegetables, like the potato, upon medicine (think of quinine), upon politics, and so forth. I leave this to the reader and only call his attention to the fact that in all these spheres the aforementioned influence increases the nearer we come to the nineteenth century; every day our life, in contrast to the "European" life of former days, is becoming more and more a "planetary" one.

IDEALISM

There is another great sphere of profound influence, little heeded in this connection, which I cannot leave undiscussed, and that all the more since in this very case the inevitable consequences of the discoveries have taken longest to reveal themselves and hardly began even in the nineteenth century to assume definite shape: I mean the influence of discoveries upon religion. The discovery — first of the spheroidal shape of the earth, secondly, of its position in the cosmos, then of the laws of motion, of the chemical structure of matter, &c. &c., has brought about that the faultlessly mechanical interpretation of nature is unavoidable and the only true one. When I say "the only true one," I mean that

290 DISCOVERY

it can be the only true one for us Teutons; other men may — in the future as in the past — think differently; among us also there is now and then a reaction against the too one-sided predominance of a purely mechanical interpretation of nature; but let not ephemeral movements lead us astray; we must ever of necessity come back to mechanism, and so long as the Teuton predominates, he will force this view of his even upon non-Teutons. I am not speaking of theories, I must discuss them elsewhere; but whatever form the theory may assume, henceforth it will always be "mechanical," that is, the inexorable demand of Teutonic

thought, for only thus can it keep the outer and the inner world beneficially acting and reacting upon each other. This is so unrestrictedly true of us that I can in no way make up my mind to regard the doctrine of mechanism as a “theory,” and consequently as pertaining to “science”: I think I must rather view it as a discovery, as an established fact. The philosopher may justify this, but the triumphant progress of our tangible discoveries is a sufficient guarantee for the ordinary man; for the mechanical thought, strictly adhered to, has been from the beginning to the present day the Ariadne's thread which has guided us in safety through all the labyrinthine paths of error. As I wrote on the title-page of this book, “We proclaim our adherence to the race which from out the darkness strives to reach the light.” What in the world of empirical experience has led and still leads us from darkness into light was and is the unfaltering adherence to mechanism. By this — and this alone — we have acquired a mass of perceptions and a command over nature never equalled by any other human race. * Now this victory

* As one must ever and in all things be apprehensive of being misunderstood in an age when the philosophic sense has become so barbarous, I add in the words of Kant, “Though there can be no real knowledge of nature unless mechanism is made the basis of research, yet this is true only of matter and does not preclude the searching after

291 DISCOVERY

of mechanism signifies the inevitable, complete overthrow of all materialistic religion. This issue is a surprise, but irrefutable. The Jewish world-chronicle might have some significance for Cosmas Indicopleustes, for us it can have none; as applied to the universe, as we know it to-day, it is simply absurd. But equally untenable in the face of mechanism is all that Eastern magic which, almost undisguised, forms so essential a part of the so-called Christian Creed (see pp. [123](#), [128](#)). Mechanism in philosophy and materialism in religion are for ever irreconcilable. He who mechanically interprets empirical nature as perceived by the senses has an ideal religion or none at all; all else is conscious or unconscious self-deception. The Jew knew no mechanism of any kind: from Creation out of nothing to his dreams of a Messianic future everything is in his case freely ruling, all-powerful arbitrariness; * that is also the reason why he never discovered anything; with him one thing only is essential, the Creator; that explains everything. The mystical and magical notions, upon which all our ecclesiastical sacraments are based, stand on an even lower plane of materialism; for they signify principally a change of substance and are therefore nothing more nor less than the alchemy of souls. Consistent mechanism, on the other hand, as we Teutons have created it and from which we can no longer escape, is compatible only with a purely ideal, *i.e.*, transcendent, religion, such as Jesus Christ had taught: the Kingdom of God is within you. † Religion for us cannot be

chronicle, but experience only — inner, direct experience.

I must come back to this elsewhere. Here I shall anticipate one point only, that in my opinion Kant's universal importance rests upon his brilliant compre-

and reflecting upon a Principle, which is quite different from explanation according to the mechanism of nature“ (*Kritik der Urteilskraft*, § 70).

* See vol. i. p. [240 f.](#)

† See vol. i. p. [187 f.](#), vol. ii. [p. 40.](#)

292 DISCOVERY

hension of this fact, that the Mechanical doctrine, consistently pursued to its furthest limits, furnishes the explanation of the world, and that the purely Ideal doctrine alone furnishes laws for the inner man. *

For how many more centuries shall we drag the fetter of the conscious falsehood of believing in absurdities as revealed truth? I do not know. But I hope that we shall not do so much longer. For the religious craving is growing so great and so imperious in our breasts that of necessity a day must come when that craving will

* In the interest of philosophically trained readers I wish to remark that I am aware of the fact that Kant establishes a dynamic natural philosophy in contrast to a mechanical natural philosophy (*Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Naturwissenschaft* ii.), but there it is a question of distinctions which cannot be brought forward in a work like the present; moreover, Kant uses the word “Dynamic“ merely to express a special view of a strictly mechanical (according to the general use of the term) interpretation of nature. I should like to take this opportunity of making it perfectly clear that I do not bind myself hand and foot to the Kantian system. I am not learned enough to follow all these scholastic turnings and twistings; it would be presumption for me to say that I belonged to this or that school; but the personality I do see clearly, and I observe what a mighty stimulus it is, and in what directions. The important thing for me is not the “being right“ or “being wrong“ — this never-ceasing battling with windmills of puny minds — but first and foremost the importance (I might be inclined in this connection to say the “dynamic“ importance) of the mind in question, and secondly its individuality. And in this respect I beheld Kant so great that but few in the world's history can be compared with him, and he is so thoroughly and specifically Teutonic (even in the limiting sense of the word) that he attains to typical significance. Philosophical technique is in him something subordinate, conditioned, accidental, ephemeral; the decisive, unconditioned, unephemeral element is the fundamental power, “not the word spoken but the speaker of it,“ as the Upanishads express it. For Kant's importance as a discoverer I also refer the reader to F. A. Lange's *Geschichte des Materialismus* (1881, p. 383), where the author shows with admirable acuteness that with Kant it was not, and could not be, a question of proving his fundamental principles, but rather of discovering them. In reality Kant is an observer, to be compared with Galilei or Harvey: he proceeds from facts and “in reality his method is no other than that of induction.“ The confusion arises from the fact that men are not clear on this matter. At any rate it is evident that, even from a formal point of view, I was justified in closing the section on “Discovery“ with the name of Kant.

shatter the rotten, gloomy edifice, and then we shall step out into the new, bright, glorious kingdom which has long been awaiting us; that will be the crown of the Teutonic work of discovery.

2. SCIENCE (From Roger Bacon to Lavoisier)

OUR SCIENTIFIC METHODS

The difference between science and the raw material of knowledge, which is supplied by discovery, has already been pointed out, and I refer the reader to the discussion on [p. 236](#); I also called attention to the boundary-line between science and philosophy. The fact that sharp distinguishing-lines can never be drawn without some arbitrary differentiation does not in any way invalidate the principle of separation. Even the sciences, that is, our new Teutonic scientific methods, have taught us another lesson. Leibniz might for all that again adopt the so-called law of continuity and carry it to its extreme consequences; in practice we dispense with metaphysical proof, for even experience shows us on all sides a gradual merging and blending. * But in order to build up science we must distinguish, and the correct differentiation is that which holds good in practice. Nature, of course, knows no such separation; that does not matter; nature knows no science either; it is differentiation in the material supplied by nature, followed by reuniting according to humanly comprehensible principles, that in general forms science.

Dich im Unendlichen zu finden,
Musst unterscheiden und dann verbinden. †

* Naturally I am at this moment leaving the purely mathematical out of account: for in that sphere it was certainly a remarkable, epoch-making achievement, so to transform the idea of the Continuous and “to separate it from the geometrical conception, that we could use it for purposes of calculation“ (Gerhardt: *Geschichte der Mathematik in Deutschland*, 1877, p. 144).

† To comprehend the Infinite, you must distinguish and then unite.

That is why I appealed to Bichat at the beginning of this section. If the classification of tissues which he taught had been revealed by nature as classification, it would have been known from the earliest times; but this is far from being the case, for the distinctions proposed by Bichat have been considerably modified since; as a matter of fact, we find everywhere transitional stages between the kinds of tissue, some of them perfectly obvious, others which reveal themselves only to minuter observation; and thus thoughtful investigators have been forced to experiment, till they were able to fix the exact point where the needs of the human intellect and respect for the facts of nature harmoniously counterbalance each other. This point can be determined — not, it is true, at once, but by practical experience; for in its methods science is guided by two considerations, it has to store up as capital what is known, and it has to see that this capital bears interest in the form of new knowledge. It is by this standard that the work of a Bichat is measured; for here, as elsewhere, genius does not invent, it does not create out of nothing, but shapes what is present. As Homer moulded the popular poetry, so Bichat gave shape to anatomy; and the same method is necessary in every department of knowledge. *

This purely methodological remark, meant only to justify my own procedure, has obviously brought us to the heart of the subject; indeed I think we have already unwittingly laid our finger upon the central point.

I have already pointed out that, while the Hellenes may be superior to us as theorists, they are certainly inferior as observers. Now theorising and systematising is nothing else than the shaping work of science. If we do not shape — that is to say, if we do not theorise and

* See vol. i. [p. 42 f.](#) The suffix *schaft* in *Wissenschaft* (science) denotes to order, to form (Eng. shape); science, therefore, means the shaping of the Known.

295 SCIENCE

systematise — we can only assimilate a minimum of knowledge; it flows through our brain as through a sieve. However, the process of shaping is not without its drawbacks; for, as pointed out in Bichat's case, this shaping is essentially human, that is, in reference to nature it is a mere one-sided and inadequate beginning. The natural sciences * themselves reveal the nullity of the gross anthropomorphism of all the Hegels in the world. It is not true that the human intellect can adequately grasp phenomena; the sciences prove the contrary; every one whose mind has been trained in the school of observation knows that. Even the much profounder conception of a Paracelsus, who called surrounding nature the “outer man,” may, it is true, attract us from the point of view of philosophy, but it will be found to be, scientifically, of little use; for whenever I have to deal with empirical facts, my innermost heart is a

muscle and my thought the function of a grey and white mass encased within a skull: so far as the life of my inner personality is concerned, this is all just as “external“ as any of those stars, whose light, according to Wm. Herschel, requires two million years to reach my eye. If then nature is perhaps in a certain sense an “outer man,“ as Paracelsus and after him Goethe say, that, from the purely scientific point of view, brings her not one inch nearer to me and to my circumscribed and specifically human understanding; for man too is merely an “external.“

Nichts ist drinnen, nichts ist draussen:

Denn was innen, das ist aussen. †

Hence all scientific systematising and theorising is a fitting and adapting; of course it is as accurate as

* I have already pointed out that all genuine science is natural science ([p. 237 f.](#)).

† Nothing is within, nothing is without: for what is within is without.

296 SCIENCE

possible, but never quite free from error, and, above all, it is always a humanly tinted rendering, translating, interpreting. The Hellene did not know this. Unrivalled as a modeller, in science too he demanded the Faultless, the perfectly Rounded, and thus barred in his own face the door that led to knowledge of nature. True observation becomes impossible as soon as man marches forward with one-sided human demands; the example of the great Aristotle should warn us against that. Nothing will convince us more thoroughly on this point than the study of mathematics; here at once we observe what hampered the Hellenes and what has aided us. The achievements of the Hellenes in geometry are known to all; but it is very interesting to notice how the triumphant progress of their mathematical investigation encountered an insurmountable obstacle in its further development. Hoefer calls attention to the nature of this obstacle by pointing out that a Greek mathematician never tolerated an “approximately“: for him the proof of the proposition had to be absolutely faultless or it was invalid; the conception that two magnitudes differing “infinitely“ little can in practice be regarded as equal is something against which his whole nature would have revolted. *

It is true that Archimedes in his investigations of the properties of the circle inevitably came upon results that could not be exactly expressed, but he then says simply, “greater than so much and less than so much“; and he expresses no opinion about the irrational roots, which he had to extract to get at his results. On the other hand, all modern mathematics with their almost incomprehensible achievements, are based, as we all

* *Histoire des mathématiques*, 4th ed. p. 206. There the reader will find an excellent example of how the Greek preferred the *reductio ad absurdum*, which was not directly convincing, because purely logical, rather than follow the path of evident, strictly mathematical proof, in which an “infinite approximation“ is regarded as equality.

297 SCIENCE

know, upon calculations with “infinitely near,“ that is, therefore, approximate values. By this “Infinitesimal Calculus“ the broad impenetrable forest of irrational numbers that blocked our way at every step has been felled; * for the great majority of roots and of so-called “functions“ which occur in the measurement of angles and curves come under this head. But for this introduction of approximate values our whole astronomy, geodesy, physics, mechanics and very important parts of our industry would be impossible. And how was this revolution brought about? By boldly cutting a knot which is tied in the human brain alone. This knot could never have been untied. In this very province, that of mathematics, where everything seemed so transparent and free from contradiction, man had very soon reached the limit of his specific human possibilities; he saw quite well that nature does not trouble herself about what is humanly thinkable and unthinkable, and that the brain of the proud *homo sapiens* is inadequate to grasp and to express the very simplest thing — the relation of magnitudes to one another; but what did it matter? As we have seen, the passion of the Teuton aimed rather at possession than at purely formal shaping; his shrewd observation of nature, his highly developed receptivity soon convinced him that the formal faultlessness of the image in the mind is absolutely no *conditio sine qua non*

* Irrational numbers are such as can never be expressed quite accurately, that is to say, in the language of arithmetic, such as contain an irrational fraction; among them there is a large number of the most important quantities that constantly occur in all calculations, *e.g.*, the square roots of most numbers, the relation of the diagonals to the side of a square, of the diameter of a circle to its circumference, &c. The latter quantity, the π of the mathematicians, has already been calculated to two hundred decimal places; we might calculate it to two millions, it would still be only an approximation. This simple example will prove in a thoroughly tangible manner the organic inadequacy of the human intellect, its incapacity to express even quite simple relations. (See vol. i. [p. 432](#) for the contribution of the Indo-Aryans to the investigation of irrational numbers.)

298 SCIENCE

for its possession, that is, in this case, for an understanding which is as comprehensive as possible. The important thing with the Greek was the respect of man for himself and for his human nature; to cherish thoughts

which were not thinkable in all parts seemed to him a crime against human nature; the Teuton, on the other hand, had a much more vivid reverence for nature (in contrast to man) than the Hellene, and moreover, like his Faust, he has never been afraid of contracts with the devil. And so he invented the imaginary magnitudes, that is, absolutely unthinkable quantities, the type of which is

$$x = \sqrt{-1}$$

In handbooks they are usually defined as “magnitudes that exist only in the imagination;” it would be perhaps more correct to say, magnitudes which can occur anywhere except in the imagination, for man is incapable of conceiving them at all. Through this brilliant discovery of the Goths and Lombards of the extreme north of Italy * calculation received an unsuspected elasticity: the absolutely unthinkable henceforth served to determine the relations of concrete facts, which otherwise could not have been tackled. The complementary step was soon taken: where one magnitude approaches “infinitely” near to another without ever reaching it, the gap was arbitrarily bridged, and over this bridge man marched from the sphere of the Impossible into the sphere of the Possible. Thus, for example, the insoluble problems of the circle were solved by regarding the latter as a polygon with an “infinite” number of sides, all therefore infinitely small. Pascal had already spoken

* Niccolo, called Tartaglia (*i.e.*, the stutterer), of Brescia, and Cardanus of Milan; both flourished in the first half of the sixteenth century. But here, as in the case of the calculus, fluxions, &c., we can hardly name definite inventors, for the necessity of solving astronomical and physical problems (which the geographical discoveries had propounded) suggested similar thoughts to the most various individuals.

299 SCIENCE

of magnitudes which are “smaller than any given magnitude” and had designated them *quantités négligeables*; * but Newton and Leibniz went much further, in that they systematically perfected calculation with these infinite series — the infinitesimal calculation to which I have referred. The advance thus made was simply incalculable; for the first time ever mathematics were redeemed from rigidity to life, for the first time they were enabled to analyse accurately not only motionless shape but also motion. Moreover, irrational numbers were now, in a way, done away with, since we can now, when necessary, avoid them. But this was not all, an idea — the idea of the Infinite — which had formerly been current only in philosophy, was henceforth extended to mathematics and acted like an elixir which gave them the strength to achieve unheard-of things. Just as it may happen that two magnitudes approach “infinitely” near to

each other, so it may also happen that the one increases or decreases “infinitely,” while the other remains constant: thus the infinitely great † and the infinitely small — two absolutely inconceivable things — may now also become workable components of our calculations: we cannot think them, but we can use them, and from their use we derive concrete, pre-eminently practical results. Our knowledge of nature, our capacity even to approach many natural problems, rests to a very great extent upon this one daring, autocratic achievement. As Carnot says: “No other idea has supplied us with so simple and effectual means of acquiring an accurate

* Saint-Beuve expresses the significant opinion that this daring man “formed in himself a second Frankish invasion of Gaul.” In him the purely Teutonic spirit asserts itself once more against the Chaos of Peoples, that was flooding France, and its chief organ, the Order of the Jesuits.

† The infinitely great is introduced into mathematics as unity divided by an infinitely small number. Concerning this supposition Berkeley remarks: “It is shocking to good sense”: so it is, but it serves a practical purpose and that is the important thing.

300 SCIENCE

knowledge of nature's laws. * The ancients had said, *Non entis nulla sunt praedicta* (Of things that are not nothing can be said); but that which is not within our head may well exist outside our head, and, *vice versa*, things which undoubtedly exist only in the human brain and are nevertheless recognised by us to be flagrantly “impossible“ may as instruments do us very good service, enabling us defiantly to gain by roundabout ways a knowledge which is not directly available to human beings.

The character of this work forbids me to pursue this mathematical discussion further, though I am glad to have found an opportunity in this section on Science to mention at the very beginning this chief organ of all systematic knowledge; we have seen that Leonardo even declared motion to be the cause of all life; he was soon followed by Descartes, who viewed matter itself as motion — everywhere the mechanical interpretation of empirical facts, which was emphasised in the last section, asserts itself! But mechanics are an ocean over which the ship of mathematics alone can carry us. Only in so far as a science can be reduced to mathematical principles does it seem to us to be exact, and that because it is in so far strictly mechanical and consequently “navigable.“ *“Nissuna humana investigatione si po dimandare vera scientia s'essa non passa per le matte-*

* *Réflexions sur la métaphysique du calcul infinitésimal*, 4th ed. 1860. This pamphlet of the famous mathematician is so perfectly clear that there is probably nothing quite like it on this subject, which, owing to the extremely contradictory nature of the matter,

is not a little confused. As Carnot says, many mathematicians have worked with success in the field of infinitesimal calculation, without ever acquiring a clear conception of the thought which formed the basis of their operations. "Fortunately," he continues, "this has not detracted from the fruitfulness of the discovery: for there are certain fundamental ideas, which can never be grasped in all their clearness, and which nevertheless, as soon as ever some of their first results stand before us, open up to the human intellect a wide field, which it can investigate at leisure in all directions."

301 SCIENCE

matiche dimonstrazioni," says Leonardo da Vinci; * and the voice of the Italian seer at the beginning of the sixteenth century is re-echoed by that of the German sage at the opening of the nineteenth: "I assert that in every special theory of nature there can only be so much real science as is vouched for by mathematics." †

With these remarks, however, as I hinted at the very outset, I have been keeping a more general purpose in view; I wished to reveal the peculiar character not only of our mathematics but of our scientific method as a whole; I hope I have succeeded. I can best draw the moral of what has been said by quoting a remark of Leibniz: "Rest can be regarded as an infinitely slow speed or as an infinitely great retardation, so that in any case the law of rest is to be considered merely as a special case within the laws of motion. Similarly we can regard two perfectly equal magnitudes as unequal (if it serves our purpose), by looking upon the inequality as infinitely small," &c. ‡ This statement expresses the

* *Libro di pittura* i. 1 (in Heinrich Ludwig's edition). I should like to call special attention to one of the remarks of the great man which bear on this point, No. 1158 in the edition of his writings by J. P. Richter (ii. 289): „*Nessuna certezza delle scienze è, dove non si può applicare una delle scienze matematiche e che non sono unite con esse matematiche.*“

† Kant, *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Naturwissenschaft*, Preface.

‡ Letter to Bayle, July 1687 (quoted from Höfer, i. c. p. 482). I do not know what Bayle's answer was. In his *Dictionnaire* I find under Zeno a violent attack upon all mathematics: "Mathematics have one fatal, immeasurable defect: they are in fact a mere chimera. The mathematical points, and consequently also the lines and surfaces of the geometricians, their spheres, axes, &c., are all abstractions which have never possessed a trace of reality; that is why these phantasies are even of less importance than those of the poets, for the latter invented nothing which is intrinsically impossible, like the mathematicians," &c. This abuse has no special significance; but it calls our attention to the important fact that mathematics, not merely since Cardanus and Leibniz, but from all time, have drawn their strength from "imaginary" or, more properly speaking, absolutely inconceivable magnitudes. When we think of it, the point according to Euclid's definition is no less inconceivable than $\sqrt{-1}$, Obviously

302 SCIENCE

fundamental principle of all Teutonic Science. Rest is, we must admit, not motion but its very opposite, just as equal magnitudes cannot be unequal: rather than have recourse to such hypotheses the Hellene would have dashed his head against the wall; but in this the Teuton has, quite unconsciously, revealed a deeper insight into the essence of man's relation to nature. He desired to know, not only that which was purely and exclusively Human (like a Homer and a Euclid), but on the contrary and above all that Nature which is external to man; * and here his passionate thirst for knowledge — that is, the predominance of his longing to learn, not of the need to shape — has caused him to find paths which have led him very much farther than any one of his predecessors. And these paths, as I remarked at the very beginning of this discussion, are those of shrewd adaptation to circumstances. Experience — that is, exact, minute, indefatigable observation — supplies the broad immovable foundation of Teutonic science, whether it be applied to philology, chemistry or anything else: the capacity of observation, the passionate enthusiasm, self-sacrifice and honesty with which it is pursued, are essential features of our race. Observation is the conscience of Teutonic science. Not only the professional natural scientist, not only the learned authority on language and the jurist investigate with painfully intent perception, even the Franciscan Roger Bacon spends his whole fortune in the cause of observation; Leonardo da Vinci preaches study of nature, observation, experiment and devotes years of his life to sketching accurately the invisible inner anatomy of the human body (especially the vascular

our “exact knowledge“ is a peculiar thing. The keenest criticism of our higher mathematics is found in Berkeley's *The Analyst* and *A Defence of Free-thinking in Mathematics*.

* He aimed so intently at this that when his study was applied to man (*see* Locke), he did his best to “objectivise“ himself, that is, to creep out of his own skin and regard himself as a piece of “nature.“

303 SCIENCE

system); Voltaire is an astronomer; Rousseau a botanist; Hume gives his chief work, which appeared a hundred and sixty years ago, the supplementary title, “An Attempt to introduce the Experimental Method into Philosophy“; Goethe's admirable and keen faculty of observation is well known, and Schiller begins his career with a treatise on “The Sensitiveness of Nerves and the Irritability of Muscle,“ and calls upon us to study more industriously the “mechanism of the body,“ if we wish to come to a better understanding of the “soul“! But that which has been experienced cannot faithfully be fashioned into Science, if man lays down the law instead of receiving it. The most daring capacities of his mind, its whole elasticity and the undaunted flight of fancy are pressed into the

service of the Observed, in order that it may be classified as part of a human system of knowledge. Obedience on the one hand towards experienced nature; autocracy on the other in reference to the human intellect: these are the hall-mark of Teutonic Science.

HELLENE AND TEUTON

This then is the foundation upon which our theory and system are based; a brave building the chief character of which lies in the fact that we are rather engineers than architects. Builders, indeed, we are, but our object is not so much beauty of construction nor perfection of shape that will finally satisfy the human mind but the establishment of a provisorium which enables us to gather new material for observation and to widen our knowledge. The work of an Aristotle acted like a brake upon science. Why was that? Because this Hellenic master-mind brooked no delay in attaining its object, because he knew no peace till he saw before his eyes a finished, symmetrical, absolutely rational and humanly plausible dogmatic system. In logic final

304 SCIENCE

results could be attained in this way, for there was a question of an exclusively human and exclusively formal science of universal validity within human limits; on the other hand, even his politics and theory of art are much less valid, because the law of the Hellenic intellect is here silently presupposed to be essentially the law of the human intellect, an idea which is contrary to experience; in natural science — in spite of a wealth of facts which often astonishes us — the absolutely predominating principle is, to draw the greatest number of hard and fast conclusions from the smallest number of observations. This is no question of idleness or of haste, still less of diletantism, it is the presumption, first, that the organisation of man is quite adequate to grasp the organisation of nature, so that — if I may so express it — one single hint suffices to enable us to interpret and survey correctly a whole complex of phenomena; secondly, that the human mind is not only adequate but also equivalent (equal not only in compass but equal also in value) to the principle or law, or whatever it may be called, which reveals itself in nature as a whole. That is why the human mind is regarded without more ado as the central point from which we may not only with the greatest ease survey all nature, but also may trace all things from the cradle to the grave, that is to say, from their first causes to their supposed finality. This supposition is as erroneous as it is simple: our Teutonic science has from the first followed another course. Roger Bacon, though he valued Aristotle highly, was just as earnest in

the thirteenth century in the warnings he addressed to scientists against Aristotle and the whole Hellenic method which he personified, as Francis Bacon was three centuries later; * in this connection, the Re-

* Francis Bacon's decisive remark is in the Preface to the *Instauratio Magna*, and is as follows: "*Scientias non per arrogantiam in humani ingenii cellulis, sed submisse in mundo majore quaerat.*"

305 SCIENCE

naissance was fortunately only a passing sickness, and it was merely in the darkest shadows of the Church that the theology of the Stagirite henceforth continued to prolong a superfluous existence. To make the matter perfectly obvious, let me employ a mathematical comparison: the science of the Hellene was, so to speak, a circle in the centre of which he himself stood. Teutonic science, on the other hand, resembles an ellipse. At one of the two foci of the ellipse stands the human intellect, at the other an x of which we know nothing. If the human intellect succeeds in a definite case in bringing its own focus near to the other, human science approaches the form of a circle; * but the ellipse is generally a very extended one: on the one side understanding penetrates very far into the sum of the Known, on the other it lies almost at the periphery. Frequently man stands almost alone with his focus (his humble torch!); with all his groping he cannot find the connection with the second focus, and thus arises a mere parabola, the sides of which, it is true, seem to approach each other in the far distance, but without ever meeting, so that our theory gives us not a closed curve, but only the beginning of a curve, which is possible but in the meantime incapable of being completed.

Our scientific procedure is obviously the negation of the Absolute. That was an acute and happy remark of Goethe's: "He who devotes himself to nature attempts to find the squaring of the circle."

THE NATURE OF OUR SYSTEMATISING

It is a matter of course that a mathematical procedure cannot be applied to other objects, especially to the sciences of observation; I scarcely think it necessary to defend myself or others against such a misconception.

* An ellipse, the foci of which exactly coincide, is a circle.

306 SCIENCE

But if we know how we have proceeded in mathematics, we also know what is to be expected in other spheres of knowledge; for the same intellect will proceed, if not identically, since the subject renders this impossible, still analogously. Unconditional respect for nature (that is, for observation) and daring originality in the application of the means with which the human intellect provides us for interpretation and elaboration: these are the principles which we again encounter everywhere. Attend a course of lectures on systematic botany: the neophyte will be astonished to hear the lecturer talk of flowers that do not exist and to see “diagrams“ of them on the blackboard; these are so-called types, purely “imaginary magnitudes,“ the assumption of which enables us to explain the structure of really existing flowers and to demonstrate the connection of the fundamental (from our human point of view mechanical) plan of structure in the special case with other related or divergent plans. Every one, no matter how inexperienced in science, must at once be struck by the purely human element in such a procedure. But do not suppose that what is thus taught is an absolutely artificial and arbitrary system; the very opposite is the case. Man had proceeded artificially and thereby cut off every possibility of acquiring new knowledge, so long as he followed Aristotle in classifying plants according to the non-existent principle of a relative (so-called) “perfection,“ or according to the division, solely derived from human practice, into trees, shrubs, grasses and the like. On the other hand, our modern diagrams, our imaginary flower-forms, all the principles of our systematic botany, serve to bring home and to make clear to the human understanding true relations of nature at which we have arrived from thousands and thousands of faithful observations. The artificiality is conscious artificiality; as in mathematics,

307 SCIENCE

it is a question of “imaginary magnitudes,“ which help us, however, to approach nearer and nearer to the truth of nature, and to co-ordinate in our minds countless actual facts; this is the true function of science. With the Hellene, on the other hand, the foundation itself was thoroughly artificial, anthropomorphic, and it was this foundation which with simple unconsciousness was regarded as “nature.“ The rise of modern systematic botany provides indeed so excellent and intelligible an example of the Teutonic scientific method that I wish to give the reader a few more cardinal facts for his further consideration.

Julius Sachs, the famous botanist, in describing the beginning of botanical science between the fourteenth and the seventeenth centuries, says that no progress could be made so long as Aristotle's influence predominated; it is to the unlearned plant-collectors alone that the

awakening of genuine science is due. Whoever was learned enough to understand Aristotle “only worked mischief in the natural history of plants.” On the other hand, the authors of the first books on herbs did not give this a further thought, but collected with the greatest possible accuracy hundreds and thousands of individual descriptions of plants. History shows how in this way, in the course of a few centuries, a new science arose, while the philosophical botany of Aristotle and Theophrastus led to no result worth mentioning. * The first learned systematiser of importance, Caspar Bauhin of Basle (second half of the sixteenth century), who frequently shows a lively appreciation of natural, that is structural, affinity, creates universal confusion once more, in that, under Aristotle's influence, he imagines himself to be bound to advance “from the most imperfect to the more and more perfect” — as if man possessed an organ to measure relative “perfection” — and

* *Geschichte der Botanik*, 1875, p. 18.

308 SCIENCE

also in that he naturally (after the example of Aristotle) considers the large trees as most perfect, the small grasses as most imperfect and more such anthropomorphic nonsense. * But the faithful collection of actual observations continued, and men at the same time endeavoured to systematise the enormously growing material in such a way as would adapt the system or classification to the needs of the human intellect and yet keep it as true to the facts of nature as possible. This is the salient point; thus arises the ellipse which is peculiar to us. The logical systematising comes last, not first, and we are ready at any moment to throw our system overboard as we did our gods of old, for in very truth its only significance for us is a “provisorium”, a makeshift. The unlearned collectors and describers of herbs had discovered the natural affinities of plants by the trained eye, long before the learned proceeded to form systems. The reason is this: we base our science not on logic, which is human and therefore limited, but on intuitive perception, on what we see and divine, as it were, by affinity with nature; which moreover is the reason why our scientific systems are so true to nature. The Hellene thought only of the needs of the human intellect; we, however, wished to get at nature and felt vaguely that we could never fathom her mystery, never represent her own “system.” Yet we were resolved to approximate as nearly as we could, and that by a path that would make ever greater proximity possible. That is why we rejected every purely artificial system, like that of Linnaeus; it contains much that is correct, but leads us no further. In the meantime there rose up men like Tournefort, John Ray, Bernard de Jussieu, Antoine Laurent de Jussieu, † and others who cannot be named

* Sachs, as above, p. 38.

† His fundamental work, *Genera plantarum secundum ordines naturales disposita*, appeared in 1774, just prior to the beginning of the nineteenth century.

309 SCIENCE

here, and their work proved the absolute impossibility of constructing the classification of plants, as derived from observation of nature, upon one anatomical characteristic, a plea which the human passion for simplification and the logical mania wished to establish, and the best known and most successful example of which is the system of Linnaeus. On the contrary, it became apparent that for sub-orders of different grades different, and for special plant groups special, characteristics must be chosen. Moreover, there was brought to light a remarkable fact which was extremely important for the further development of science, viz., that, in reducing to a simple, logical, systematic principle the natural affinity of plants which is already recognised by quickened observation, the general external habit — so sure an indication to the expert — is of no use whatever, but that only characteristics from the secret interior of the structure, and in fact mostly such as are entirely invisible to the naked eye are of any service. In flowering plants we have to take into account especially relations of the embryo, then relations of the generative organs, connections between parts of the flower, &c.; in non-flowering plants the most invisible and seemingly most unimportant things, such as the rings on the sporangia of ferns, the teeth round the spore-capsules of mosses, &c. In this way nature has provided us with a clue by means of which it is possible to penetrate far into her mystery.

What happened here deserves our close attention, for it teaches us much concerning the historical development of our sciences. And so, even at the risk of repeating myself, I must direct the attention of the reader still more emphatically to what took place in systematic botany. By faithful and engrossing study of a very extensive material the eye of the observer had been quickened, and he was enabled to divine

310 SCIENCE

connections, to see them, as it were, with the eye, without, however, being able accurately to account for them and above all without being able to find a simple, so to speak “mechanical,” visible and demonstrable characteristic by which he might finally and convincingly prove the truth of his observation. Every child, for example, can — when its attention is aroused — distinguish between monocotyledons and dicotyledons; but it cannot give a reason for it, cannot point to a definite, sure distinguishing-mark. Obviously here (as everywhere) intuition is at the

bottom of the matter. Regarding John Ray, the real founder of modern systematic botany, his contemporary Antoine de Jussieu expressly tells us that he was engrossed in the external habit — *plantae facies exterior*; * now it was this same John Ray who discovered the importance of the cotyledons for a natural system of flowering plants, and at the same time the simple and infallible anatomical characteristic to distinguish the monocotyledons from the dicotyledons. Hereby it was proved that a hidden, mostly microscopically small anatomical characteristic was the essential thing by which the needs of the human intellect could be brought into unison with the facts of nature. This led to further discoveries regarding the presence or absence of albumen in the seed, regarding the position of the germ in the albumen, &c. These are all systematic characteristics of fundamental importance. Thus observation, united to intuition, had first dimly suggested the right solution; but man had to grope long before he could draw his ellipse; for the other focus, the *x*, was altogether lacking. At last it was found (*i.e.*, approximately found), but not where human reason would have sought it nor at the place which mere intuition would ever have reached: it was only after long

* From the quotation in Hooker's supplement to the English edition of Le Maout and Decaisne: *System of Botany*, 1873, p. 987.

311 SCIENCE

searching, after indefatigable comparison, that man at last hit upon the series of anatomical characteristics which are the criterion of a system in consonance with nature. But note carefully what followed this discovery, for now and now only comes the decisive point, the point which reveals the incomparable value of our scientific method. Now that man had, so to speak, come upon the track of nature, and with her help had drawn an approximately correct ellipse, he discovered hundreds and thousands of new facts, which all the “unscientific” observation and all the intuition in the world would never have revealed to him. False analogies were seen to be false; unsuspected connections between things which appeared to be absolutely heterogeneous were irrefutably proved. In fact, man had now really created order. This order, it is true, was also artificial, at least it contained an artificial element, for man and nature are not synonymous; if we had the purely “natural” order before our eyes, we could do nothing with it, and Goethe's famous remark, “Natural system is a contradiction,” expresses in a nut-shell all the objections that can here be raised; but this human-artificial order, in contrast to that of Aristotle, was one in which man had made himself as small as possible and retired into the background, while endeavouring to let nature speak, in so far as her voice can be understood. And this principle is one which ensures

progress; for in this way we gradually learn to understand the language of nature better. Every purely logical-scientific and every philosophically dogmatic theory forms an obstacle to science, whereas every theory which has been drawn as accurately as possible from nature and is yet only accepted as provisional, contributes to the advance of both knowledge and science.

This one example drawn from systematic botany must stand for many. It is a well-known fact that systematising as a necessary organ for shaping knowledge extends over

312 SCIENCE

all departments of knowledge; even religions are now classified in orders, species and categories. The victory of the method illustrated by botany forms in every sphere the backbone of the historical development of science between 1200 and 1800. In Physics, Chemistry, Physiology and in all related branches the same principles are at work. All knowledge must finally be systematised before it becomes science; that is why we encounter systematising everywhere and at all times. Bichat's theory of tissue — which was the result of anatomical discoveries, and at the same time the source of new discoveries — is an example, the exact analogy of which to John Ray's establishment of the so-called system of plants, and to the further history of this study, is at once apparent. Everywhere we see painfully exact observation, followed by daring, creative, but not dogmatic theorising.

IDEA AND THEORY

Before closing this section I should like to go a step farther, otherwise we should overlook an important point, one of those cardinal points which must serve to enable us to understand not only the history of our science, but also science itself as it exists in the nineteenth century. We must penetrate somewhat deeper into the nature and value of scientific theorising, and we can best do this by referring to that incomparable instrument of Teutonic science — the experiment. But it is merely a parenthesis, for the experiment is peculiar only to some studies, while in this connection I must go down still deeper, in order to reveal certain cardinal principles of all more modern sciences.

The experiment is, in the first place, merely “methodical” observation. But it is at the same time theoretical observation. * Hence its right application calls for

* Kant says regarding experiment: “Reason only perceives what she herself brings forth according to her own design, she must according to

philosophical reflection, otherwise it may easily happen that the result might be that the experiment rather than nature might speak. “An experiment which is not preceded by a theory, *i.e.*, an idea, stands in the same relation to natural investigation as jingling with a child's rattle does to music,” says Liebig, and in his brilliant fashion he compares the attempt to calculation; in both cases thoughts must precede. But how much caution is necessary here! Aristotle had experimented with falling bodies; he certainly did not lack acumen; but the “preceding theory” made him observe falsely. And if we take up Galilei's *Discorsi*, the fictitious conversation between Simplicio, Sagredo and Salviati will convince us that in the discovery of the true law of gravity conscientious observation, burdened with as few prejudice as possible, had the lion's share in the work and that the real theories followed after rather than “preceded.” We have here, I think, a confusion on the part of Liebig, and where so great a man, one who has deserved so well of science, is at fault, we may presume that true understanding can only be derived from the finest analysis. And such understanding is all the more essential, as it and it alone enables us to grasp the significance of genius for science and the history of science. That we shall now attempt to do.

Liebig writes, “A theory, *i.e.*, an idea”; he accordingly regards theory and idea as equivalents — the first source of his error. The Greek word *idea* — which in its living significance has never been successfully translated into any modern language — means exclusively something seen with the eyes, a phenomenon, a form; even Plato understands so fully by *idea* the quintessence of the Visible, that the single individual appears to him too pale

constant laws lead the way with principles of her own judgment and compel nature to answer her questions” (Preface to the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*).

to be regarded as more than the shadow of a true idea. * Theory, on the other hand, denoted even from the first not “looking at” but “looking on” (Watching) — a very great difference, which continued to grow ever greater till the word theory had received the special meaning of an arbitrary, subjective view, an artificial arrangement. Theory and idea are therefore not synonyms. When John Ray had by much observation attained so clear a picture of flowering plants as a whole that he distinctly perceived that they formed two great groups, he had an idea; when, however, he published in 1703 his *Methodus Plantarum*, he propounded a theory, a theory far inferior to his idea; for though he had

discovered the importance of the cotyledons as criteria for systematising, many other points (*e.g.*, the importance of the parts of the flower) had escaped his notice, so that the man, who already correctly comprehended in its essential points the formation of the vegetable kingdom, nevertheless sketched an untenable system; in fact our knowledge at that time was not thorough enough for Ray's "idea" to be bodied forth adequately in a "theory." In the case of the idea man is still obviously a piece of nature; here speaks — if I may venture to make the comparison — that "voice of the blood" which forms the principal theme of the narratives of Cervantes; man perceives relations for which he cannot account, he has a presentiment of things which he could not prove. † That is not real knowledge; it is the reflection of a transcendent connection, and is, therefore, a direct, not a dialectical, experience. The interpretation of such presentiments will always be

* People imagine that Plato's ideas are abstractions; on the contrary, they are in his estimation the only concrete thing from which the phenomena of the empirical world are abstracted. It is the paradox of a mind longing for the most intense visualisation.

† Kant has found a splendid expression for this and calls the idea, in the sense in which I use the word, *eine inexponible Vorstellung der Einbildungskraft* (an inexpoundable conception of the Imagination): *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, § 57, note 1.

315 SCIENCE

uncertain; neither they nor their interpretation can claim objective validity, their value is confined to the individual and depends absolutely on his individual importance. It is here that genius reveals its creative power. And while our whole Teutonic science is a science of faithful, painfully exact, absolutely prosaic observation, it is at the same time a science of genius. Everywhere "do ideas precede," here Liebig is perfectly right; we see it as clearly in the case of Galilei as of Ray, * in Bichat as well as Winckelmann, in Colebrooke as in Kant; but we must avoid the confusion of idea and theory; for these ideas of genius are far from being theories. The theory is the attempt so to organise a certain mass of experience — often, perhaps always, collected with the aid of an idea — that this artificial organism may serve the needs of the specific human intellect, without contradicting or arbitrarily treating the known facts. It is at once clear that the relative value of a theory will always stand in direct relation to the number of known facts, but this is by no means true of the idea, the value of which rather depends solely upon the greatness of the one personality. Leonardo da Vinci, for example, though his facts were very few, so correctly and accurately grasped the fundamental principles of geology, that not till the nineteenth century did we possess the necessary experience to demonstrate scientifically (and that means theoretically) the correctness of his intuition; again, he did not demonstrate the circulation of the blood (in some details he certainly

did not even conceive it rightly or grasp it mechanically), but he guessed it, that is, he had the idea of circulation, not the theory.

At a later point, and in another connection, I shall discuss the incomparable importance of genius for our

* Ray, who founded rational systematic botany, proved that in his case real genius predominated by the fact that he did exactly the same in the far removed and, previous to this time, hopelessly confused field of ichthyology. Power of Intuition is the divine gift here.

316 SCIENCE

whole culture; there is nothing to explain there; it is sufficient to point to the fact. * But here it is still necessary for the comprehension of our science to answer the one important question: How do theories arise? Here too, I hope, by criticising a well-known remark of Liebig, in which a widespread view is expressed, to point out the right path; and it will be seen that our great scientific theories are neither thinkable without genius nor, at the same time, indebted to genius alone for their shaping.

The famous chemist writes “Artistic ideas take root in fancy, scientific ideas in understanding.” † This short sentence is full, if I am not mistaken, of psychological inaccuracies, but only one point interests us particularly at present; imagination is supposed to serve art alone, while science could get on without it; from this follows the further — really monstrous — assertion, that art “invents facts,” science “explains facts.” Science never explained anything! The word explain (*erklären*) has no meaning for science, unless we take it to mean “to make more clearly visible.” If my pen slips from my fingers, it falls to the ground; the law of gravitation is a theory which sets out in the very best way all the relations which are to be taken into account in this fall; but what does it

* I merely wish to call the attention of those who are not very well read in philosophy to the fact that at the close of the epoch with which we are occupied in this chapter, the importance of genius was recognised and analysed with incomparable acumen: the great Kant has fixed upon the relative predominance of “nature“ (*i.e.*, what is, so to speak, outside and above man) in contrast to “reflection“ (*i.e.* the circumscribed and logically Human) as the specific token of genius (*see especially the Kritik der Urteilskraft*). This does not mean that the genius is less “reflective,” but rather that, in addition to a maximum of logical thinking power, something else is present; this addition is precisely the yeast which causes the dough of knowledge to rise.

† Like the former quotation, this is from the speech on Francis Bacon in the year 1863. To obviate any misjudgment of Liebig, I beg the reader to read once more the totally different remark on [p. 236](#). I am not exploiting the *lapsus calami* of the great investigator from any desire to put him right, but because this criticism helps to make my own thesis perfectly clear.

317 SCIENCE

explain? If I suggest the power of attraction, I arrive no further than the first chapter of *Genesis*, verse 1, that is to say, I put forward as an explanation a totally unthinkable and inexplicable entity. Oxygen and hydrogen unite to form water; good; what fact here explains and what fact is explained? Do oxygen and hydrogen explain water? Or are they explained by water? Obviously this word has not the shadow of a meaning, especially in science. It is true that in more complex phenomena this is not at once apparent, but the more thoroughly we analyse, the more does the delusion vanish, that explanation means an actual increase not only of knowledge but also of understanding. If the gardener, for example, says to me, "This plant turns towards the sun," I fancy in the first place, as he does, that I possess a perfectly valid "explanation." But if the physiologist says: strong light hinders growth, so that the plant grows more quickly on the shaded side and for that reason bends towards the sun — if he shows me the influence of the capacity of extension on the part of the plant in question and of the differently refracted rays, &c., in short, if he reveals the mechanism of the process and unites all known facts to a theory of "heliotropism," I feel that I have learned a great deal more, but that the delusion of an "explanation" has considerably paled. The clearer the How, the more vague the Why. The fact that the plant "turns towards the sun" looked like a final explanation, for I myself, man, seek the sun; but when I hear that strong light hinders the separation of cells and consequently the lengthening of the stalk on the one side, and thus causes the plant to bend, this is a new fact, and that again impels me to seek explanation from still more remote causes, and so thoroughly dispels my original simple anthropomorphism that I begin to ask by what mechanical concatenation it happens that I am so fond of sunning myself. Here again Goethe is right:

318 SCIENCE

"Every solution of a problem is a new problem." * And if ever we should reach so far, that physical chemistry will take in hand the problem of heliotropism, and the whole become a calculation and finally an algebraical formula, then this question will have reached the same stage as gravitation, and every one will recognise here, too, that science does not explain facts, but helps to discover and classify them — with as much truth to nature and as much in the interest of man as possible. Now is this, the real work of science, possible, as Liebig says, without the co-operation of imagination? Does the creative faculty — and that is what we call genius — play no necessary part in the construction of our science? We need not enter into a theoretical discussion, for history proves the opposite. The more exact the science, the more need has it of

imagination, and no science can altogether do without it. Where shall we find more daring creations of fancy than those atoms and molecules without which physics and chemistry would be impossible — or than that “physical jack-of-all-trades and chimera,” as Lichtenberg calls it, ether, which is indeed matter (otherwise it would be useless for our hypotheses) but to which the most essential characteristics of matter, as, for example, extension and impenetrability, must be denied (otherwise it would be of equally little use), a true “Square root of minus one!” It would be hard to say where there is an Art so deeply “rooted in imagination.” Liebig says that art “invents facts.” It never does! It has no need whatever to do that; moreover, we should not understand it if it did. It certainly condenses what lies apart, it unites what is only known to us as separate, and separates that part of the actual which stands in its way; in that way it gives shape to that which is beyond the sight of man, and distributes light and shade as it thinks fit, but it never crosses the boundary of what is familiar to conception and what

* *Gespräch mit Kanzler von Müller*, June 8, 1821.

319 SCIENCE

is conceivably possible; for art is — in direct contrast to science — an activity of mind which confines itself solely to the purely human; from man it comes, to man it addresses itself, the Human alone is its field. * Science, as we have seen, is quite different; it is directed to the investigation of nature, and nature is not human. Indeed, would that it were so, as the Hellenes supposed! But experience has contradicted the supposition. In science, therefore, man attacks something which is, of course, not in-human, for he himself belongs to it, but it is to a great extent super- and extra-human. As soon, therefore, as man has an earnest desire to understand nature, and not to be satisfied with dogmatising *in usum Delphini*, he is compelled, in science, and especially in natural science in the narrower sense of the word, to strain to the utmost the powers of his imagination, which must be infinitely inventive and pliable and elastic. I know that such an assumption is contrary to the general acceptation; to me, however, it seems that science and philosophy make higher claims on the imagination than poetry. The purely creative element in men like Democritus and Kant is greater than in Homer and Shakespeare. That is the very reason why their works remain accessible to but few. This scientific imagination is rooted of course in facts, as all imagination is of necessity; † and scientific imagination is particularly rich for this reason, that it has at its disposal an enormous number of facts, and its store of facts is being continually increased by new discoveries. I have already briefly referred ([p. 287](#)) to

the importance of new discoveries for nourishing and stimulating the imagination; this importance extends

* Landscape painting or animal painting is obviously never anything but a representation of landscapes or animals as they appear to man; the most daring caprice of a Turner or of one of the most modern impressionists can never be anything but an extravagant assertion of human autonomy. "When artists speak of nature, they always suppose the idea, without being clearly conscious of it" (Goethe).

† See vol. i. pp. [177](#), [427](#); vol. ii. p. [273](#).

320 SCIENCE

even to the highest regions of culture, but it reveals itself to begin with and above all in science. The wonderful advance of science in the sixteenth century — of which Goethe wrote: "The world will not soon see the like again" * — is by no means due to the regeneration of foolish Hellenic dogmatics, as people would have us believe; this has rather had the effect of leading us astray — as in systematic botany, so in every department of knowledge; on the contrary, this sudden advance was directly due to the stimulus of the new discoveries, which I discussed in the previous section, discoveries in the heavens, discoveries on earth. Read the letters in which Galilei, trembling with excitement, proclaims the discovery of the moons of Jupiter and of the ring round Saturn, thanking God for revealing to him "such never-dreamt-of wonders," and you will get an idea of the mighty influence which the new discoveries exercised upon the imagination, and how they at the same time impelled man to seek further and further, and to bring the object of search nearer to the understanding. When discussing mathematics, we saw to what glorious heights of extreme daring the human spirit allowed itself to be transported in the intoxicating atmosphere of a newly discovered super-human nature. But for the genuine idea of genius, which sprang from the imagination — not from observation, nor, as Liebig says, from facts — the higher mathematics together with our knowledge of the heavens, of light, of electricity, &c., would have been impossible. But the same holds good everywhere, and that for the simple reason adduced above, that we otherwise could not reach this world which is outside man. The history of our sciences between 1200 and 1800 is an unbroken series of such magnificent workings of the

* *Geschichte der Farbenlehre*, conclusion of the third part. An assertion which Liebig countersigns: "After this sixteenth century there is none which was richer in men of equal creative power" (*Augsburger Allg. Zeitung*, 1863, in the *Reden und Abhandlungen*, p. 272).

321 SCIENCE

imaginations. That implies the predominant power of creative genius.

AN EXAMPLE.

Looking back, we now perceive that scientific chemistry was impossible so long as oxygen had not been discovered as an element; for this is the most important body of our planet, the body from which the organic as well as the inorganic phenomena of telluric nature derive their special colouring. In water, air and rocks, in all combustion (from the simple slow oxidising to flaming fire), in the breathing of all living creatures — everywhere, in short, this element is at work. This is the very reason why it defied direct observation; for the outstanding characteristic of oxygen is the energy with which it unites with other elements, in other words, conceals from observation its existence as an independent body; even where it occurs not chemically united with other substances, but in a free state — as, for example, in the air, where it only enters into a mechanical union with nitrogen — it is impossible for the ignorant to observe oxygen; for not only is this element, under our conditions of temperature and pressure, a gas, it is, moreover, a colourless gas, without smell and without taste. The senses alone could not, therefore, discover it. Now in the second half of the seventeenth century there lived in England one of those genuine discoverers like Gilbert (see p. 269), namely, Robert Boyle, who by a treatise, *Chemista scepticus*, made an end of Aristotelian dialectics and alchemistic quackery in the field of chemistry, and at the same time set a twofold example: that of strict observation, and that of classifying and sifting the already much increased material of observation by the introduction of a creative idea. As a birthday gift he presented to chemistry, which was just arising in a genuine form, the new conception of elements, a more daring conception than the old one of Empedocles, one more after the spirit of Democritus. This idea was

322 SCIENCE

at that time based on no observation; it sprang from the imagination, but became henceforth the source of countless discoveries which have not yet reached the end of their course. Here we see what paths our science always follows. * But now for the example of which I am thinking. Boyle's idea had led to a rapid increase of knowledge, discovery had succeeded discovery, but the more numerous the facts became, the more confused was the total result; any one who desires to know how impossible science is without theory, should study the state of chemistry at the beginning of the eighteenth century; he will find a Chinese chaos. If, as Liebig thinks, science can “explain“ facts, if the unimaginative “understanding“ is capable of such a task, why did it not prove so then? Were Boyle himself and Hooke and Becher and the many other capable collectors of facts of

that age unintelligent persons? Certainly not; but understanding and observation alone are not sufficient, and the wish to “explain“ is a delusion; what we call comprehension always presupposes a creative contribution from man. The important thing therefore was, to deduce from Boyle's brilliant idea the theoretical consequences, and this was done by a Franconian doctor, a man of “transcendentally speculative tendency of mind“, † by the ever memorable Georg Ernst Stahl. He was not a professional chemist, but he saw what was lacking: an element! Could its existence be proved? Not at that time. But was a daring Teutonic mind to be disheartened by that? Fortunately not! So Stahl arbitrarily invented an imaginary element, and called it phlogiston. At once

* It deserves mention that Boyle's remarkable capacity for imaginative inventions found expression in theological writings from his pen, and was also noticed in his daily life.

† I quote these words from Hirschel's *Geschichte der Medizin*, 2nd ed. p. 260. I possess a number of chemical books, but none of them mentions Stahl's intellectual gifts, their authors are much too prosaic and mechanical for that.

323 SCIENCE

light shone in the midst of the chaos; and the Teuton had destroyed magic superstition in its last stronghold and throttled the salamander for ever. By the propounding of a purely mechanical thought, men were henceforth enabled to form a right conception of the process of combination, that is to say, to find that x , the second focus, or at least to approximate to it, so that they could begin to draw the humanly comprehensible ellipse. “The theory of phlogiston gave chemistry a powerful stimulus, for never before had such a number of chemical facts been grouped together as analogous processes and united in so clear and simple a manner.“ * If that is not a work of the imagination words have lost their meaning. But at the same time we must note that here it was rather the theorising understanding than intuition that had been at work. Boyle had been a phenomenally fine observer; Stahl, on the other hand, was a pre-eminently acute and inventive mind, but a bad observer. The difference which I indicated becomes particularly clear in this case; for the idea of phlogiston — which held the whole eighteenth century in its sway, which acquired for its author the honorary title of a founder of scientific chemistry, and in the light of which all the foundations of our later theory which is more in consonance with nature were actually laid — this idea was based (in addition to the theoretical exploitation of Boyle's idea) on flagrantly false observations! Stahl thought that combustion was a process of disintegration; instead of which it was a process of unification. Various experiments had already proved in his time that combustion adds to weight, but Stahl (who, as I said, was a

very unreliable observer and possessed to a high degree the special obstinacy of the theorising logician) supposed that combustion consisted

* Roscoe und Schorlemmer: *Ausführliches Lehrbuch der Chemie* 1872, i. 10.

324 SCIENCE

in the escape of phlogiston, &c. Consequently, when Priestley and Scheele had at last separated oxygen from certain combinations, they firmly believed that they had within their grasp that famous phlogiston, which had been pursued ever since Stahl's time. But Lavoisier soon proved that the discovered element, far from possessing the qualities of the hypothetical phlogiston, revealed qualities of exactly the opposite kind! The oxygen thus discovered and rendered accessible to observation was in fact a different thing altogether from what the human imagination in its need had conceived. Without imagination man can establish no connection between phenomena, no theory, no science, but human imagination nevertheless always reveals itself as inadequate to and unlike nature, requiring to be corrected by empirical observation. That is also the reason why all theory is ever provisional, and science ceases as soon as dogmatism assumes the lead.

The history of our science is the history of such phlogistons. Philology has its "Aryans," but for which its great achievements in the nineteenth century would have been inconceivable. * Goethe's theories of metamorphoses in the vegetable kingdom and the affinities of the bones of the skull and the vertebrae have exercised an enormous stimulus upon the increase and systematising of our knowledge, but Schiller was perfectly right when he shook his head and said: "That is not experience" (and he might have added, nor a theory); "that is an idea." † He was equally right when he added: "Your intellect works to a remarkable degree intuitively

* Cf. vol. i. [p. 264](#), &c.

† Goethe: *Glückliches Ereignis*, sometimes printed as *Annalen*, 1794. Goethe himself, however, recognised this later and did not remain blind to the defects of his "idea." In the supplement to the *Nachträge zur Farbenlehre*, under the heading *Probleme*, we find the remark, "The idea of metamorphosis is a most venerable but at the same time most dangerous gift from above. It leads to the Formless, destroys knowledge, disintegrates it."

325 SCIENCE

and all your thinking powers seem, as it were, to have committed themselves to the imagination, as to their common representative." * As Carnot says: "Mathematical analysis is full of enigmatical hypotheses

and from these enigmas it draws its strength.“ † John Tyndall, a competent authority, says of physics: “The greatest of its instruments is the imagination.“ ‡ In the sciences of life, to-day as well as yesterday, wherever we are endeavouring to open up new spheres for the understanding and to reduce to order facts that are in confusion, it is imaginative, creative men who take the lead. Haeckel's plastidules, [Wiesner's](#) plasoms, Weissmann's biophores, &c., spring from the same need as Stahl's masterly invention. The imagination of these men is, of course, nourished and stimulated by the wealth of exact observations; pure imagination, for which the theory of “signatures“ may serve as an example, has for science the same significance as the picture painted by a man who does not know the technique of painting has for art; their hypothetical suppositions, however, are not observations, consequently not facts, but attempts to arrange facts and pave the way for new observations. The most salient phlogiston of the eighteenth century was really nothing less than Darwin's theory of natural selection.

Perhaps I may be allowed, in summarising these results, to quote myself. I once had occasion to make a special and thorough study of a definite scientific subject, the rising sap of plants. On this occasion I was greatly interested in investigating the historical development of our knowledge of the question, and discovered that although there has been no lack of competent investigators, only three men, Hales (1727), Dutrochet

* [Letter to Goethe, August 31, 1794](#). Schiller adds: “At bottom this is the highest point to which man can raise his powers, as soon as he succeeds in generalising his intuition and making his feeling lawgiver.“

† *Loc. cit.* p. 27.

‡ *On the Scientific Use of the Imagination*, 1870.

326 SCIENCE

(1826), and Hofmeister (1857) have really brought it one step farther. In these three exceptional men, though they differ absolutely in other respects, the concurrence of the following characteristics is very remarkable: they are all excellent observers, they are all men of wide outlook and of pre-eminently vivid, daring imagination, while all are, as theorists, somewhat one-sided and desultory. Highly gifted with imagination, they were in fact, like Goethe, inclined to ascribe too far-reaching significance to their creative ideas — Hales to capillarity, Dutrochet to osmose, and Hofmeister to tension of tissue; the same power of imagination, which enabled these great men to enrich us, has therefore in a certain sense limited them: so that in this they have been forced to submit to correction from intellects which were their inferiors. Concerning them I wrote in my treatise: “To such men we owe all real

progress of science; for whatever we may think of their theories, they have not only enriched our knowledge by the discovery of countless facts, but also our imagination by the promulgation of new ideas; theories come and go, but what the imagination once possesses, is eternal.“ But this investigation led me to a second discovery, one of still greater importance in principle: our imagination is very limited. If we trace the sciences back to antiquity, it is remarkable how few new conceptions the course of time has added to the very numerous old ones; this teaches us that it is solely and simply observation of nature that enriches our imagination, whereas all the thought in the world does not add one grain to its wealth. *

* Houston Stewart Chamberlain, *Recherches sur la Sève ascendante*, Neuchâtel, 1897, p. 11. Locke, in his *Human Understanding* (iv. 3, 23), already points out that poverty of “ideas“ (as he too calls them) is one of the chief primary causes of the limitation of our knowledge.

327 SCIENCE

THE GOAL OF SCIENCE

Let me add one final word.

Mathematicians — never at a loss, as we have seen — think it proper to say that a circle is an ellipse in which the two foci coincide. Will this coincidence of the foci ever be realised in our sciences? Is it to be supposed that human intuitive perception and nature will ever exactly coincide, that is, will our perception of things ever be absolute understanding? The preceding discussion shows how foolish such an assumption is; I am convinced that I may also assert that no single serious scientist of the present day, certainly no Teuton, believes it possible. * We find this conviction even where (as happens unfortunately very frequently to-day) the intellect is not adequately schooled by philosophy, and perhaps it is all the more impressive because it is expressed with perfect simplicity. Thus, for example, one of the admittedly most important investigators of the nineteenth century, Lord Kelvin, on celebrating in 1896 his jubilee as a Professor of fifty years standing, made the memorable confession: “One single word comprises the result of all that I have done towards the furthering of science during fifty-five years: this word is Failure. I know not one iota more to-day about electric or magnetic power, how ether, electricity and weighable matter stand to one another, or what chemical affinity means, than I did when I delivered my first lecture.“ These are the words of an honest, truthful, thorough Teuton, the man who seemed to have brought

* Our numerous excellent Jewish scholars may be in a different case; for when a people without ever learning anything, has known everything for thousands of years, it

is a bitter hardship to have to tread the painful but brilliant path of study and to be forced finally to confess that our knowledge is everlastingly and narrowly circumscribed by human nature.

328 SCIENCE

the hypothetical, unthinkable atoms so near to us, when in a happy hour he undertook to measure their length and breadth. Had he been in addition something of a philosopher, he would certainly not have needed to speak of failure in such a melancholy strain; for in that case he would not have assigned to science an absolutely unattainable goal, the ever impossible absolute knowledge, which may well be conceived in our inmost hearts but can never take the tangible form of an actual, empirical "knowledge"; he might then have unhesitatingly rejoiced over that brilliant, free, shaping power, which began to stir at the moment when the Teuton rebelled against the leaden might of the Chaos of Peoples, which since then has conferred on us so rich a blessing of civilisation, and in days to come is destined to attain still greater things.

*

* In this connection I should like to draw the reader's attention to the change in men's views regarding the nature of life. At the beginning of the nineteenth century the gulf between the Organic and the Inorganic was thought to be, if not filled up, at least bridged over (vol. i. [p. 43](#)); at the close of the century that gulf, for all men of knowledge, is wider than ever. Far from being in a position to produce *Homunculi* chemically in our laboratories, we have learned first of all (through the researches of Pasteur, Tyndall, &c.), that there nowhere exists *generatio spontanea*, but that all life is produced solely by life; then minuter anatomy (Virchow) has taught us that every cell of a body can only arise from an already existing cell; now we know ([Wiesner](#)) that even the simplest organic structures of the cell arise not by the chemical activity of the contents of the cell, but only from similar organised structures, *e.g.* a chlorophyll granule only from an already existing chlorophyll granule. Form, not matter, is the fundamental principle of all life. And thus Herbert Spencer, who was formerly so daring, had lately, as an honest investigator, to confess that "the theory of a special vital principle is inadequate, the physico-chemical theory has, however, likewise failed: the corollary being that in its ultimate nature Life is incomprehensible." (Letter in *Nature*, vol. lviii. p. 593, October 12, 1898). Here too a little metaphysical thought would have saved him from a painful retreat. Taken in Spencer's sense, the whole empirical world too is incomprehensible. The mystery is pre-eminently striking in the case of life, because life is just the one thing which we ourselves know from direct experience. By virtue of life we attack the problem of life and must now confess that the cat may indeed bite the point of its tail (if the latter is long enough), but not

329 SCIENCE

I hope that with the remarks in this section I have contributed something to help us to understand the history of our Teutonic sciences and to form an exact estimate of the progress in the nineteenth century.

We have seen that science — according to our new and absolutely individual view — is the human shaping of something extra-human; we have shown in the essential outlines and by the aid of individual examples how this shaping has hitherto been accomplished. Of a “makeshift bridge“ more cannot be expected.

more; it cannot swallow and digest itself. To what proud flights will our science rise on the day when it has discarded the last remnant of the Semitic delusion of understanding, and passes on to pure, intensive intuitive perception, united to free, consciously human shaping. Then in truth will “man by man have entered into the daylight of life!“ (Cf. my [Immanuel Kant, 5th lecture, “Plato.”](#))

329

3. INDUSTRY (From the Introduction of Paper to Watt's Steam-engine).

EPHEMERAL NATURE OF ALL CIVILISATION

We now enter the domain of civilisation; here I can and shall be exceedingly brief, for the relation of the Present to the Past is absolutely different from what it is in culture and knowledge. In discussing knowledge I had to break new ground, and lay foundations to enable us to understand the nineteenth century; for our knowledge of to-day is so closely bound up with the work of the preceding six centuries — grows out of it under such definite conditions — that we can estimate the Present only in connection with the Past; here, moreover, the genius of eternity rules; the material of knowledge is never “done with,“ discoveries can never be annulled, a Columbus stands nearer in spirit to us than to his own century, and even science, as we have seen, contains elements

330 INDUSTRY

which vie in immortality with the most perfect products of art; there consequently the Past lives on as Present. We cannot assert the same of civilisation. Naturally in this domain also link is locked with link, but former ages support the present only in a mechanical way as in the coral the dead calcified generations serve as a basis to the living polyyps. Here, too, of course, the relation of Past to Present is of the highest academic interest, and its investigation may prove instructive; but in practice public life always remains an exclusively “present“ phenomenon; the doctrines of the Past are vague, contradictory, inapplicable; the future is likewise very little considered. A new machine supersedes former ones, a

new law annuls the old; the necessities of the moment and the hurry of the short-lived individual are the ruling power. It is so, for example, in politics. In the discussion on "The Struggle in the State" we discovered certain great undercurrents which are still flowing as they flowed a thousand years ago; here universal racial relations are actively at work, physical fundamental facts, which in the hurtling waves of life break the light in manifold ways and consequently reveal themselves in many colours, but nevertheless are recognisable by careful observers in their permanent organic unity; but if we take real politics, we find a chaos of transecting and intersecting events, in which chance, the Unanticipated, the Unforeseen, the Inconsistent are decisive, in which the recoil from a geographical discovery, the invention of a loom, the discovery of a coal-mine, the exploit of a general of genius, the intervention of a great statesman, the birth of a weak or strong monarch, destroys all that centuries have achieved, or, it may be, wins back in a single day all that has been ceded to others. Because the Byzantines make a poor defence against the Turks, the great commercial republic of Venice falls; because the Pope excludes the Portuguese from the Western seas, they discover the

331 INDUSTRY

Eastern route, and Lisbon springs into sudden prosperity; Austria is lost to the Germans and Bohemia loses its national importance for ever, because an intellectual and moral cipher, Ferdinand II., stands from childhood under the influence of a few foreign Jesuits; Charles XII. shoots like a comet through history, and dies at the age of thirty-five, yet his unexpected intervention changes the map of Europe and the history of Protestantism; the transformation of the world, the dream of that scourge of God, Napoleon Bonaparte, was effected in a much more thorough fashion by the simple honest James Watt, who patented his steam-engine in the year 1769, the very year in which that condottiere was born.... And meanwhile real politics consist of a ceaseless adaptation, a ceaseless ingenious compromising between the Necessary and the Chance, between what yesterday was and what to-morrow will be. As the venerable historian Johannes von Müller testifies: "All history humbles politics; for the greatest things are brought about by circumstances." Politics retard, as long as they can, they further, as soon as the stream has overcome its own resistance; they haggle with a neighbour for advantages, rob him when he becomes weak, grovel before him when he grows strong. Moved by politics the mighty prince invests the nobles with fiefs that they may elect him to be King or Emperor, and then promotes the interests of the citizen that they may aid him against those very lords who have raised him to the throne; the citizens are loyal,

because they thereby escape the tyranny of the nobles, who think only of self-aggrandisement, but the monarch becomes a tyrant as soon as there are no longer powerful families to keep him in check, and the people awakens to find itself more dependent than ever; that is why it rebels, beheads its King and banishes his supporters; now, however, the ambition to rule asserts itself a thousandfold and with dogged intolerance the

332 INDUSTRY

foolish “majority“ raises its will to the dignity of law. Everywhere the despotism of the moment, that is to say, of the momentary necessity, the momentary interest, the momentary possibility, and consequently a rich sequence of various circumstances, which may indeed have a genetic connection and can be unrolled by the historian in their natural order before our eyes, but so that the one Present destroys the other, as the caterpillar the egg, the chrysalis the caterpillar, and the butterfly the chrysalis; the butterfly, again, dies when it lays eggs, so that history may begin all over again.

Alas! Away! and leave them in their graves,
These strifes between the tyrant and the slaves!
They weary me; for scarcely are they o'er,
Than they commence from first to last once more.

What is here proved for politics is just as true of all industrial and economic life. One of the most industrious modern workers in this wide sphere, Dr. Cunningham, repeatedly points out how difficult it is for us — in one passage he calls it hopeless * — really to understand the economic conditions of past centuries and especially the views regarding them which floated before the minds of our fathers, and determined their actions and legal measures. Civilisation, the mere garment of man, is in fact so ephemeral a thing that it disappears and leaves no trace behind; though vases, earrings and suchlike adorn our museums, though all sorts of contracts, bills of exchange, and diplomas are preserved in dusty archives, the living element in them is dead beyond recall. Any one who has not studied these conditions has no idea how quickly one state of affairs supersedes another. We hear talk of Middle Ages and believe that that was a great uniform epoch of a thousand years,

* [*The Growth of English Industry and Commerce during the Early and Middle Ages*](#), 3rd ed. page 97.

333 INDUSTRY

kept in constant ferment by wars, but fairly stable, so far as ideas and social conditions are concerned; then came the Renaissance, out of which the Present gradually developed; in reality, from the moment when the Teuton entered into history, especially from the time when he became the decisive factor in Europe, there has never been a moment's peace in the economic world; every century has a physiognomy of its own, and sometimes — as between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries — one single century may experience greater economic upheavals than those which form a yawning gulf between the end of the eighteenth and the end of the nineteenth. I once had occasion to study thoroughly the life of that glorious fourteenth century; I approached it not from the standpoint of the pragmatic historian, but simply to get a really vivid idea of that energetic age in which the middle classes and freedom flourished so gloriously; one fact in particular struck me, that the great men of that impetuously advancing century, the century of “rashly daring progress“ * — a Jacob von Artevelde, a Cola Rienzi, a John Wyclif, an Etienne Marcel — were wrecked because they were not understood by contemporaries reared on the traditional views of the thirteenth century; they had clothed their thoughts in a new fashion too quickly. I almost believe that the haste, which seems to us to be the special characteristic of our age, was always peculiar to us; we have never given ourselves time to live our lives; the distribution of property, the relations of class to class, in fact everything that makes up the public life of society is constantly swaying backwards and forwards. In comparison with economics even politics are enduring; for the great dynamic interests, and later the interests of races, form a heavy ballast, while trade, city life, the relative

* Lamprecht: *Deutsches Städteleben am Schluss des Mittelalter*, 1884, p. 36.

334 INDUSTRY

value of agriculture, the appearance and disappearance of the proletariat, the concentration and distribution of capital, &c., are subject almost solely to the influence of the “anonymous forces“ mentioned in the General Introduction. From all these considerations it is manifest that past civilisation can scarcely in any respect be considered a still living “foundation“ of the Present.

AUTONOMY OF MODERN INDUSTRY

As far as industry in particular is concerned, obviously not only the conditions of its existence depend on the caprices of Protean economics

and fickle politics, but it derives even its possibility and particular nature first and foremost from the state of our knowledge. There the equation — as the mathematician would say — receives two variable factors, the one of which (economics) is in every way inconstant, while the other (knowledge) only grows in a fixed direction, but with varying rapidity. Clearly industry is very variable; it is often — as to-day — an all-consuming, but yet uncertain and inconstant entity. It may powerfully affect life and politics — think only of steam and electricity — yet it is not really an independent but a derivative phenomenon, springing on the one hand out of the needs of society, on the other from the capabilities of science. For this reason its various stages have only a slight or no organic connection, for a new industry seldom grows out of an old one — it is called into life by new wants and new discoveries. In the nineteenth century a perfectly new industry was dominant: being one of the great, new forces (vol. i. [p. lxxxii](#)), it left its distinct, individual impression upon the civilisation of this century and revolutionised — as perhaps, no previous industry — wide spheres of life. It was devised in the last quarter of the eighteenth and realised in the nineteenth century; what formerly stood, disappears as

335 INDUSTRY

before a magic wand, and possesses for us — I repeat — merely academic interest. The student will, of course, find the idea of the steam-engine in earlier times: here he will have to consider not only, as is usually done, Papin, who lived one hundred years before Watt, and Hero of Alexandria, who flourished exactly two thousand years before Papin, but above all that wonderful magician Leonardo da Vinci who, in this sphere as in others, had with giant strides sped far in front of his age, dominated as it was by Church Councils and Inquisition Courts. Leonardo has left us an accurate sketch of a great steam-driven cannon, and in addition he studied especially two problems, how to use steam to propel ships and to pump water — the very purposes for which three hundred years later steam was first successfully employed. But neither his age with its needs and political circumstances, nor science and its apparatus were sufficiently developed to allow these brilliant ideas to be turned to practical account. When the favourable moment came, Leonardo's ideas and experiments had long fallen into oblivion, and have only lately been brought to light again. The use of steam, as we know it, is something altogether new and must be discussed in connection with the nineteenth century, since we do not wish, any more than in preceding parts of this book, to allow artificial divisions of time to influence our thought and judgment. But what we have said is true not only of the revolution effected by steam, and naturally to a still higher degree by electricity,

which had not even begun a hundred years ago to be applied to industry, but also of those great, all-important industries which pertain to the clothing of man, and consequently have in this sphere somewhat the same place as the cultivation of corn has in agriculture. The methods of spinning, weaving and sewing have been completely changed, and the first steps were likewise taken at the end of the eighteenth century. Hargreaves patented his spinning frame in 1770,

336 INDUSTRY

Arkwright his almost at the same time, the great idealist Samuel Crompton gave the world the perfect machine (the so-called Mule) about ten years later; Jacquard's loom was perfected in 1801; the first practical sewing machine, that of Thimonnier, was not completed — in spite of attempts at the end of the eighteenth century — till thirty years later. * Here too, of course, there had been previous attempts and ideas, and first of all we must again think of the great Leonardo, who invented a spinning machine which embodied the most brilliant ideas of later times and “is quite equal to the best machines of to-day”: in addition he experimented with the construction of looms, machines for cutting cloth and the like. † But all this had no influence upon our age, and is consequently out of place here. Another fact should be noticed, that in by far the greater part of the world men still spin and weave as they did centuries ago; in these very matters man is extremely conservative; ‡ but if he does make the change, it is made, like the invention itself — at one bound.

PAPER

Within the scope of this book, then, there remains little to be said about industry. But this little is not without significance. Just as our science can be called a “mathematical” one, so our civilisation from the

* I have not been able to find in any language a really practical, comprehensive history of industry; the dates have with great trouble to be sought in fifty different specialised treatises, and we may be glad to find anything at all, for the men of industry live wholly in the present and care very little about history. For the last subject, however, see Hermann Grothe: *Bilder und Studien zur Geschichte vom Spinnen, Weben, Nähen* (1875).

† Grothe, *loc. cit.*, p. 21. More details in Grothe's *Leonardo da Vinci als Ingenieur*, 1824, p. 80 f. Leonardo had infinite talent in the invention of mechanism, as we can see by reading the above work.

‡ Grothe: *Bilder und Studien*, p. 27.

beginning possesses a definite character, or, we might say, a definite physiognomy; and, moreover, it is an industry which at that decisive turning-point, the twelfth to the thirteenth century, laid upon our civilisation that special impress which has been growing ever more pronounced; our civilisation is of paper.

When we follow the usual practice of representing the invention of printing as the beginning of a new age, we are in error and are therefore falsifying history. In disproof of such an assertion we have, to begin with, only to recall to mind the fact that the living source of a new age lies not in this or that invention, but in the hearts of definite men; as soon as the Teuton began to found independent States and to shake off the yoke of the Roman-theocratic Imperium, a new age was born; I have proved this in detail and do not need to return to the point. He who shares Janssen's opinion that it was printing which "gave wings to the intellect" might explain to us why the Chinese have not yet grown wings. And whoever champions with Janssen the thesis that this invention, which "gave wings to the intellect," and in addition the whole "activity of intellectual life" from the fourteenth century onwards are to be ascribed solely to the Roman Catholic doctrine of justification by works, might be good enough to explain why the Hellenes, who knew neither printing nor justification by works, were yet able to soar so high on the wings of song and creative philosophy that it was only after great difficulty and long striving, and after having shaken off the fetters of Rome, that we succeeded in reaching a height which rivalled theirs. * We may well give no heed to these foolish phrases. But even in the province of the concrete

* Janssen: *Geschichte des deutschen Volkes*, 16th edition, i, 3 and 8. This industrious and consequently useful compilation has really won extravagant praise; it is fundamentally a party pamphlet in six volumes, unworthy either for its fidelity or its depth of becoming a household book. The German Catholic has as little reason to fear the

and sincere study of history, the one-sided emphasising of the invention of printing obscures our insight into the historical course of our civilisation. The idea of printing is very ancient; every stamp, every coin is a manifestation of it; the oldest copy of the Gothic translation of the Bible, the so-called [*Codex argenteus*](#), is "printed" on parchment by means of hot metal types; the decisive — because distinctive — thing is the

manner in which the Teutons came to invent cast movable type and so practical printing, and this again is bound up with their recognition of the value of paper. For in its origin, printing is an application of paper. As soon as paper — *i.e.*, a suitable, cheap material for reproduction — was found, the industrious, ingenious Teutons began in a hundred places (the Netherlands, Germany, Italy, France) to seek a practical solution of the old problem, how to print books mechanically. It will repay us to study the process carefully, especially as compendia and encyclopaedias are still very badly informed concerning the earliest history of our paper. In fact the matter has only been fully cleared up by the works of Josef Karabacek and [Julius Wiesner](#), and the results form one of the most interesting contributions to the knowledge of Teutonic individuality. *

It seems that those industrious utilitarians, the Chinese,

truth as any other German; but Janssen's method is systematic distortion of truth, and deliberate sully of the best impulses of the German spirit.

* Karabacek: *Das arabische Papier, eine historisch-antiquarische Untersuchung*, Wien, 1887; and Wiesner: *Die mikroskopische Untersuchung des Papiers mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der ältesten orientalischen und europäischen Papiere*, Wien, 1887. The two scholars, each in his own special department, have investigated the matter simultaneously, so that their works, though appearing separately, supplement each other and together form a whole. One result is of decisive importance, that paper made of cotton nowhere occurs, and that the oldest pieces of Arab manufacture are made of rags (of linen or hemp), so that (in contrast to the former assumption) the Teuton does not deserve credit even for the modest idea of using linen instead of cotton. The details of the following are taken to a large extent from the two books.

339 INDUSTRY

first hit upon the idea of making a cheap, convenient and universally suitable medium for writing (in place of expensive parchment, still more expensive silk, comparatively rare papyrus, Assyrian bricks for writing on, &c.); but the assertion that they invented paper only partly represents the facts. The Chinese, who themselves used a papyrus perfectly similar to our own, * and knew its disadvantages, discovered how to make by artificial process from suitable plant fibres a writing material analogous to paper: that is their contribution to the invention of paper. Chinese prisoners of war then brought this industry (roughly speaking, in the seventh century) to Samarkand, a city which was subject to the Arabian Khalif, and mostly ruled by almost independent Turkish princes, the inhabitants of which, however, consisted at that time of Persian Iranians. The Iranians — our Indo-European cousins — grasped the clumsy Chinese experiments with the higher intelligence of incomparably richer and more imaginative instincts and changed them completely, in that they “almost immediately“ invented the making of

paper from rags — so striking a change (especially when we think that the Chinese have not advanced any further to the present day!) that Professor Karabacek is certainly justified in exclaiming: “A victory of foreign genius over the inventive gifts of the Chinese!” That is the first stage: an Indo-European people, stimulated by the practical but very limited skill of the Chinese, invents paper “almost immediately”; Samarkand becomes for a long time the metropolis of the manufacture. Now follows the second and equally instructive stage. In the year 795 Harûn-al-

* The papyrus of the Chinese is the thinly cut medullary tissue of an *Aralia*, as that of the ancients was the thinly cut medullary tissue of the *Cyperus papyrus*. The use of this is still prevalent in China for painting with water-colours, &c. For details, see Wiesner: [*Die Rohstoffe des Pflanzenreiches*](#), 1873, p. 458 f. (new enlarged edition, 1902, ii, 429-463).

340 INDUSTRY

Raschîd (a contemporary of Charlemagne) sent for workmen from Samarkand and erected a factory in Bagdad. The preparation was kept a State secret; but wherever Arabs went, paper accompanied them, particularly to Moorish Spain, that land where the Jews were for long predominant and where paper can be proved to have been in use from the beginning of the tenth century. Hardly any, on the other hand, came to Teutonic Europe, and, if it did, it was only as a mysterious material of unknown origin. This went on till the thirteenth century. For nearly 500 years, therefore, the Semites and half-Semites held the monopoly of paper, time enough, if they had possessed a spark of invention, if they had experienced the slightest longing for intellectual work, to have developed this glorious weapon of the intellect into a power. And what did they do with it during all this period — a span of time greater than from Gutenberg to the present day? Nothing, absolutely nothing. All they could do was to make promissory notes of it, and in addition a few hundred dreary, wearisome, soul-destroying books: the invention of the Iranian serving to bowdlerise the thoughts of the Hellene in the form of spurious learning! Now followed the third stage. In the course of the Crusades the secret of the manufacture, guarded with such intellectual poverty, was revealed. What the poor Iranian, wedged in between Semites, Tartars and Chinese, had invented, was now taken over by the free Teuton. In the last years of the twelfth century exact information concerning the making of paper reached Europe; the new industry spread like wild-fire through every country; in a few years the simple instruments of the East were no longer sufficient; one improvement followed another; in the year 1290 the first regular paper-mill was

erected in Ravensburg; it was scarcely one hundred years before block-printing (of whole books even) had become common, and in fifty years more

341 INDUSTRY

printing with movable letters was in full swing. And are we really to believe that this printing first “gave wings to our intellect”? What a contempt of the facts of history! What a poor appreciation of the value of Teutonic individuality! We surely see that it was, on the contrary, the winged intellect that actually forced on the invention of printing. While the Chinese never advanced further than printing with awkward flat pieces of wood (and that only after painful groping for about one thousand years), while the Semitic peoples had found next to no use for paper — in the whole of Teutonic Europe and especially in its centre, Germany, “the wholesale production of cheap paper manuscripts“ had at once become an industry. * Even Janssen tells us that in Germany, long before printing with cast type had begun, the most important products of Middle High German poetry, books of folk-lore, sagas, popular medical treatises, &c., were offered for sale. † And Janssen conceals the fact that from the thirteenth century onwards the Bible, especially the New Testament, translated into the languages of the various nations, had been spread by paper through many parts of Europe, so that the emissaries of the Inquisition, who themselves knew only a few pruned passages from the Holy Scripture, were astonished to meet peasants who repeated the four Gospels by heart from beginning to end. ‡ Paper at the same time spread the liberating influence of works like those of Scotus Erigena among the many thousands who were educated enough to read Latin (see p. [274](#)). As soon as paper was available, in all European countries there followed the more or less distinct revolt against Rome, and immediately, as a reaction against this, the prohibition to read the Bible and the introduction of the

* Vogt und Koch: *Geschichte der deutschen Litteratur*, 1897, p. 218. More details in any of the larger histories.

† *Loc. cit.* i, 17.

‡ Cf. p. [132, note 1](#).

342 INDUSTRY

Inquisition ([p. 132](#)). But the longing for intellectual freedom, the instinct of the race born to rule, the mighty ferment of that intellect which we

recognise to-day by its subsequent achievements, would not be tyrannised and dammed up. The demand for reading and knowledge grew day by day; there were as yet no books (in our sense), but there were already booksellers who travelled from fair to fair and sold enormous quantities of clean, cheap copies printed on paper; the invention of printing was rendered inevitable. Hence, too, the peculiar history of this invention. New ideas like the steam-engine, the sewing machine, &c., have generally to fight hard for recognition; but printing was everywhere expected with such impatience that it is scarcely possible at the present day to follow the course of its development. At the same time as Gutenberg is experimenting with the casting of letters in Mayence, others are doing the same in Bamberg, Harlem, Avignon and Venice. And when the great German had finally solved the riddle, his invention was at once understood and imitated, it was improved and developed, because it met a universal and pressing need. In 1450 Gutenberg's printing press was set in motion, and twenty-five years from that time there were presses in almost all the cities of Europe. Indeed in some of the cities of Germany — Augsburg, Nürnberg, Mayence — there were twenty or more presses at work. How hungrily does the Teuton, pining under the heavy yoke of Rome, grasp at everything that gives freedom to manhood! It is almost like the madness of despair. The number of separate works printed between 1470 and 1500 is estimated at ten thousand; all the then known Latin authors were printed before the end of the century; in the next twenty years all the available Greek poets and thinkers followed. * But men were not content with the past

* Green: [*History of the English People* iii. p. 195.](#)

343 INDUSTRY

alone; the Teuton at once devoted himself to the investigation of nature, and that too in the right way, starting from mathematics; Johannes Müller of Königsberg in Franconia, called Regiomontanus, founded between 1470 and 1475 a special press in Nürnberg to print mathematical works; * numerous German, French, and Italian mathematicians were thereby stimulated to work in mechanics and astronomy; in 1525 the great Albrecht Dürer of Nürnberg published the first Geometry in the German language, and soon after there also appeared in Nürnberg the *De Revolutionibus* of Copernicus. In other branches of discovery man had not been idle, and the first newspaper, which appeared in 1505, “actually contains news from Brazil.” †

Nothing could surely bring more clearly home to us the great importance of an industry for all branches of life than the history of paper; we see, too, how all-important it is into whose hands an invention

falls. The Teuton did not invent paper; but what had remained a useless rag to Semites and Jews became, thanks to his incomparable and individual racial gifts, the banner of a new world. How just is Goethe's remark: "The first and last thing for man is activity, and we cannot do anything without the necessary talent or the impelling instinct Carefully considered, even the meanest talent is innate, and there is no indefinite capacity." ‡ Any one who knows the history of paper and still persists in believing in the equality of the human races is beyond all help.

The introduction of paper is unquestionably the most pregnant event in the whole of our industrial history. All else is comparatively of very little importance. The advance in textile industries, mentioned at the beginning of this section, and to a higher degree the invention of the

* Gerhardt: *Geschichte der Mathematik in Deutschland*, 1877, p. 15.

† Lamprecht: *Deutsche Geschichte*, v. 122.

‡ *Lehrjahre*, Book VIII. c. iii.

344 INDUSTRY

steam-engine, the steamboat and the locomotive, were the first things that exercised as deep an influence upon life; but even they were not nearly so important as paper, because the invention of the locomotive, which has made the earth accessible to all (as paper has the realm of thought), contributes not directly, but indirectly, to the increase of our intellectual possessions. But I am convinced that the careful observer will notice everywhere the activity of these same capacities, which have revealed themselves with such brilliancy in the history of paper. I may therefore regard my object as fulfilled, when I have by this one example pointed out not only the most important achievement, but at the same time the decisive individual characteristics of our modern industry.

344

4. POLITICAL ECONOMY (From the Lombardic League of Cities to Robert Owen, the Founder of Co-operation).

CO-OPERATION AND MONOPOLY

A few pages back I quoted a remark of a well-known social economist, to the effect that it is "almost hopeless" to try to understand the

economic conditions of past centuries. I do not require to repeat what I said there. But the very feeling of the kaleidoscopic complexity and the ephemeral nature of these conditions has forced upon me the question, whether after all there is not a uniform element of life, I mean an ever constant principle of life that might be discovered in the most various forms of our ever-changing economic conditions. I have not found such a principle in the writings of an Adam Smith, a Proudhon, a Karl Marx, a John Stuart Mill, a Carey, a Stanley Jevons, a Böhm-Bawerk, and others; for these authorities speak (and rightly from their standpoint) of capital and work, value, demand, &c., in the

345 POLITICAL ECONOMY

same way as the jurists of old spoke of natural law and divine law, as if these things were independent, superhuman entities which rule over us all, while to me the important thing seems to be, “who” possesses the capital, “who” does the work, and “who” has to estimate a value. Luther teaches us that it is not the works that make the man, but the man that makes the works; if he is right, we shall, even within the manifoldly changing economic life, contribute most to the clearing up of past and present, if we succeed in proving in this connection the existence of a fundamental Teutonic feature of character; for works change according to circumstances, but man remains the same, and the history of a race enlightens, not when divisions into so-called epochs are made — always an external matter — but when strict continuity is proved. As soon as my essential similarity to my ancestors is demonstrated to me, I understand their actions from my own, and mine again receive quite a new colouring, for they lose the alarming appearance of something which has never yet existed and which is subject to the resolutions of caprice, and can now be investigated with philosophic calm as well-known, ever-recurring phenomena. Now and now only do we reach a really scientific standpoint: morally the autonomy of individuality is emphasised in contrast to the general delusion regarding humanity, and necessity, that is to say, the inevitable mode of action of definite men, is recognised historically as a supreme power of nature.

Now if we look at the Teutons from the very beginning, we shall find in them two contrary and yet supplementary features strongly marked: in the first place, the violent impulse of the individual to stand masterfully upon his own feet, and secondly, his inclination to unite loyally with others, to pave the way for undertakings that can only be accomplished by common action. In our life to-day, this twofold phenomenon is ever-present, and

346 POLITICAL ECONOMY

the threads that are woven this way and that form a strangely ingenious, firmly plaited woof. Monopoly and co-operation: these are beyond doubt the two opposite poles of the economic situation to-day, and no one will deny that they have dominated the whole nineteenth century. What I now assert is that this relation, this definite polarity, * has dominated our economic conditions and their development from the first. By recognising this fact we shall, in spite of the succession of never recurring forms of life, be enabled to gain a profound understanding of the past, and thereby also of the present; it will certainly not be the scientific understanding of the political economist that we must leave to the specialist — but such a one as will prove useful to the ordinary man in forming a right conception of the age in which he lives.

One simple, ever constant, concrete fact must be regarded as essential: the changing form which economic conditions take under definite men is a direct result of their character; and the character of the Teutonic races, whose most general features I have sketched in the sixth chapter, leads necessarily to definite though changing forms of economic life, and to conflicts and phases of development that are ever repeating themselves. Let it not be supposed that this is something universally human; on the contrary, history offers us nothing similar, or at least only superficial similarities. For what distinguishes and differentiates us from others is the simultaneous sway of the two impulses — to separate and to unite. When Cato asks what Dante is seeking on his toilsome path, he receives the answer:

Libertà va cercando!

To this seeking for freedom both those manifestations of our character are equally due. To be economically

* So Goethe would have called it; see the *Erläuterung zu dem aphoristischen Aufsatz, die Natur*.

347 POLITICAL ECONOMY

free, we unite with others; to be economically free, we leave the union and stake our single head against the world. Consequently, the Indo-Europeans have quite a different economic life from the Semitic peoples, the Chinese, &c. * But as I pointed out on [p. 542 f.](#) (vol. i.), the Teutonic character and especially the Teutonic idea of freedom differ considerably from those of his nearest Indo-European relations. We saw how in Rome the great “co-operative” strength of the people crushed out all autonomous development of the intellectual and moral personality; when later the enormous wealth of single individuals introduced the system of

monopoly, this only served to ruin the State, so that nothing remained but a featureless human chaos; for the idiosyncrasies of the Romans were such that they could only achieve great things when united — they could develop no economic life from monopoly. In Greece we certainly find greater harmony of qualities, but here, in contrast to the Romans, there is a regrettable lack of uniting power: the pre-eminently energetic individuals look to themselves alone, and do not understand that a man isolated from his racial surroundings is no longer a man; they betray the hereditary union and thereby ruin themselves and their country. In trade, the Roman consequently lacked initiative, that torch that lights the path of the individual pioneer, while the Hellene lacked honesty, that is to say, that public, all-uniting, all-binding conscience which later found ever memorable expression in the “honest wares“ of budding German industry. Here, moreover, in the “honest wares“ we have already an excellent example of the reciprocal influences of Teutonic character upon economic forms.

* See, for example, Mommsen on Carthage, above, vol. i. p. [117 f.](#)

348 POLITICAL ECONOMY

GUILDS AND CAPITALISTS

The reader will find innumerable accounts of the activity of the guilds between the thirteenth and the seventeenth centuries (approximately); it is the finest example of united effort: one for all, all for one. When we see how in these corporations everything is exactly determined and supervised by the council of the guild, as also by specially appointed committees of control, the town magistracy and so forth, so that not only the nature of the execution of every single piece of work in all its details, but also the maximum of daily work is fixed and must not be exceeded, we are inclined, with most authors, to exclaim in horror: the individual had not a jot of initiative, not a trace of freedom left! And yet this judgment is so one-sided as to be a direct misconception of the historical truth. For it was precisely by the union of many individuals to form a solid, united corporation that the Teuton won back the freedom which he had lost through contact with the Roman Empire. But for the innate instinct which led the Teutons to co-operate, they would have remained just as much slaves as the Egyptians, Carthaginians, Byzantines or the subjects of the Khalif. The isolated individual is to be compared to a chemical atom with little cohesive power; it is absorbed, destroyed. By adopting, of his own free will, a law and submitting unconditionally to it, the individual assured to himself a secure and decent livelihood — in fact a higher livelihood than that of our workmen to-day, and in addition the

all-important possibility of intellectual freedom which in many cases was soon realised. * That is the one side of the matter.

* Leber, in his *Essai sur l'appréciation de la fortune privée au moyen-âge*, 1847, shows that the workman of the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries was on the average better off than to-day; by proving that "the money of the poor was then worth comparatively more than

349 POLITICAL ECONOMY

But the spirit of enterprise of our race is too strong in the individual to be checked even by the strictest rules, and so we find even here, in spite of the authority of the guilds, that energetic individuals amassed huge fortunes. For example, in the year 1367, a poor journeyman weaver, named Hans Fugger, came to Augsburg; a hundred years later his heirs were in a position to advance 150,000 Gulden to Archduke Siegmund of the Tyrol. It is true that Fugger, in addition to his business, engaged in trade, and so successfully that his son became an owner of mines; but how was it possible, when the rules of the guilds were so strict in forbidding one artisan to work more than another, for Fugger to make enough money to engage to such an extent in trade? I do not know; no one does; concerning the beginnings of the prosperity of the Fuggers nothing definite is known. * But we see that it was possible. And though the Fugger family is unique both in point of wealth and because of the rôle which it played in the history of Europe, there was no lack of rich citizens in every city, and we need only look up Ehrenberg's *Zeitalter der Fugger* (Jena, 1896) or Van der Kindere's *Le siècle des Artevelde* (Brussels, 1879) to see how men of the people, in spite of the constraint of the guilds, everywhere attained to independence and wealth. But for the guilds, and that means but for co-operation, we should never have had an industrial life at all — that is self-evident; but co-operation did not fetter the individual, it served him as a spring-board. But whenever the individual had attained a strong independent position, he behaved in exactly the same way as the Kings of that time acted towards the princes

that of the wealthy, since luxuries were exorbitantly dear and impossible for all but those of very great wealth, whereas everything indispensable, such as the simple means of sustenance, housing, clothing, &c., was extremely cheap." (Quoted from Van der Kindere: *Le siècle des Artevelde*, Bruxelles, 1879, page 132.)

* Aloys Geiger: *Jakob Fugger*, Regensburg, 1895.

350 POLITICAL ECONOMY

and the people; he knew only one aim: monopoly. To be rich is not enough, to be free does not satisfy:

Die wenigen Bäume, nicht mein eigen,
Verderben mir den Weltbesitz! *

Who will deny that this Teutonic longing for the Infinite is in many respects pernicious, that on the one hand it leads to crime, on the other to misery? Never is the history of a great private fortune a chronicle of spotless honour. In South Germany the word *fuggern* is still used to denote an over-crafty, all but fraudulent system of business. † And in fact, scarcely had the Fuggers become wealthy than they began to form trusts with other rich merchants to control the market prices of the world, exactly as we see it to-day, and such syndicates signified then, as now, systematic robbery above and below: the workman has his wages arbitrarily curtailed and the customer pays more than the article is worth. ‡ It is almost comical, though revolting, to find that the Fuggers were financially interested in the sale of indulgences. The Archbishop of Mayence had rented from the Pope for 10,000 ducats paid in advance the sale of the Jubilee indulgences for certain parts of Germany; but he already owed the Fuggers 20,000 ducats (out of the 30,000 he had had to pay the Curia for his appointment), and thus in reality the archbishop was only a man of straw, and the real farmer of the indulgences was the firm of Fugger! Thus Tetzl, who has been immortalised by Luther, could only travel and preach when accompanied by the firm's commercial agent, who drew in all the receipts and alone had a key

* The few trees that are not my own spoil my possession of the world.

† According to Schoenhof: *A History of Money and Prices*, New York, 1897, p. 24.

‡ See Ehrenberg, *loc. cit.* i, p. 90. They aimed especially at the control of the copper market; but the Fuggers were so eager for absolute monopoly that the syndicate soon broke up.

351 POLITICAL ECONOMY

to the "indulgence-box." * Now if it is not particularly edifying to see how such a fortune is amassed, it is simply appalling to learn what outrageous use was made of it. When the individual tears himself away from the salutary union of common interests, he gives rein to unbridled despotism. The slow-witted calculation of private interests, on the part of a miserable weaver's son, determines who is to be Emperor; only by the help of the Fuggers and Welsers was Charles V. chosen, only by their assistance was he enabled to wage the baneful Smalcaldic war, and in the following war of the Habsburgs against German conscience and German freedom these unscrupulous capitalists again played a decisive

part; they took the side of Rome and opposed the Reformation, not from religious conviction, but simply because they had extensive dealings with the Curia, and were afraid of losing considerable sums if the Curia eventually should suffer defeat. †

And yet, after all, we must admit that this unscrupulous individual ambition, that stopped at no crime, has been an important and indispensable factor in our whole civilising and economic development. I named the Kings a moment ago and I wish once more to adduce a comparison from the closely related sphere of politics. Who can read the history of Europe from the fifteenth century to the French Revolution without almost constantly feeling his blood boil with indignation? All liberties are taken away, all rights trodden under foot; Erasmus already exclaims with anger: "The people build the cities, the princes destroy them." And he

* Ludwig Keller: *Die Anfänge der Reformation und die Ketzerschulen*, p. 15; and Ehrenberg, *loc. cit.* i. 99.

† All details are proved by material from archives, quoted in Ehrenberg's book. It will give Platonic consolation to many a feeling heart to learn that the Fuggers and the other Catholic capitalists of that time were all ruined by the Habsburgs, since these princes always borrowed and never paid back. They owed the Fuggers eight million Gulden.

352 POLITICAL ECONOMY

did not live to see the worst by any means. And what was the object of it all! To give a handful of families the monopoly of all Europe. History does not reveal a worse band of common criminals than our princes; from the legal point of view, almost all of them were gaol-birds. And yet what calm and sensible man will not now see in this development a real blessing? By the concentration of political power round a few central points have arisen great strong nations — a greatness and a strength in which every individual shares. Then when these few monarchs had broken every other power, they stood alone; henceforth, the great community of the people was able to demand its rights and the result is that we possess more far-reaching individual freedom than any previous age knew. The autocrat became (though unconsciously) the forger of freedom; the immeasurable ambition of the one has proved a benefit to all; political monopoly has paved the way for political co-operation. We see this development — which is yet far from its culmination — in all its peculiar significance, when we contrast it with the course taken by Imperial Rome. There we saw how all rights, all privileges, all liberties were gradually wrested from the people which had made the nation, and vested in one single man; * the Teutons took the opposite course; out of chaos they welded themselves into nations, by uniting for the time being all power in a few hands; but after this the community demanded back

its own — law and justice, freedom and a maximum of independence for the individual citizen. In many States to-day the monarch is already little more than a geometrical point, a centre from which to draw the circle. In the economic domain, of course, things are much more complicated, and, moreover, they are by no means so far advanced as in politics, yet I believe that the analogy between the two is very great.

* See vol. i. [p. 125.](#)

353 POLITICAL ECONOMY

The same national character in fact is at work in both spheres. Among the Phoenicians capitalism had brought absolute slavery in its train; but not among us; on the contrary: it causes hardships, just as the growth of the kingship did, but everywhere it is the forerunner of great and successful co-operative movements. In the communistic State of the Chinese bestial uniformity predominates; with us, as we see, strong individuals always arise out of powerful combinations.

Whoever takes the trouble to study the history of our industry, our manufactures and trade, will find these two powers everywhere at work. He will find that co-operation is everywhere the basis, from the memorable league of the Lombard cities (followed soon by the Rhenish city-league, the German Hansa, the London Hansa) to that visionary but brilliant genius, Robert Owen, who at the dawn of the nineteenth century sowed the seed of the great idea of co-operation, which is just beginning to take strong root. He will, however, see just as clearly at all times and in all spheres the influence of the initiative of the individual in freeing himself from the constraint of communism, and this he will perceive to be the really creative, progressive element. It was as merchants, not as scholars, that the Polos made their voyages of discovery; in the search for gold Columbus discovered America; the opening-up of India was (like that of Africa to-day) solely the work of capitalists; almost everywhere the working of mines has been made possible by the conferring of a monopoly upon enterprising individuals; in the great industrial inventions of the end of the eighteenth century, the individual had invariably to contend all his life against the masses, and would have succumbed but for the help of independent, mercenary capital. The concatenation is infinitely complex, because the two motive powers are always

354 POLITICAL ECONOMY

simultaneously at work and do not merely relieve each other. Thus we saw Fugger, after freeing himself from the restrictions of the guilds, voluntarily enter into new connections with others. Again and again, in every century in which great capitalists are numerous (as in the second half of the nineteenth) we see syndicates being formed, that is, therefore, a special form of co-operation; thereby, however, capitalist robs capitalist of all individual freedom; the power of the individual personality wanes, and then it breaks out elsewhere. On the other hand, real co-operation frequently reveals from the first the qualities and aims of a definite individuality: that is particularly clear in the case of the Hansa at the period of its greatness, and wherever a nation adopts political measures to safeguard its economic interests.

I had collected material to prove in detail what is here sketched, but space fails me, and I shall only call the reader's attention to a particularly instructive example. One glance, in fact, at the hitherto undiscussed subject of agriculture suffices to reveal with particular clearness the working of the above-mentioned essential principles of our economic developments.

FARMER AND LANDLORD

In the thirteenth century, when the Teutonic races began to build up their new world, the agriculturist over nearly the whole of Europe was a freer man, with a more assured existence, than he is to-day; copyhold was the rule, so that England, for example — to-day a seat of landlordism — was even in the fifteenth century almost entirely in the hands of hundreds of thousands of farmers, who were not only legal owners of their land, but possessed in addition far-reaching free rights to

355 POLITICAL ECONOMY

common pastures and woodlands. * Since then, all these farmers have been robbed, simply robbed, of their property. Any means of achieving this was good enough. If war did not afford an opportunity for driving them away, existing laws were falsified and new laws were issued by those in authority, to confiscate the estates of the small holders in favour of the great. But not only the farmers, the small landlords had also to be destroyed: that was achieved by a roundabout method: they were ruined by the competition of the greater landlords, and then their estates were bought up. † The hardships hereby entailed may be illustrated by a single example: in the year 1495, the English farm labourer, who worked for wages, earned exactly three times as much (in marketable value) as

he did a hundred years later! Hence many a hardworking son could, in spite of all his diligence, only earn a third of what his father did. So sudden a fall, affecting precisely the productive class of the people, is simply alarming; it is hardly comprehensible that such an economic catastrophe should not have led to the disruption of the whole State. In the course of this one century, almost all agriculturists were reduced to the position of day-labourers. And in the first half of the eighteenth century the agricultural class, which was independent a few centuries before, had sunk so low that its members could not have made ends meet but for the generosity of the “lords“ or the contributions from the treasury of the community, since the maximum profit of the whole year did not suffice

* [Gibbins: *Industrial History of England*](#), 5th ed. p. 40 f. and 108 f. We find copyhold still in Eastern Europe, where under Turkish rule everything has remained unchanged since the fifteenth century; in the domains of the Grand Duchy of Mecklenburg-Schwerin it was reintroduced in 1867.

† A process particularly easy to trace in England, where the political development was unbroken and the interior of the country has not been ravaged by war since the fifteenth century; the famous book of Rogers, *Six Centuries of Work and Wages*, is an excellent guide

356 POLITICAL ECONOMY

to buy the minimum of the necessaries of life. * Now in all these things — and in fact in every discussion of this kind — we must not allow either abstract theorising or mere feeling to influence our judgment. Jevons, the famous social economist, writes: “The first step towards understanding consists in once and for all discarding the notion that in social matters there are abstract 'rights'.” † And as for moral feeling, I may point out that nature is always cruel. The indignation which we felt against criminal Kings and thieving nobles is nothing to the indignation which any biological study arouses. Morality is in fact altogether a subjective, that is, a transcendent intuition; the words: “Father, forgive them,” have no application outside the human

here. But in all the countries of Central Europe practically the same thing happened; the great estates which we see to-day have all without exception been won by robbery and fraud, since they were subject to the lords of the land as juristical property (*Eigentum*), but were the actual, rightful possession (*Besitz*) of the copyholders. (Consult any legal handbook under the heading “Emphyteusis.”)

* Rogers, *loc. cit.* chap. xvii. This unworthy position of the farm-labourer was still unchanged in the middle of the nineteenth century, at least in England: this is fully proved by Herbert Spencer in *The Man Versus the State*, chap. ii. Such facts, and there are hundreds of them — I shall only mention the one fact that the labourer was never in so wretched a position as at about the middle of the nineteenth century — prove the total invalidity of that idea of a constant “progress.” For the great majority of the

inhabitants of Europe the development of the last four centuries has been a “progress“ to greater and greater misery. At the end of the nineteenth century the labourer's position is indeed improved, but he is still about 33 per cent. worse off than in the middle of the fifteenth (according to the comparative calculations of Vicomte d'Avenel in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, July 15, 1898). The Socialist writer, Karl Kautzky, quoted a short time ago in the *Neue Zeit* a “decree“ of the Saxon Dukes Ernst and Albert, 1482, which bade the workmen and mowers be content, if, in addition to their wages, they received twice daily, at midday and in the evening, four dishes, soup, two courses of meat, and one vegetable, and on holidays five dishes, soup, two kinds of fish, with vegetables to each. Kautzky remarks: “Where is there a workman, not excluding the very aristocracy of the class, who could afford such a diet twice daily? And yet the ordinary labourers of Saxony were not always satisfied with it in the fifteenth century.“

† *The State in Relation to Labour* (quoted from Herbert Spencer).

357 POLITICAL ECONOMY

heart; hence the absurdity of every empirical, inductive, anti-religious system of ethics. But if we disregard moral considerations, as we ought to here, and confine ourselves to the influence of this economic development upon life, all we require to do is to take up any authority on the subject, *e.g.*, Fraas' *Geschichte der Landbauwissenschaft*, to recognise at once that a complete revolution was necessary in agriculture. But for that we should long ago have had so little to eat in Europe that we should have been forced to consume each other. But these small farmers, who were, so to speak, spreading a net of co-operation over the country, would never have carried through the necessary reform of agriculture; capital, knowledge, initiative, hope of great profit were necessary. None but men who do not live from hand to mouth can undertake such great reforms; dictatorial power over great districts and numerous workmen was also indispensable. * The landed nobility arrogated this *rôle* and made good use of it. They were spurred on by the sudden rise of the merchant classes, who seriously threatened their own special position. They applied themselves to the work with such industry and success that the produce of the cornfields at the end of the eighteenth century was estimated to be four times as great as at the end of the thirteenth! The fat ox had grown three times as heavy and the sheep bore four times as much wool! That was the result of monopoly; a result which sooner or later was bound to benefit the community. For in the long run we Teutons never tolerate Carthaginian exploitation.

* This can be proved from history. Pietro Crescenzi of Bologna published his book on rational agriculture in the beginning of the fourteenth century: he was soon followed by Robert Grossetête, Walter Henley, and others, who discuss in detail the value of farmyard manure, but with almost no result, as the peasants were too uneducated to be able to learn anything about the matter. There is instructive information on the small

produce of the soil under primitive agriculture in André Réville's book: *Les Paysans au Moyen-Age*, 1896, p. 9.

358 POLITICAL ECONOMY

And while the large landlords pocketed everything, both the legitimate wages of their workmen and the profit which formerly had been a modest competence to the families of thousands and thousands of well-to-do yeomen, these powers sought new ways of obtaining a worthy independence. The inventors in the textile industries at the end of the eighteenth century are nearly all peasants, who took to weaving because otherwise they could not earn enough for their sustenance; others emigrated to the colonies and laid great stretches of land out in corn, which began to compete with the home supply; others again became sailors and merchant princes. In short, the value of the land monopoly sank gradually and is still sinking — just like the value of money * — so that we are now clearly feeling the wave of reaction and are nearing the day when the masses will assert their rights once more, and demand back from the large landlords the possessions entrusted to them — just as they demanded back their rights from the King. The French of the Revolution showed the way; a more sensible example was given thirty years ago by a generous German prince, the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg-Schwerin.

SYNDICATES AND SOCIALISM

In spite of radical changes in universal economic conditions, any one reading Ehrenberg's frequently mentioned book will be astonished at the resemblance between the financial status of four centuries ago and that of to-day. There were companies promoted even in the thirteenth century (*e.g.*, the Cologne ship-mills †); bills of exchange were also common and were in currency from one end of Europe to the other; there were insurance companies in Flanders even at the beginning of the four-

* In the year 1694 the English Government paid 8½ per cent. for money, in the year 1894 scarcely 2 per cent.

† Lamprecht: *Deutsches Städteleben*, p. 30.

359 POLITICAL ECONOMY

teenth century; * syndicates, artificial raising and lowering of prices,

bankruptcy ... all these things flourished then as now. † The Jew — that important economic factor — of course also flourished. Van der Kindere (pp. 222-223) says laconically of the fourteenth century in Flanders: decent money-lenders took up to 6½ per cent., Jews between 60 per cent. and 200 per cent.; even the short period of the Ghettos, of which so much has been made — it was between 1500 and 1800 — made little or no change in the prosperity and business practices of this shrewd people.

The insight we have got, on the one hand, into the predominance of fundamental, unchanging qualities of character, on the other into the relative constancy of our economic conditions (in spite of all painful swinging to and fro of the pendulum) will, I think, prove very useful when we proceed to form a judgment of the nineteenth century; it teaches us to look more calmly at phenomena, which to-day present themselves as something absolutely new, but which are in reality only old things in new garb, merely the natural, inevitable products of our character. Some point to-day to the formation of great syndicates, others on the contrary to Socialism, and fancy they see

* Van der Kindere, *loc. cit.* p. 216.

† Martin Luther refers in various passages to the capricious “raising“ of the price of corn by the farmers and calls these latter “murderers and thieves“ in consequence (see his *Tischgespräche*); and his work on *Kaufhandlung und Wucher* gives a delightful description of the syndicates that flourished even then: “Who is so dull as not to see that the companies are downright *monopolia*? ... They have all the wares in their hands and use them as they will, they raise or lower the price according to their pleasure and oppress and ruin all smaller merchants, as the pike devours the small fishes in the water, just as if they were lords over God's creatures and above all laws of faith and love ... by this all the world must be sucked dry and all the gold be deposited in their gourd ... all others must trade with risk and loss, gain this year, lose the next, but they (the capitalists) win always and make up any loss with increase of gain, and so it is little wonder that they soon seize hold of everybody's property.“ These words were written in 1524; they might really be written to-day.

360 POLITICAL ECONOMY

the end of the world approaching; both movements certainly involve danger whenever anti-Teutonic powers gain the upper hand in them. * But in themselves they are altogether normal phenomena, in which the pulse of our economic life is felt. Even before the exchange of natural products was replaced by circulation of money, we see similar economic currents at work; for example, the period of bondage and serfdom denotes the necessary transition from ancient slavery to universal freedom — beyond doubt one of the greatest achievements of Teutonic civilisation; here, as elsewhere, the egotistical interest of individuals, or, it may be, of individual classes, have paved the way for the good of all, in

other words, monopoly prepared the way for co-operation. † But as soon as the circulation of money is introduced (it begins in the tenth century, has already made great progress in the north by the thirteenth, and in the fifteenth is fully established), economic conditions run practically parallel to those of to-day, ‡ except that new political combinations and new industrial achievements have naturally dressed the old Adam in a new garb, and that the energy with which contrasts clash — what in physics is called the “Amplitude of the oscillations“ — now decreases and now increases. According to Schmoller, for instance, this “amplitude“ was at least as great in the thirteenth century as in the nineteenth, while in the sixteenth it had considerably decreased. § We have already seen capitalism at work in the case of the Fuggers; but Socialism

* See pp. [176 and 177](#).

† This becomes especially clear from the investigations of Michael: *Kulturzustände des deutschen Volkes während des 13. Jahrhunderts*, 1897, i., Division on *Landwirtschaft und Bauern*.

‡ The widespread belief held by the ignorant that paper-money is one of “the proud achievements of modern times“ is refuted by the fact that this institution is not a Teutonic idea, but had been common in ancient Carthage and in the late Roman Empire, though not exactly in this form (since there was no paper).

§ See Strassburg's *Blüte*, quoted by Michael, as above.

361 POLITICAL ECONOMY

has been an important element of life long before their time; for almost five hundred years it plays an important part in the politics of Europe, from the rising of the Lombardic cities against their counts and Kings to the numerous organisations and risings of peasants in all the countries of Europe. As Lamprecht somewhere points out, the organisation of agriculture was with us from the first “communistic and socialistic.“ Genuine communism must always have its root in agriculture, for it is only here, in the production of the indispensable means of sustenance, that co-operation attains wide, and possibly State-moulding, importance. For that reason the centuries up to the sixteenth were more socialistic than the nineteenth, in spite of the socialistic talk and theorising to which we are treated. But even this theorising is anything but new; to give only one older example, the *Roman de la Rose* (of the thirteenth century, the century of awakening), for a long time the most popular book in Europe, attacked all private property; and even in the first years of the sixteenth century (1516) theoretic socialism was so well and thoughtfully expressed in Sir Thomas More's *Utopia*, that all that has been added since is only the theoretical extension and completion of the sphere clearly marked out by More. * In fact the completion was undertaken

* Even the Socialist leader Kautzky admits this (*Die Geschichte des Sozialismus*, 1895, i. p. 468) when he expresses the opinion that More's view was the standard one among Socialists till 1847, that is, till Marx. Now it is clear that there can be little in common between the thoughts of this highly gifted Jew, who tried to transplant many of the best ideas of his people from Asia to Europe and to suit them to modern conditions of life, and those of one of the most exquisite scholars ever produced by a Teutonic people, an absolutely aristocratic, infinitely refined nature, a mind whose inexhaustible humour inspired his bosom friend Erasmus' *Praise of Folly*, a man who in public posts — finally as Speaker of the House of Commons and Chancellor of the Exchequer — had acquired great experience of life, and now frankly and ironically (and with justice) lashes the society of his age as “a conspiracy of the rich against the poor,” and looks forward to a future State built upon genuinely Teutonic and Christian foundations. His use of the word Utopia, *i.e.*, Nowhere, for his State of the future is again a humorous

362 POLITICAL ECONOMY

at once. Not only do we possess a long series of social theorists before the year 1800, among whom the famous philosopher Locke is pre-eminent with all his clear and very socialistically coloured discussions on work and property, * but the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries produced perhaps as large a number of attempts at ideal, communistic reforms of State as the nineteenth. The Dutchman, Peter Cornelius, for example, as early as the seventeenth century, suggests the abolition of all nationalities and the formation of a “central administration“ which shall undertake the control of the common business of the various groups united into numerous “companies“ [sic], † and Winstanley constructs in his *Law of Freedom* (1651) so complete a communistic system with the abolition of all personal property, abolition (on penalty of death) of all buying and selling, abolition of all spiritualistic religion, yearly election of all officials by the people, &c., that he really left very little for his successors to suggest. ‡

feature; for in reality he takes a perfectly practical view of the social problem, much more so than many doctrinaires of the present day. He demands rational cultivation of the soil, hygiene in regard to the body of dwellings, reform of the penal system, lessening of work-hours, education and recreation for all many of these things we have introduced: in the other points, More, as blood of our blood, felt so accurately what we needed that his book, four hundred years old, is still valuable and not out of date. More opposes with all the force of ancient Teutonic conviction the monarchical absolutism then just beginning to be developed: yet he is no republican, Utopia is to have a King. In his State there is to be absolute religious freedom of conscience: but he is not, like our pseudo-mosaical Socialists of to-day, an anti-religious, ethical doctrinaire, on the contrary, whoever has not in his heart the feeling of the Godhead, is excluded from all posts in Utopia. The gulf separating More from Marx and his followers is not therefore the progress of time, but the contrast between Teuton and Jew. The English workmen of the present day, and especially such leading spirits as William Morris, are evidently much nearer to More than to Marx: the same will be seen in the case of the German Socialists, whenever with firm politeness they have requested their Jewish leaders to mind the business of their own people.

* See especially the *Second Essay on Civil Government*, p. 27.
† Cf. Gooch: *The History of English Democratic Ideas*, 1898, p. 209 f.
‡ Pretty full details of Winstanley in the *Geschichte des Sozialismus in Einzeldarstellungen*, i. 594. E. Bernstein, the author of this section,

363 POLITICAL ECONOMY

THE MACHINE

I think that these considerations — extended of course, and pondered — will enable many to understand our age better. Certainly in the nineteenth century a new element has been introduced with revolutionary effect, the machine, that machine of which the good and thoughtful socialist William Morris says: “We have become the slaves of the monsters to which our own invention has given birth.” * The amount of misery caused by the machine of the nineteenth century cannot be represented by figures; it is absolutely beyond conception. I think it is probable that the nineteenth century was the most “pain-ful“ of all known ages, and that chiefly because of the sudden advent of the machine. In the year 1835, shortly after the introduction of the machine into India, the Viceroy wrote: “The misery is scarcely paralleled in the history of trade. The bones of the cotton weavers whiten the plains of India.“ † That was on a larger scale a repetition of the same inexpressible misery caused everywhere by the introduction of the machine. Worse still — for death by starvation affects only the one generation — is the reduction of thousands and millions of human beings from relative prosperity and independence to continuous slavery, and their removal from the healthy life of the country to a miserable, light-

is the re-discoverer of Winstanley; but Bernstein confines himself to the one book and shows moreover so very little insight into the Teutonic character that we shall find more about Winstanley in the little book of Gooch, p. 214 f. and 224 f. We find probably the most decisive rejection of all communistic ideas at that time in Oliver Cromwell who — although a man of the people — flatly refused to entertain the proposal to introduce universal suffrage, as it “would inevitably lead to anarchy.“

* *Signs of Change*, p. 33.

† Quoted from May: *Wirtschafts- und Handelspolitische Rundschau für das Jahr 1897*, p. 13. Harriet Martineau tells with delightful simplicity in her much-read book, *British Rule in India*, p. 297, how the poor English officials had to abandon their usual drive in the evenings because of the frightful stench of the corpses.

364 POLITICAL ECONOMY

less and airless existence in large cities. * And yet we may doubt whether

this revolution (apart from the fact that it affected a greater number) caused greater hardships and a more intense general crisis than the transition in the case of trade from exchange in kind to the use of money, or in the case of agriculture from natural to artificial methods. The very fact of the extraordinary rapidity with which large factories have been established, and at the same time the unparalleled facilities given to emigrants have tended to some extent to mitigate the cruelties inevitably ensuing from this development.

We have seen how completely this economic change was determined by the individual character of the Teutonic peoples. As soon as baleful politics allowed men to draw breath for a moment in peace, we saw Roger Bacon in the thirteenth century and Leonardo de Vinci in the fifteenth anticipate the work of invention, the execution of which was to be hindered for centuries by external circumstances alone. And no more than the telescope and locomotive are absolutely new, the fruit, say, of an intellectual development, is there anything fundamentally new in our economic condition to-day, however much it may differ, as a phenomenon, from the conditions of former times. It is only when we have learned to recognise the essential features of our own character at work everywhere in the past, that we shall be able to judge correctly the economic condition of our present age; for the same character is the moulding influence now as before.

* The textile workers almost all lived in the country till towards the end of the eighteenth century, and engaged also in work in the fields. They were incomparably better off thus than to-day (see Gibbins, as above, p. 154, and read also the eighth chapter of the first book of Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*). To get an idea of the condition of many industrial workers to-day, in that country of Europe where they are best paid, namely, England, the reader should consult R. H. Sherard's *The White Slaves of England*, 1897.

365

5. POLITICS AND CHURCH (From the Introduction of Compulsory Confession, 1215, to the French Revolution)

THE CHURCH

I have explained on page [240](#) to what extent in this brief survey I regard Politics and Church as connected; more profound reasons for this connection are adduced in the [introduction](#) to the division "The Struggle." * Moreover, no one will, I take it, deny that in the development of Europe since the thirteenth century the actually existing relations between Church and Politics have had decisive influence in many very important matters, and practical politicians are unanimous in asserting that a complete severance of the Church from the political State — *i.e.*,

the indifference of the State in regard to ecclesiastical affairs — is even to-day impossible. If we examine the pertinent arguments of the most Conservative statesmen, we shall find them even stronger than those of their doctrinaire opponents. Consult, for example, Constantin Pobedonoszew's book *Problems of the Present*. This well-known Russian statesman and supreme procurator of the Holy Synod may be regarded as a perfect type of the reactionary; a man of liberal views will seldom agree with him in politics; moreover, he is a member of the Orthodox Church. Now he expresses the opinion that the Church cannot be separated from the State, at any rate, not for long, simply because it would soon inevitably "dominate the State," and lead to a subversion in the theocratic sense! This assertion by a man who is so well acquainted with Church affairs and is most sympathetic towards the Church, seems to me worthy of attention. He at the same time expresses the fear that as soon as the State introduces the principle of indifference

* See also Author's Introduction, vol. i. [p. lxxx.](#)

366 POLITICS AND CHURCH

towards the Church, "the priest will invade the family and take the place of the father." Pobedonoszew, therefore, ascribes such enormous political importance to the Church, that as an experienced statesman he fears for the State, and as an orthodox Christian for religion, should the Church get a free rein. That may give Liberals something to think about! It may in the meantime justify my standpoint, though I proceed from quite different premisses, and have quite different objects in view from those of the adviser of the Autocrat of all the Russias.

I intend, in fact, as this section, like the rest, must necessarily be brief, to direct my attention almost exclusively to the part played by the Church in Politics during the last six hundred years, for it is in this way that I expect to show what still lives on among us as a fatal legacy of former times. What has been already mentioned does not require repetition, and it would be equally superfluous to summarise what every one learns at school. * Here a new field beckons to us, and we have before us the prospect of deep insight into the innermost workshop of world-shaping Politics. In other respects, of course, Politics are a mere matter of accommodating and adapting, and the past has little interest for the present; but here we see the permanent motives, and learn why only certain accommodations were successful, while others were not.

MARTIN LUTHER

The Reformation is the centre of the political development in Europe between 1200 and 1800; its significance in politics resembles that of the introduction of compul-

* See in the preceding section, [p. 352](#), the remarks about monarchical absolutism being a means of attaining national independence and of winning back freedom; also the remarks on [p. 330 f.](#) and the whole of [chap. viii.](#)

367 POLITICS AND CHURCH

sory Confession in religion. By the Confession (not only of great, publicly acknowledged and atoned sins, as formerly, but of daily misdeeds, secretly confided to the priest) the Roman religion had two tendencies forced upon her, both of which removed her ever further from the Gospel of Christ — the tendency to a more and more absolute priestly hierarchy, and the tendency to an ever greater weakening of the inner religious aspect; scarcely fifty years had passed since the Vatican synod of 1215, when the doctrine was preached that the sacrament of atonement required not repentance (*contritio*) but only fear of hell (*attritio*). Religion was henceforth altogether externalised, the individual was unconditionally handed over to the priest. Obligatory Confession means the complete sacrifice of the personality. The conscience of earnest men all over Europe rose in revolt against this. But it was only the reforming activity of Luther that transformed the religious ferment, which had been seething throughout Christendom for centuries, * into a political power, and the reason was that he fused the numerous religious questions into one Church question. It was only in this way that a decisive step towards freedom could be taken. Luther is above all a political hero; we must recognise this in order to judge him fairly and to understand his pre-eminent position in the history of Europe. Hence those remarkable, significant words: “Well, my dear princes and lords, you are in a great hurry to get rid of me, a poor solitary man, by death; and when that has been accomplished, you will have won. But if you had ears to hear, I would tell you something strange. What if Luther's life were worth so much before God that, if he were not alive, not one of you would be sure of his life or authority, and that his death would be a misfortune to you all?” What political acumen! For subsequent history frequently proved that princes who

* See p. [95 f.](#)

368 POLITICS AND CHURCH

did not absolutely submit to Rome were not sure of their lives; the others, however, according to Roman doctrine did not possess independent authority and never could possess it, as I have irrefutably proved in chap. viii., not only on the basis of numerous Papal bulls, but also as an inevitable conclusion from the imperialistic, theocratic premisses. * Now if we supplement the passage quoted by numerous others, where Luther emphasises the independence of the “secular government“ and separates it completely from the hierarchy of a divinely appointed individual, where he desires to see “Spiritual law swept away from the first letter to the very last,“ the essentially political and national character of his Reformation is clear to all. In another passage he says: “Christ does not make princes or nobles, burgomasters or judges;

* I know of no more impressive document concerning the assassination of princes directed by Rome than the complaint of Francis Bacon (in 1613 or 1614) against William Talbot, an Irish lawyer, who had indeed been ready to take the oath of allegiance, but declared, in reference to an eventual obligation to murder the excommunicated King, that he submitted in this, as in all other “matters of faith,“ to the resolutions of the Roman Church. Lord Bacon then gives a concise description of the murder of Henry III. and Henry IV. of France and of the various attempts to assassinate Queen Elizabeth and James I. This brief contemporary account breathes that atmosphere of assassination, which, for three centuries, from throne to peasant's cottage, was to encompass the aspirations of the rising Teutonic world. If Bacon had lived later, he would have had plenty of opportunity to complete his account; Cromwell especially, who had made himself the representative of Protestantism in all Europe, was in daily, hourly danger. Whenever a misguided proletarian of the present day attempts to assassinate a monarch, the whole civilised world breaks out in exclamations of indignation, and all such criminal attempts are commonly put down as consequences of defection from the Church; formerly it was a different story, monks were the murderers of Kings and God had directed their hand. Pope Sixtus V., on hearing of the murder by the Dominican Clement, joyfully exclaimed in the consistorium: “*Che l' successo della morte del re di Francia si ha da conoscer dal voler espresso del signor Dio, e che perciò si doveva confidar che continuerebbe al haver quel regno nella sua prottione*“ (Ranke: *Päpste*, 9th ed., ii, 113). The fact that Thomas Aquinas had considered murder of tyrants one of the “godless means“ was naturally not applied here, for it was a question not of tyrants but of heretics (who are proscribed, see p. 174) or too free-thinking Catholics, like Henry IV.

369 POLITICS AND CHURCH

that duty he lays upon reason; reason deals with external things, where there must be authorities.“ * That is surely the very opposite of the Roman doctrine, according to which every secular position, as prince or serf, every profession, as teacher or doctor, is to be regarded as an ecclesiastical office (see p. 165), in which above all the monarch rules in the name of God — not of reason. We may well exclaim with Shakespeare: “Politics, O thou heretic!“ This political ideal is completed

by the constant emphasising of the German nation in contrast to the “Papists.” It is to the “Nobility of the German nation“ that the German peasant's son addresses himself, and that in order to rouse them against the alien, not on account of this or that subtle dogma, but in the interest of national independence and of the freedom of the individual. “Let not the Pope and his followers claim to have done great service to the German nation by the gift of this Roman Empire. First, because they have conferred no advantage on us thereby but have abused our simplicity; secondly, because the Pope has sought not to give us the Imperial Sovereignty, but to arrogate it to himself, in order to subjugate all our power, freedom, property, bodies and souls, and through us (had God not prevented it) the whole world.“ † Luther is the first man who is perfectly conscious of the importance of the struggle between imperialism and nationalism; others had only a vague idea of it, and either, like the educated citizens of most German cities, had confined its application to the religious sphere, had felt and acted as Germans, without, however, seeing the necessity of revolt in ecclesiastical and political matters; or, on the other hand, had indulged in fantastic daring schemes, like

* *Von weltlicher Obrigkeit.*

† *Sendschreiben an den christlichen Adel deutscher Nation.* An assertion which an unbiased witness, Montesquieu, later confirms: „*Si les Jésuites étaient venus avant Luther et Calvin, ils auraient été les maîtres du monde*“ (*Pensées diverses*).

370 POLITICS AND CHURCH

Sickingen and Hutten, the latter of whom made it his clear endeavour “to break the Roman tyranny and put an end to the foreign disease“; but they did not comprehend what broad foundations must be laid if war was to be declared with any prospect of success against so strong a citadel as Rome. * Luther, however, while calling upon princes, nobles, citizens and people to prepare for the strife, does not remain satisfied with the merely negative work of revolt from Rome; he also gives the Germans a language common to all and uniting them all, and lays hold of the two points in the purely political organisation which determined the success of nationalism, namely, the Church and the School.

Subsequent history has proved how impossible it is to keep a Church half-national, that is, independent of Rome and yet not decisively severed from the Roman community. France, Spain, and Austria refused to sign the resolution of the Council of Trent, and France especially, so long as it possessed kings, fought vigorously for the special rights of the Gallic Church and priesthood; but gradually the most rigid Roman doctrine gained more and

* In order to comprehend how universal the religious revolt from Rome was in Germany a considerable time before Luther, the reader should consult the works of Ludwig Keller and especially the smallest of those known to me, entitled *Die Anfänge der Reformation und die Ketzerschulen* (published among the works issued by the Comenius Society). We get an idea of the prevailing sentiment throughout all Germany in Luther's time from the unprejudiced and famous legate Alexander, who, writing on February 8, 1521, from Worms, informed the Pope that nine-tenths of the Germans were for Luther, while the remaining tenth, though not exactly in favour of Luther, yet cried out, Down with the Roman Court! Alexander often emphasises the fact that almost all the German clergy were against Rome and for the Reformation. (See the *Depeschen vom Wormser Reichstage*, 1521, published by Kalkoff.) Zwingli accurately described the part played by Luther amid the universal revolt when he wrote to him: "There have been not a few men before you who recognised the sum and essence of evangelical religion as well as you. But from all Israel no one ventured to join battle, because they feared that mighty Goliath who stood threateningly in all the weight of his armour and strength."

371 POLITICS AND CHURCH

more ground, and to-day these three countries would be glad to receive, as a gift of grace, the no longer up-to-date but yet comparatively free standpoint of the Council of Trent. And as far as Luther's school-reforms are concerned — which he sought to carry through with all the strength that a solitary giant has at his disposal — the best proof of his political sagacity is the fact that the Jesuits immediately followed in his footsteps, founded schools and wrote school-books with exactly the same titles and the same arrangement as those of Luther. * Freedom of conscience is a splendid achievement, as long as it forms the basis of genuine religion; but the modern assumption that every Church can harmonise with every system of politics is madness. In the artificial organisation of society the Church forms the inmost wheel, that is, an essential part of the political mechanism. This wheel may, of course, have more or less importance in the whole mechanism, but its structure and activity are bound to exercise influence upon the whole. And who can study the history of Europe from the year 1500 to the year 1900 and refuse to admit that the Roman Church has manifestly exercised a powerful influence upon the political history of nations? Look first at the nations which (in virtue of the numbers and pre-eminence of Catholics) belong to the Roman Church, and then at the so-called "Protestant" nations! Opinion may vary regarding

* Nowhere can we feel the warm heart-throb of the Teuton better than when Luther begins to speak of education. He tells the Nobles that, if they seriously desire a Reformation, they should above all effect "a thorough reformation of the Universities." In his *Sendschreiben an die Bürgermeister und Ratsherren aller Städte in deutschen Landen* he writes in reference to schools, "If we gave one Gulden to oppose the Turks, here it were proper, even though they were at our throats, to give 100 Gulden, if but one boy might therewith be educated," ... and he urges every citizen henceforth to give all

the money, that he has hitherto thrown away on Masses, vigils, annual holidays, begging monks, pilgrimages and “all such rubbish,” to the school, “to educate the poor children — which would be such a splendid investment.”

372 POLITICS AND CHURCH

them; but who will deny the influence of the Church? Many a reader may offer the objection that this is due to difference of race, and I myself have laid so much stress on the physical structure as the basis of the moral personality, that I should be the last to question the justice of this view; * but nothing is more dangerous than the attempt to construct history from a single principle; nature is infinitely complex; what we call race is within certain limits a plastic phenomenon, and, just as the physical can affect the intellectual, so too the intellectual may influence the physical. Let us suppose, for example, that the religious reform, which for a time surged so high among the Spanish nobility of Gothic descent, had found in a daring, fiery prince, a man capable — though it were with fire and sword — of freeing the nation from Rome (whether he belonged to the followers of Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, or any other sect is absolutely and manifestly of no moment, the only important matter is the complete severance from Rome); does any one believe that Spain, saturated as its population may be with Iberian and Chaotic elements, would stand today where it does stand? Certainly no one believes that, no one at least who, like myself, has looked upon these noble, brave men, these beautiful, high-spirited women, and has seen with his own eyes how this hapless nation is enslaved and gagged by its Church — “priest-ridden“ as we say — how the clergy nip every individual spontaneous effort in the bud, encourage crass ignorance — and systematically foster childish, degrading superstition and idolatry. And it is not the faith, not the acceptance of this or that dogma, that exercises this influence, but the Church as a political organisation, as we clearly see in those freer lands where the Roman Church has to compete with other Churches, and where it adopts forms which are calculated to satisfy men who stand at the highest stage of culture. It is

* See vol. i. [p. 320](#), vol. ii. [p. 50](#), &c.

373 POLITICS AND CHURCH

still more manifest from the fact that the Lutheran, as also the other Protestant systems of dogma — purely as such — possess no great importance. The weak point in Luther was his theology; * if it had been

his strong point, neither he nor his Church would have been of any use for the political work which he accomplished. Rome is a political system; it had to be opposed by another political system; otherwise there would only have been a continuance of the old struggle, which had gone on for fifteen hundred years, between orthodoxy and heterodoxy. Heinrich von Treitschke may call Calvinism "the best Protestantism" if he pleases; † Calvin was, of course, the real, purely religious Church reformer and the man of inexorable logic; for nothing follows more clearly from the consistently argued doctrine of predestination than the insignificance of ecclesiastical acts and the invalidity of priestly claims; but we see that this doctrine of Calvin was much too purely theological to shake the Roman world; moreover it was too exclusively rationalistic. Luther, the German patriot and politician, went differently to work. No dogmatic subtleties filled his brain; they were of secondary moment; first came the nation: "For my Germans I was born, them I will serve!" His patriotism was absolute, his learning limited, for in the latter he never quite threw off the monkish cowl. One of the most authoritative theologians of the nineteenth century, [Paul de Lagarde](#), says of Luther's theology: "In the Lutheran system of dogma we see the Catholic scholastic structure standing untouched before us with the exception of a few *loci*, which have been broken away and replaced by an addition which is united to the old by mortar only, but

* Harnack (*Dogmengeschichte*, Grundriss, 2nd ed. p. 376) writes: "Luther presented his Church with a Christology which for scholastic inconsistency far surpassed the Thomistic."

† *Historische und politische Aufsätze*, 5th ed. ii. 410.

374 POLITICS AND CHURCH

unlike it in style"; * and the famous authority on dogma, Adolf Harnack, who is no Catholic either, confirms this judgment when he calls the Lutheran Church doctrine (at least in its further development) "a miserable duplicate of the Catholic Church." † This is meant as a reproach on the part of these Protestant authorities; but we, looking at the matter from the purely political standpoint, cannot possibly accept it as such; for we see that this essential character of the Lutheran reform was a condition of its political success. Nothing could be done without the princes. Who would seriously assert that the princes who favoured reform were actuated by religious enthusiasm? We could certainly reckon on fewer than the fingers of one hand those of whom such an assertion could be made. It was political interests and political ambition, supported by the awakening of the spirit of national independence, that settled the matter. Yet all these men, as also the nations, had grown up

in the Roman Church, and it still exercised a strong spell over their minds. By offering merely a “duplicate“ of the Roman Church, Luther concentrated the prevailing excitement upon the political side of the question, without disturbing consciences more than was necessary. The hymn beginning

Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott
ends with the line:

Das Reich muss uns doch bleiben.

That was the right keynote to strike. And it is quite false to say, as Lagarde does, that “everything remained as it was.“ The separation from Rome, for which Luther contended with passionate impetuosity all his life, was the greatest political upheaval that could pos-

* *Über das Verhältnis des deutschen Staates zu Theologie, Kirche und Religion.*

† *Dogmengeschichte*, para. 81.

375 POLITICS AND CHURCH

sibly have taken place. Through it Luther has become the turning-point in the history of the world. For no matter how pitiful the further course of the Reformation was in many respects to be — when greedy, bigoted princes “of unexampled incapacity,” as Treitschke says, destroyed with fire and sword the spirit of Germany which had at last awakened, and handed the country over to the care of the Basques and their children — Luther's achievement was not lost, for the simple reason that it had a firm political foundation. It is ridiculous to count the so-called “Lutherans“ and estimate Luther's influence thereby — the influence of a hero who emancipated the whole world, and to whom the Catholic of to-day is as much indebted as every other person for the fact that he is a free man. *

That Luther was more of a politician than a theologian naturally does not preclude the fact that the living power which he revealed flowed from a deep inner source, namely, his religion, which we must not confuse with his Church. But the discussion of this point is out of place in this section; here it suffices to say that Luther's fervent patriotism was a part of his religion. But one thing more is noteworthy, namely, that so soon as the Reformation revealed itself as a revolt against Rome, the religious ferment, which had kept men's minds in constant fever for centuries, ceased almost suddenly. Religious wars are waged, but Catholics (like Richelieu) calmly league themselves with Protestants against other Catholics. Huguenots, it is true,

* Concerning Luther's act of liberation which benefited the whole world — even the strictly Catholic States — Treitschke says (*Politik* i. 333): “Since the great liberating act

of Luther the old doctrine of the superiority of Church over State is for ever done away with, and that not only in Protestant countries. Of course it is hard to convince a Spaniard that he owes the independence of the crown to Martin Luther. Luther expressed the great thought that the State is in itself a moral system, without requiring to lend its protecting arm to the Church; this is his greatest political service.“

376 POLITICS AND CHURCH

wrestle with Gallicans for predominance, Papists and Anglicans zealously behead one another — but everywhere it is political considerations that occupy the foreground. The Protestant no longer learns the whole of the four Gospels by heart; new interests now claim his thought; not even the pious Herder can be called orthodox in the Church sense, he had listened too faithfully to the voice of nations and of nature; and the Jesuit, as confessor of monarchs and converter of nations, shuts both eyes to all dogmatic heterodoxies, if he can but promote Rome's interests. We see how the mighty impulse that emanated from Luther drives men away from ecclesiastical religion; they do not, of course, all take the same, but totally divergent, directions; the tendency, however — as we can see even in the nineteenth century — is increasing indifference, an indifference which first affects the non-Roman Churches, as being the weakest. This, too, is a fact of Church history which is most important for our understanding of the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, for it belongs to the few things which do not (as Mephistopheles says of politics) always begin at the beginning again, but follow a definite course. People say and complain, and some exult, that this means a defection from religion. I do not believe it. That would only be so if the traditional Christian Church were the quintessence of religion, and I hope I have clearly and irrefutably proved that that is not the case (see chap. [vii.](#)). Before that assertion could be valid, we should also have to make the extraordinary assumption that a Shakespeare, a Leonardo da Vinci, a Goethe, had had no religion: this point I shall touch upon again. Nevertheless this development means without doubt a decrease of ecclesiastical influence on the general political constitution of society; this tendency is apparent even in the sixteenth century (in men like Erasmus and More) and has been growing ever since. It is one of the most

377 POLITICS AND CHURCH

characteristic features in the physiognomy of the new world which is arising; at the same time it is a genuinely Teutonic and in fact old Indo-

European feature.

I had not the slightest intention of even sketching the political history of six centuries on twenty pages, the one thing that seemed to me absolutely necessary was to put in a perfectly clear light the fact that the Reformation was a political act and indeed the most decisive of all political acts. It gave back their freedom to the Teutonic nations. No commentary is needed: the importance of this fact for a comprehension of past, present and future is self-evident. But there is one event which I should not like to pass over in this connection, the French Revolution.

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

It is one of the most astonishing errors of the human judgment to regard this catastrophe as the morning of a new day, a turning-point in history. The Revolution was inevitable simply because the Reformation had not been able to succeed in France. France was still too rich in pure Teutonic blood silently to fall into decay like Spain, too poor in itself to free itself completely from the fatal embrace of the theocratic empire. The wars of the Huguenots have from the first this fatal feature, that the Protestants contend not only against Rome but also against the Kingship and oppose the latter's endeavours to create a national unity, so that we see the paradoxical spectacle of the Huguenots in league with the ultramontane Spaniards and their opponent, Cardinal Richelieu, in alliance with the protagonist of Protestantism, Gustavus Adolphus. But experience has proved that everywhere, even in Catholic countries, a strong Kingship is the most powerful bulwark against Roman

378 POLITICS AND CHURCH

politics; moreover it is (as we have seen in the previous section) the surest way to attain to great individual freedom on the basis of firmly established conditions. Thus the cause of the Huguenots stood upon tottering feet. They were in a still worse position when they finally surrendered, and — giving up all political aspirations — remained a purely religious sect; for then they were annihilated and scattered. The number of the exiles (leaving the murdered out of account) is estimated at more than a million. Consider what a power might in the intervening two centuries have grown out of that million of human beings! And they were the best in the land. Wherever they settled in new abodes, they brought with them industry, culture, wealth, moral strength, great intellectual achievements. France has never recovered from this loss of the choicest of its population. Thenceforth it fell a prey to the Chaos of Peoples, and soon afterwards to the Jews. To-day it is a well-known fact

that the destruction and exile of the Protestants was not the work of the King, but of the Jesuits; La Chaise is the real author and executor of the anti-Huguenot movement. The French were formerly no more inclined to intolerance than other Teutons; their great legal authority, Jean Bodin, one of the founders of the modern State, had, though a Catholic himself, in the sixteenth century demanded absolute religious tolerance and the rejection of all Roman interference. Meantime, however, the nationless Jesuit — the “corpse“ in the hands of his superiors (vol. i. [p. 575](#)) — had wormed his way to the throne; with the cruelty, certainty and stupidity of a beast he destroyed the noblest in the land. And after La Chaise was dead and the Huguenots annihilated, came another Jesuit, Le Fellier, who succeeded in getting the licentious King, who had been brought up in the crassest ignorance by his Jesuit teachers, so thoroughly under his power by the fear of hell, that his order could

379 POLITICS AND CHURCH

now proceed to the next struggle in Rome's interest, namely, to the destruction of all genuine, even Catholic religion; this was the struggle against the orthodox but independent Catholic clergy of France. The main object in this case was to destroy the national independence of the Gallican Church which the most pious Kings of the early ages had asserted, and at the same time the last traces of that profoundly spiritual mystic faith which had always struck such deep roots in the Catholic Church, and now in Janssen and his followers threatened to grow into a far-reaching moral power. This object too was attained. Whoever desires to inform himself of the real *Origines de la France contemporaine* can do so, even without reading Taine's comprehensive work; he only requires to study carefully the famous Papal bull *Unigenitus* (1713), in which not only numerous doctrines of Augustine, but also the fundamental teaching of the Apostle Paul, are condemned as “heretical“; he may then take up any handbook of history and see how this bull, designed especially against France, was enforced. It is a struggle of narrow-minded fanaticism, allied to absolutely unscrupulous political ambition, against all the learning and virtue which the French Catholic clergy still possessed. The most worthy prelates were dismissed and reduced to misery; others, as also many theologians of the Sorbonne, were simply thrown into the Bastille and so silenced; others again were weak, they yielded to political pressure and threats, or were bought with gold and benefices. * Yet the struggle lasted long. In a pathetic protest the most courageous of the bishops demanded a universal

* From the earliest times these were the favourite tactics of Rome. Alexander's letter to the Curia of April 27. 1521, gives an authentic account of the attempts to bribe

Luther. In the same place we can see how the enthusiasm of Eck and others was kept warm by presents of money, benefices &c., and how carefully they were enjoined to be “absolutely silent“ on the matter (May 15. 1521).

380 POLITICS AND CHURCH

concilium against a bull, which, as they said, “destroyed the firmest foundations of Christian ethics, indeed the first and greatest commandment of the love of God“; the Cardinal de Noailles did the same, also the University of Paris and the Sorbonne — in fact, all Frenchmen who were capable of thinking for themselves and were seriously inclined to religion. * But the same thing happened then as happened after the Vatican Council in the nineteenth century: the oppressive power of universalism prevailed; the noblest of men, one after the other, sacrificed their personality and truthfulness at this altar. Genuine Catholicism was rooted out as Protestantism had been. Thus the time was ripe for the Revolution; for otherwise there was nothing left for France but — as already suggested — Spanish decline. But this gifted people had still too much vigour for that, so it rose in rebellion with the proverbial rage of the long-suffering Teuton, but devoid of all moral background and without one single really great man. “A great work was never accomplished by such little men,“ Carlyle exclaims in reference to the French Revolution. † And let no one offer the objection that I overlook the economic conditions; these are well known, and I do estimate their importance highly; but history offers no example of a mighty rebellion brought about solely by economic conditions; man can bear almost any degree of misery, and the more wretched he is, the weaker he becomes; hence, the great economic upheavals, with the bitter hardships involved (see p. 355), have always, in spite of a few rebellions, taken a comparatively peaceful course, because some accustomed themselves gradually to new, unfavourable circumstances, others to new claims.

* Cf. Döllinger und Reusch: *Geschichte der Moralstreitigkeiten in der römisch-katholischen Kirche* I. Div. i. chap. v. § 7. Cardinal de Noailles always describes the Jesuits straight away as “the protagonists of depraved morals.“

† *Critical Essays* (Mirabeau).

381 POLITICS AND CHURCH

History too, proves the fact: it was neither the poor oppressed peasant nor the proletariat that caused the French Revolution, but the middle classes of the citizens, some of the nobles, and an important section of the still nationally inclined clergy, and these were stirred and spurred on

by the intellectual elite of the nation. The explosive in the case of the French Revolution was “grey brain-matter.” It is most essential, if we wish to understand such a movement, to keep our eyes riveted upon the innermost wheel of the political machine, that wheel which connects the individual's inner being with the Community. In decisive moments everything depends on this connection. It may be a matter of indifference whether we call ourselves Catholics or Protestants or what not; but it matters a great deal whether on the morning of battle the soldiers sing *Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott* or lascivious opera songs: that was seen in 1870. Now, when the Revolution broke out, the Frenchman had been robbed of religion, and he felt so clearly what was lacking that he sought with pathetic haste and inexperience to build it up on every side. The *assemblée nationale* holds its sessions *sous les auspices de l'Être suprême*; the goddess of reason in flesh and blood — a Jesuit idea, by the way — was raised upon the altar; the *déclaration des droits de l'homme* is a religious confession: woe to him who does not accept it! Still more clearly do we see the religious character of these endeavours in the most influential and impassioned spirit among those who paved the way for the Revolution — in Jean Jacques Rousseau, the idol of Robespierre, a man whose mind was full of longing for religion. * But in all these things such ignorances of

* The words which he puts in the mouth of Héloïse are beautiful and specially applicable to the French of that time: “*Peut-être vaudrait-il mieux n'avoir point de religion du tout que d'en avoir une extérieure et maniérée, qui sans toucher le coeur rassure la conscience*” (Part III. Letter xviii.).

382 POLITICS AND CHURCH

human nature and such superficiality of thought are revealed that we seem to see children or madmen at work. By what confusion of historical judgment could the whole nineteenth century remain under the delusion — and let itself be profoundly influenced thereby — that the French by their “Great Revolution” had kindled a torch for mankind? The Revolution is the catastrophe of a tragedy, which had lasted for two hundred years; the first act closed with the murder of Henry IV., the second, with the rescinding of the Edict of Nantes, while the third begins with the bull *Unigenitus* and ends with the inevitable catastrophe. The Revolution is not the dawn of a new day, but the beginning of the end. And though a great deal was accomplished, the fact cannot be overlooked that this was to a large extent the work of the *Constituante*, in which the Marquis de Lafayette, the Comte de Mirabeau, the Abbé Comte Sieyès, the learned astronomer Bailly — all men of influence through their culture and social position — played the leading part; to some extent also

it was the work of Napoleon. Thanks to the Revolution this remarkable man found nothing left but the work of the *Constituante* and the political plans of men like Mirabeau and Lafayette, otherwise *tabula rasa*; this situation he exploited as only a brilliant, absolutely unprincipled genius, and (if the truth must be told) short-sighted despot, could. * The real Revolution — *le peuple souverain* — did nothing at all but destroy. Even the *Constituante* was under the

* When speaking of Napoleon's genius as a statesman, we must never forget (among other things) that it was he who finally reduced the Gallican Church to ruins, thus irretrievably delivering over the great majority of the French to Rome and destroying every possibility of a genuine national Church. He it was also who enthroned the Jews. This man — devoid of all understanding for historical truth and necessity, the impersonation of wicked caprice — is a destroyer, not a creator, at best a codifier, not an inventor; he is a minion of the Chaos, the proper complement to Ignatius of Loyola, a new personification of the anti-Teutonic spirit.

383 POLITICS AND CHURCH

sway of the new God that France was to present to the world, the God of phrase. Look at the famous *droits de l'homme* — against which the great Mirabeau thundered in vain, finally exclaiming: “At least do not call them rights; say simply: in the public interest it has been determined...” — they are, however, still regarded by serious French politicians as the dawn of freedom. At the very beginning we find the words: “*L'oubli ou le mépris des droits de l'homme sont l'unique cause des malheurs publics.*” It is impossible to think more superficially or to judge more falsely. It was not the rights, but the duties of men that the French had forgotten or despised, and so brought about the national catastrophe. That is manifest enough from my previous remarks and is confirmed step by step in the further course of the Revolution. This solemn proclamation is based, therefore, from the very outset, on an untruth. We know what Sieyès cried out in the assembly, “You wish to possess freedom and you do not even know how to be just!” The rest of the proclamation is essentially a transcription by Lafayette of the Declaration of Independence of the Anglo-Saxons settled in America, and this Declaration, too, is little more than a word for word copy of the English “Agreement of the People” of the year 1647. We can understand why so clever a man as Adolphe Thiers in his *History of the Revolution* hurries over this declaration of the rights of humanity, remarking merely that “it is a pity time was wasted on such pseudo-philosophical commonplaces.” * But the matter cannot be regarded so lightly, for the sad predominance which this riding to death of abstract principles of “freedom of humanity” acquired over statesmanlike insight into the needs and possibilities of a

definite people at a definite moment, continued to spread like an infectious disease. Let us hope the day may come when every

* Chap. iii.

384 POLITICS AND CHURCH

sensible person will know the proper place for such things as the *Déclaration*, namely, the waste-paper basket.

Rome, the Reformation, the Revolution, these are three elements which still influence politics, and so had to be discussed here. Nations, like individuals, sometimes reach a parting of the ways, where they must decide whether it is to be right or left. This was in the sixteenth century the case with all European nations (with the exception of Russia and the Slavs who had fallen under Turkish sway); the subsequent fate of these nations, even to the present and for the future, is determined in the most essential points by the choice then made. France at a later time wished completely to retrace her steps, but she had to pay dearer for the Revolution than Germany for her frightful Thirty Years War, and the Revolution could never give her back what she failed to acquire at the Reformation. The Teutons in the narrower sense of the word — the Germans, Anglo-Saxons, Dutch, Scandinavians — in whose veins much purer blood still flows, have, as we see, grown stronger and stronger since that turning-point in history and this justifies us in concluding that Luther's policy was the right one. *

THE ANGLO-SAXONS

In this connection I ought specially to call attention to the scattering of the Anglo-Saxons over the world as perhaps the most important phenomenon in modern politics; but it is only in the course of the nineteenth

* Such a view is not to be obscured by sectarian narrowness: this is proved by the fact that the Bavarians — who are still Catholic and lovers of freedom — at the Electoral Assembly of the year 1640 not only sided with the Protestants in all important questions, but even, when the latter, represented by characterless princes, dropped their claims, asserted them again and contended for them in opposition to the faithless Habsburgs and cunning prelates (*cf.* Heinrich Brockhaus, *Der Kurfürstentag zu Nürnberg*, 1883, pp. 264 f., 243, 121 f.).

385 POLITICS AND CHURCH

century that this fact has begun to reveal its almost incalculable importance, so that here I may content myself with general allusions, all other considerations being left to a later occasion. One point strikes us at once, that this extraordinary expansion of a small but strong people is likewise rooted in the Reformation. Nowhere is the political character of the Reformation so manifest as in England; here there were no dogmatic strifes at all; even from the thirteenth century the whole people knew that it did not wish to belong to Rome; * the King — influenced by very worldly considerations — had only to cut the connection, and the separation was at once complete. It was only at a later time that some dogmas, which the English had never really adopted, were expressly rescinded: some few ceremonies too, especially the cult of the Virgin, which at all times had been repulsive to the people, were done away with. For that reason, after the Reformation, everything had remained as it had been, and yet all was fundamentally new. The expansive power of the nation, which Rome had held in check, immediately began to assert itself, and hand in hand with this — and all the more rapidly, as it was to form the basis of that further development — came the building up of a strong, liberal constitution. The great work was attacked simultaneously from all sides; the sixteenth century, however, was chiefly devoted to carrying out the work of the Reformation (in which the formation of powerful Nonconformist sects played a leading part), the seventeenth to the stubborn struggle for freedom, the eighteenth to the acquirement of colonial possessions. Shakespeare has correctly foreshadowed the whole process in the last scene of his *Henry VIII.*: the first thing is a sincere recognition of God (the Reformation) then greatness

* In the year 1231 proclamations were scattered over the whole country, fixed to walls, carried from house to house: "Rather die than be ruined by Rome!" What innate political wisdom!

386 POLITICS AND CHURCH

will no longer be determined by descent, but by walking in the paths of honour (freedom resulting from strict performance of duty); the men thus strengthened shall then emigrate, to found "new nations." The great poet lived to witness the prosperity of the first colony, Virginia, and in *The Tempest* he has celebrated the wonders of the West Indian Islands — the new world which began to reveal itself to the eyes of men, with its unknown plants and undreamt-of animals. Four years after his death the glorious Puritans had undertaken with still greater energy the world of colonisation; after untold hardships they founded New England, not from lust of gold, but, as their solemn proclamation testifies, "from love to

God," and because they desired "a dignified Church service tinged by no Papism." Within fifteen years, twenty thousand English colonials, mostly from the middle classes, had settled there. Then Cromwell appeared, the real founder of the British Navy and hence of the British Empire. * Clearly recognising what was necessary, he boldly attacked the Spanish colossus, took from it Jamaica, and was making preparations to conquer Brazil, when death robbed his country of his services. Then for a time the movement came to a standstill: the struggle against the reactionary ambitions of Catholicly inclined princes once more demanded all men's energies; in England, as elsewhere, the Jesuits were at work; they supplied Charles II. with mistresses and gold; Coleman, the soul of this conspiracy against the English nation, wrote at that time, "by the complete destruction of pestilent heterodoxy in England ... the Protestant religion in all Europe will receive its death-blow." † It was only about the year 1700, when

* Seeley: *The Expansion of England*, 1895, p. 146.

† Green: [*History of the English people*, vi. p. 293](#). Capital has been made of the fact that some perjurers and forgers misled the whole country by the discovery of a pretended, trumped-up plot of the Jesuits, but this does not disprove the fact of there having been a great

387 POLITICS AND CHURCH

William of Orange had banished the treacherous Stuarts and finally laid the foundations of the constitutional State — when the law had been passed that henceforth no Catholic could occupy the English throne (either as Consort or as Queen) — that the Anglo-Saxon work of expansion began anew, and it was supported by numerous German Lutherans and reformed churchmen, who were fleeing from persecution, as also by Moravian brethren. Soon (about 1730) there lived in the flourishing colonies of England more than a million human beings, almost all Protestants and genuine Teutons, upon whom the hard struggle for existence exercised the same influence as strict artificial selection. Thus there arose a great new nation, which violently severed its connection with the Mother Country at the close of the century, a new anti-Roman power of the first rank. * But this separation in no degree weakened the expansive power of the Anglo-Saxons, who were joined as before by numerous Scandinavians and Germans. Scarcely had the United States severed their connection when (1788) the first colonists landed in Australia, and South Africa was wrested from the industrious but not very energetic Dutch. These were the beginnings of a world-empire which has grown enormously in the nineteenth century. And not only in the founding of such "new nations," as they floated before

Shakespeare's mind, but also in the less important task of ruling alien peoples (India), one fact has invariably

international conspiracy, which was directed from Paris, a fact which has been established beyond doubt by numerous diplomatic documents and authentic Jesuit correspondence.

* On September 3, 1783, the treaty was signed by which Old England relinquished its claims to New England. It is well known to what an extent "some few heroes and man of mark" were the heart and soul of this undertaking also; though the new nation to begin with did not choose a King, it honoured the personality of its founder by adopting as national emblem the stars and stripes, the old coat of arms which had been conferred on the Washingtons by English Kings. (This coat of arms can still be seen on the tombstones of the Washingtons in the church of Little Trinity, in London.)

388 POLITICS AND CHURCH

proved itself, that such things could be permanently, gloriously and fully achieved only by Teutons and only by Protestants. The huge South American continent remains quite outside of our politics and our culture; nowhere have the Conquistadors created a new nation; the last Spanish colonies are to-day saving themselves from ruin by going over to other nations. France has never succeeded in founding a colony, except in Canada, which, however, first flourished after England's intervention. * Real power of expansion is found only among Anglo-Saxons, Germans and Scandinavians; even the related Dutch have shown in South Africa more perseverance than power of expansion; the Russian expansion is purely political, the French purely commercial, other countries (with the exception of some few parts of Italy) reveal none at all.

If men did not lose their way and go astray by over-attention to the incalculable details of history, they would long ago have been clear regarding the decisive importance of two things in politics, namely, race and religion. They would also know that the political conformation of society — especially the conformation of that innermost wheel, the Church — reveals the most secret powers of a race and of its religion, and thus becomes the greatest promoter of civilisation and culture, or, on the other hand, that it can altogether ruin a people by impeding the development of its capacities and favouring the growth of its most perilous tendencies. That Luther recognised this fact testifies to his pre-eminent greatness and explains the importance of the part which he played in the political organisation of the world. Goethe regarded it as the first and foremost historical duty of the Germans "to break the Roman Empire

* How matters would have stood but for this intervention is seen from the fact that the Catholic priests there had already carried their point with regard to the "prohibition

against the printing of books“ and that a “heretic“ was strictly forbidden to live in the land!

389 POLITICS AND CHURCH

and raise up a new world.“ * But for the Wittenberg nightingale this would scarcely have been achieved. Truly, when those who share Luther's political views (no matter what they think of his theology) look at the map of the world to-day, they have every reason to sing with him:

Nehmen sie den Leib,
Gut, Ehr, Kind und Weib:
Lass fahren dahin,
Sie haben's kein Gewinn;
Das Reich muss uns doch bleiben! †

* November 1813, Conversation with Luden.

† Though they take from us body, wealth, honour, wife and child: let it pass, it profiteth them not: the Kingdom must surely remain to us.

389

6. PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION (From Francis of Assisi to Immanuel Kant).

THE TWO COURSES

I have already given ([p. 241](#)) a definition of philosophy (*Weltanschauung*), and in this book I have frequently discussed religion; ‡ I have also called attention ([p. 244](#)) to the inseparability of the two ideas. I am far from maintaining the identity of philosophy and religion, for that would be a purely logical and formalistic undertaking, which is quite beyond my purpose; but I see that everywhere in our history philosophical speculation is rooted in religion, and in its full development aims at religion — and when on the one hand I contemplate national idiosyncrasies and on the other pass a succession of pre-eminent men in review before my mind's eye, I discover a whole series of relations between philosophy and religion, which show me that they are closely and organically connected: where the one is absent the other fails, where the one is strong and vigorous, so is the

‡ See especially vol. i. pp. [213 f.](#), [411 f.](#), [471](#).

390 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

other: a deeply religious man is a true philosopher (in the living, popular sense of the word), and those choice minds that rise to comprehensive, clear, philosophical views — a Roger Bacon, a Leonardo, a Bruno, a Kant, a Goethe — are not often ecclesiastically pious, but always strikingly “religious.” We see, therefore, that philosophy and religion on the one hand further one another, and on the other hand are substitutes for, or complementary to, each other. On pp. 258-9 I wrote: In the want of a true religion springing from and corresponding to our individuality I see the greatest danger for the future of the Teuton, that is in him the heel of Achilles, whoever wounds him there, will lay him low. If we look closer, we shall see that the inadequacy of our ecclesiastical religion revealed itself, to begin with, in the invalidity of the philosophy which it presupposed; our earliest philosophers are all theologians and mostly honest ones, who pass through an inner struggle for truth, and truth always means the sincerity of views as determined by the special nature of the individual. Out of this struggle our Teutonic philosophy, which is absolutely new, gradually grew up. This development did not follow one straight line; the work was taken in hand simultaneously at most divergent points, as if in the building of a house, mason, carpenter, locksmith and painter each did his own work independently, troubling himself as little as possible about the others. It is the will of the architect that unites the essentially different aims; in this case instinct of race is the architect; the *homo europaeus* can only follow definite paths, and he, as Master, to the best of his power forces his path upon others who do not belong to him. I do not think that the structure is complete; I am not bound to any school, but take joy in the growth and development of the Teutonic work, and do what I can reverently to assimilate it. My task in this section is, in the most general

391 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

outlines, to show the growth and present condition of this Teutonic work. Here history again comes to its own; for while civilisation only fastens on to the past in order to destroy it and replace it by something new, and knowledge is, as it were, of no special time, the philosophical and religious development of seven hundred years is still alive, and it is, indeed, impossible to speak of to-day, without remembering that it is born of yesterday. Here everything is still in process of development; our philosophy and, above all, our religion, is the most incomplete feature of our whole life. Here, then, the historical method is forced upon us; it alone can enable us so to pick up and follow the various threads that the web of the tissue, as it was made over to us by the year 1800, shall be clearly seen and surveyed. *

Ecclesiastical Christianity, purely as religion, consists, as I endeavoured to show in the seventh chapter, of unreconciled elements, so that we found Paul and Augustine involved in most serious

contradictions. In Christianity, as a matter of fact, we are dealing not with a normal

* I shall not copy what is to be found in the text-books on the history of philosophy, for the very reason that there is none that would suit my purpose here. But I should like once for all to refer to the well-known, excellent handbooks to which I owe much in my account. It is to be hoped that at no too distant date Paul Deussen's *Allgemeine Geschichte der Philosophie mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Religion* will be so far advanced as at least partially to fill the gap which has been so keenly felt by me while writing this section. The very fact that he takes religion also into account proves Deussen's capacity to perform the task and his long study of Indian thought is a further guarantee. Meanwhile I recommend to the less experienced reader the short *Skizze einer Geschichte der Lehre vom Idealen und Realen* which begins the first volume of Schopenhauer's *Parerga und Paralipomena*; in a few pages it offers a brilliantly clear survey of Teutonic thought at its best, from Descartes to Kant and Schopenhauer. The best introduction to general philosophy that exists is in my opinion (and as far as my limited knowledge extends) Friedrich Albert Lange's *Geschichte des Materialismus*: this author takes a special point of view and hence the whole picture of European thought from Democritus to Hartmann becomes more vivid, and in the healthy atmosphere of a frank partiality challenging contradiction we breathe much more freely than under the hypocritical impartiality of masked Academic authorities.

392 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

religious philosophy, but with an artificial philosophy forcibly welded into unity. Now as soon as genuine philosophic thought began to be active — which was never the case with the Romans, but was bound to come with the advent of the Teuton — the nature of this faith full of contradictions violently asserted itself; and in fact it is a truly tragic spectacle to see noble minds like Scotus Erigena in the ninth, and Abelard in the twelfth century wriggle and turn in the hopeless struggle to bring the complex of faith which was forced upon them into harmony with themselves and with the demands of honest reason. Inasmuch as the Church dogmas were regarded as infallible, philosophy had henceforth two parts to choose between; it could openly admit the incompatibility of philosophy and theology — that was the course of truth; or it could deny the evidence of the senses, cheat itself and others, and by means of countless tricks and devices force the irreconcilable to be reconciled — this was the course of falsehood.

THE COURSE OF TRUTH

The course of truth branches off almost from the first in different directions. It could lead to a daring, genuinely Pauline, anti-rationalistic theology, as Duns Scotus (1274-1308) and Occam (died 1343) show. It could bring about a systematic subordination of logic to intuitive feeling, and thus conduced to the rich variety of mystical philosophies, which, beginning with Francis of Assisi (1182-1226) and Eckhart (1260-1328), was to lead up to minds of such different character as Thomas à Kempis,

the author of the *Imitatio Christi* (1380-1471), Paracelsus, the founder of scientific medicine (1493-1541), or Stahl, the founder of modern chemistry (1660-1734). * Or, on the other hand, this unswerving honesty could cause

* See p. [322](#).

393 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

men to turn away from all special study of Christian theology and spur them on to acquire a comprehensive, free cosmogony; we see an indication of this in the encyclopaedist Albertus Magnus (1193-1280), it is then further developed in the Humanists, *e.g.*, in Picus of Mirandola (1463-94), who considers the science of the Hellenes as divine a revelation as the books of the Jews, and consequently studies it with the fire of religious zeal. Finally, this path could lead the most profound philosophic intellects to test and reject the foundations of the theoretical philosophy then regarded as authoritative, in order to proceed, as free responsible men, to the construction of a new philosophy in harmony with our intellect and knowledge; this movement — the really “philosophical“ one — always starts in our case from the investigation of nature; its representatives are philosophers who study nature, or philosophic investigators; it begins with Roger Bacon (1214-1294), then slumbers for a long time, repressed by main force by the Church, but raises its head again when the natural sciences have developed strength, and runs a glorious course, from Campanella (perhaps the first man who consciously propounded a scientific theory of perception, 1568-1639) and Francis Bacon (1561-1626) to Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) at the threshold of the nineteenth century. So manifold were the new paths opened up to the human spirit when it once faithfully followed its true nature. And by each of the courses mentioned a splendid harvest was garnered. Pauline theology gave birth to Church reform and political freedom; mysticism led to a deeper view of religion, and at the same time to reform and brilliant natural science; the awakened humanist desire for knowledge advanced genuine liberal culture, and the horizon of mankind was powerfully widened by the reconstruction of philosophy in the special sense on the basis of exact observation and critical, free

394 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

thought; while all scientific knowledge gained in depth and religious conceptions in the Teutonic sense began to undergo a complete transformation.

THE COURSE OF FALSEHOOD

The other method, which I have designated the course of falsehood, remained absolutely barren of results; for here arbitrary caprice and capricious arbitrariness predominated. The very attempt to rationalise all religion, that is, to accommodate it to reason, and yet at the same time to bind and put thought under the yoke of faith, is a double crime against human nature. For such an attempt to succeed the delusive belief in dogmatism must first become a raving madness. A Church doctrine which had been patched together out of the most varying foreign alien elements, and which contradicted itself in the most essential points, had to be declared eternal, divine truth; a fragmentary, badly translated, often totally misunderstood, essentially individualistic, pre-Christian philosophy had to be declared infallible; for without these prodigious acceptations the attempt would never have succeeded. And so this theology and this philosophy, which had no connection with one another, were forced into wedlock and a monstrosity was imposed upon humanity as the absolute, all-embracing system to be unconditionally accepted. * In this path development followed a straight, short line; for, while divine truth is as manifold as the creatures in which it is reflected, the impious caprice of a human system, which lays down the law of "truth" and carries it out with fire and sword, soon reaches its limit, and any further step would be a negation of itself. Anselm, who died in the year 1109, can be regarded as the author of this method, which gags thought and feeling; scarcely a hundred and fifty years after his death

* See p. [178](#).

395 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

Thomas Aquinas (1227-1274) and Ramon Lull (1234-1315) had brought the system to the highest perfection. Progress was in this case impossible. Such an absolute theological philosophy neither contained in itself the germ of any possible development, nor could it exercise a stimulating influence upon any branch of human intellectual activity, on the contrary, it necessarily signified an end. * It becomes clear how irrefutable this assertion is when we look at the frequently mentioned Bull *Aeterni Patris*, of August 4, 1879, which represents Thomas Aquinas as the unsurpassed, solely authoritative philosopher of the Roman view of life even for the present day; and, to make matters more complete, some lovers of the Absolute have lately put Ramon Lull with his *Ars Magna* even above Thomas. For Thomas, who was a thoroughly honest Teuton, possessed of brilliant intellectual gifts, and who had learned all that he really knew at the feet of the great Swabian Albert von Bollstadt, expressly admits that some few of the highest mysteries — *e.g.*, the Trinity and the Incarnation — are incomprehensible to human reason. It is true he tries to explain this incomprehensibility by rational means, when he says that God intentionally made it so, that faith might be more

meritorious. But he at least admits the incomprehensibility. Now Ramon does not admit this, for this Spaniard had learned in a different school, that of the Mohammedans, and had there imbibed the fundamental doctrine of Semitic religion that nothing can be incomprehensible, and so he undertakes to prove everything under the sun on grounds of reason. † He also makes the boastful claim that from his method (of rotary differently coloured disks with letters for the chief ideas)

* See the remarks on “not-knowing“ as the source of all increase of experience, [p. 272](#), and on the sterilising effects of universalism, [p. 276](#).

† Cf. vol. i. [p. 414](#). It is very important to note in addition that Thomas Aquinas also must seek support from the Semites and in many passages links on to Jewish philosophers — Maimonides and others. See Dr. J. Guttman: *Das Verhältnis des Thomas von Aquino zum Judentum und zur jüdischen Litteratur* (Göttingen 1891).

396 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

all sciences can be derived without the necessity of studying them. Thus absolutism is at the same moment perfected in two ways, by the earnest, ethically idealistic system of Thomas and by the faultlessly logical and consequently absurd doctrine of Ramon. I have already mentioned ([p. 276](#)) the judgment of the great Roger Bacon, who was a contemporary of both these misguided men, upon Thomas Aquinas; similar and just as much to the point was the opinion of Cardanus, the doctor, mathematician and philosopher, who had wasted much time on Ramon Lull — a marvellous master! he teaches all sciences without knowing a single one. *

There is nothing to be gained by lingering over these delusions, although the fact that at the close of the nineteenth century we were solemnly called upon to turn about and choose this insincere course lends them a melancholy present interest. We prefer to turn to that long, magnificent series of splendid men who imposed no shackles on their inner nature, but in simple sincerity and dignity sought to know God and the world. I must, however, first make a remark on method.

SCHOLASTICISM

In the grouping, which I have sketched above (into theologians, mystics, humanists and scientists), the usual conception of a “scholastic period“ completely disappears. And I really think that the notion may be dispensed with here, as being altogether superfluous, if not directly harmful, for the vivid comprehension of the philosophic and religious development of the Teutonic world; it is contrary to the motto from Goethe which I prefixed to this “Historical Survey,“ in that it unites what is heterogeneous and at the same time rends links

* Here we are reminded of Rousseau's remark: “*Quel plus sûr moyen de courir*

d'erreurs en erreurs que la fureur de savoir tout?" (Letter to Voltaire, 10. 9. 1755).

397 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

that belong to one single chain. Taken literally, scholastic means simply schoolman; the name should therefore be limited to men who derive their knowledge solely from books; in fact that is the sort of derogatory sense which the word has acquired in common parlance. But we may define more exactly. A predominance of dialectical hair-splitting to the disadvantage of observation — of the Theoretical to the disadvantage of the Practical — is what we call "scholastic"; every abstractly intellectual, purely logical construction seems to us to be "scholasticism," and every man who constructs such systems out of his head, or, as the German popular saying is, "Out of his little finger," is a scholastic. But when thus viewed the word has no historical value; there have been such scholastics at all times and there is a rich crop of them at the present day. From the historical point of view we generally regard the scholastics as a group of theologians, who for several centuries endeavoured to fix the relations between thought and the Church doctrine, which was now almost completely developed and rigidified. Such a grouping may be useful to the Church historian; it took the "Fathers" a thousand years of bitter struggle to fix the dogmas; then for five hundred years there raged a violent dispute with regard to the manner in which these Church doctrines could be reconciled with the surrounding world, and especially with the nature of man, so far as this could be derived from Aristotle. Finally, however, the underground current of true humanity had undermined more and more seriously the rock of St. Peter, and the thunder of Martin Luther scattered the theologians; and so on one side and on the other a third period, that of the practical testing of principles, was introduced. As I have said above, from the point of view of the Church historian this may give a useful idea of scholasticism, but from the philosophic standpoint I find it exceedingly misleading, and for the history of our Teutonic culture it is utterly

398 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

useless. What, for example, is the sense of saying, as I find in all text-books, that Scotus Erigena is the founder of scholastic philosophy? Erigena! one of the greatest mystics of all times, who interprets the Bible, verse by verse, allegorically, who fastens directly on to Greek gnosticism * and like Origenes teaches that hell means the tortures of our own consciences, heaven their joys (*De Divisione Naturae* v. 36), that every man will at last be redeemed, "whether he has led a good or a wicked life" (v. 39), that to understand eternity we must realise that "space and time are false ideas" (iii. 9), &c. What connection is there between this daring Teuton † and Anselm or Thomas? Even if we look more closely at

Abelard, who, as a pupil of Anselm and an incomparable dialectician, stands much nearer to the doctors named, we must observe that though he is animated by the same purpose — that of reconciling reason and theology — his method and results are so very different that it is quite ridiculous to class such contradictions together merely because of external points of contact. ‡ And what is the meaning of linking together Thomas Aquinas with Duns Scotus and Occam, the sworn opponents, the diametrical contradictions of the *doctor angelicus*? What is the use of trying to persuade us that it is merely a question of fine metaphysical differences between realism and nominalism? On the contrary, these metaphysical subtleties are merely the external shell, the real difference is the wide gulf that separates the one intellectual tendency from the other, the fact that different characters forge quite different weapons from the same metal. It is the duty of the historian to bring into evidence that which is not immediately clear to every one; to distinguish what seems uniform, while in reality it is essentially antago-

* Cf. p. [129](#).

† Cf. vol. i. p. [325](#).

‡ As I do not wish to repeat myself, I refer the reader to vol. i. pp. [501 f.](#) and [244](#), note on Abelard.

399 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

nistic; to unite what seems contradictory but is fundamentally in agreement — as, for example, Duns Scotus and Eckhart. Martin Luther felt vividly and profoundly the difference between these various doctors; in a passage of his *Table-talk* he says: “Duns Scotus has written very well ... and has endeavoured to teach with good system and correctly. Occam was an intelligent and ingenious man Thomas Aquinas is a gossiping old washerwoman.” * And is it not perfectly ridiculous when a Roger Bacon, the inventor of the telescope, the founder of scientific mathematics and philology, the proclaimer of genuine natural science, is thrown into the same class as those who pretended to know everything and consequently stopped Roger Bacon's mouth and threw him into prison? Finally I should like to ask: if Erigena is a scholastic and Amalrich also, how is it that Eckhart, who is manifestly under the power of both, is not one, although he is contemporary of Thomas and Duns? I know that the sole reason is the desire to form a new group, that of the Mystics, which shall lead up to Böhme and Angelus Silesius; and with this object in view Eckhart is violently separated from Erigena, Amalrich and Bonaventura! And that nothing may be wanting to show the artificiality of the system, the great Francis of Assisi is excluded altogether; the man who has exercised perhaps more influence upon the trend of thought than any one, the man to whose order Duns Scotus and Occam belong, to whom Roger Bacon, the regenerator of natural science,

confesses his allegiance, and who, by the power of his personality, did more than any other to awaken mysticism to new life! This man, who is a real force in

* I quote from the Jena edition, 1591, fol. 329; in the new wide-spread selections we do not find this passage nor the others “dealing with the Scholastics as a whole“ where Luther sighs when he thinks of his student days, when “fine, clever people were burdened with the hearing of useless teachings and the reading of useless books with strange, un-German, sophisticated words....“

400 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

every field of culture — since he has stimulated art as powerfully as philosophy — is not even mentioned in the history of philosophy; this reveals the faultiness of the scheme which I am criticising, and at the same time the untenability of the idea that religion and philosophy are two fundamentally different things.

ROME AND ANTI-ROME

My bridge will, I think, have been substantially advanced if I have succeeded in replacing this artificial scheme by a living discernment. Such a discernment must naturally in all cases be gained from living facts, not from theoretical deductions. We see here the very same struggle, the same revolt, as in other spheres; on the one hand the Roman ideal which grew out of the Chaos of Peoples, on the other Teutonic individuality. I have shown already that Rome can be satisfied in philosophy as in religion with nothing less than the unconditionally Absolute. The *sacrifizio dell' intelletto* is the first law which it imposes upon every thinking man. This too is perfectly logical and justifiable. That moral pre-eminence is not incompatible with it is proved by Thomas Aquinas himself. Endowed with that peculiar, fatal gift of the Teuton to sink himself in alien views, and, thanks to his greater capacities, to transfigure them and give them new life, Thomas Aquinas, who had drunk in the southern poison from childhood, devoted Teutonic science and power of conviction to the service of the Anti-Teutonic cause. In former ages the Teuton had produced soldiers and commanders to conquer their own nations, now they supplied the enemy with theologians and philosophers; for two thousand years this has steadily been going on. But every unprejudiced observer feels that such men as Thomas are doing violence to their own nature. I do not assert that they consciously and intentionally lie, though

401 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

that was and is often enough the case with men of lower calibre; but, fascinated by the lofty (and for a noble, misguided mind, actually holy)

ideal of the Roman delusion, they fall a prey to suggestion and plunge into that view of life which destroys their personality and their dignity, just as the song-bird throws itself into the serpent's jaw. That is why I call this the way of falsehood. For whoever follows it sacrifices what he received from God, his own self; and in truth that is no trifle; Meister Eckhart, a good and learned Catholic, a Provincial of the Dominican Order, teaches us that man should not seek God outside himself — “*Got ûzer sich selber nicht ensuoche*“; * whoever therefore sacrifices his personality loses the God whom he could have found only within himself. Whoever, on the other hand, does not sacrifice his personality in his philosophy, manifestly follows the very opposite path no matter to what manner of opinions his character may impel him, and no matter whether he belong to the Catholic or to any other Church. A Duns Scotus, for example, is an absolutely fanatical priest, wholly devoted to the essential doctrines of Rome, such as justification by works — a hundred times more intolerant and onesided than Thomas Aquinas; yet every one of his words breathes the atmosphere of sincerity and of autonomous personality. This *doctor subtilis*, the greatest dialectician of the Church, exposes with contempt and holy indignation the whole tissue of pitiful sophism upon which Thomas has built up his artificial system. It is not true, as he points out, that the dogmas of the Church stand the test of reason, much less that, as Thomas had taught, they can be proved by reason to be necessary truths; even the so-called proofs of the existence of God and of

* Pfeiffer's edition, 1857, p. 626. What is here uttered negatively is expressed in the fifty-third saying, concerning the seven grades of contemplative life, as a positive theory: “*Unde sôder Mensch alsô in sich selber gât, sô vindet er got in ime selber*“ (“If so man then enters into himself, he findeth God in himself“).

402 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

the immortality of the soul are wretched sophistries (*see the Quaestiones subtilissimae*); it is not the syllogism that is of value in religion, but faith only; it is not the understanding which forms the centre of human nature, but the will; *voluntas superior intellectu!* However intolerant from the ecclesiastical point of view Duns Scotus might personally be, the path that he trod led to freedom. And why? Because this Anglo-Saxon is absolutely sincere. He accepts without question all the doctrines of the Roman Church, even those which do violence to the Teutonic nature, but he despises all deceit. What Lutheran theologian of the eighteenth century would have dared to declare the existence of God to be incapable of philosophic proof? What persecutions had not Kant to suffer for this very thing? Scotus had long ago asserted it. And Scotus, by putting the Individual in the centre of his philosophy as “the one real thing,” saves the personality; and that means the rescue of everything. Now this one

example shows with special clearness that all those who follow the same path, the path of sincerity, are closely connected with one another; for what the theologian Scotus teaches is lived by the mystic Francis of Assisi: the will is the supreme thing, God is a direct perception, not a logical deduction, personality is the “greatest blessing“; Occam, on the other hand, a pupil of Scotus, and as zealous a dogmatist as his master, found it not only necessary to separate faith still more completely from knowledge, and to destroy rationalistic theology by proving that the most important Church dogmas are actually absurd, whereby he became a founder of the sciences of observation — but he also upheld the cause of the Kings in opposition to the Papal stool, that is, he fought for Teutonic nationalism against Roman universalism; at the same time he also stoutly upheld the rights of the Church against the interference of the Roman *Pontifex* — and for this he was thrown into

403 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

prison. Here, as we see, Politics, Science and Philosophy, in their later anti-Roman development, are directly connected with Theology.

Even such hasty indications will, I think, suffice to convince the reader that the grouping which I suggest goes to the heart of the matter. This division has one great advantage, namely, that it is not limited to a few centuries, but permits us to survey at one glance the history of a thousand years, from Scotus Erigena to Arthur Schopenhauer. In the second place, derived as it is from living facts, it has the further advantage for our own practical life that it teaches us unlimited tolerance towards every sincere, genuinely Teutonic view; we do not inquire about the What of a particular Philosophy, but about the How; free or not free? personal or not personal? It is solely thus that we learn to draw a clear line between our own selves and the alien, and to oppose the latter with all our weapons at once and at all times, no matter how noble and unselfish and thoroughly Teutonic he may pretend to be. The enemy worms his way into our very souls. Was that not the case with Thomas Aquinas? And do we not see a similar phenomenon in the case of Leibniz and Hegel? The great Occam was called *doctor invincibilis*: may we live to see many *doctores invincibiles* taking part in the struggle which threatens our culture on all sides!

THE FOUR GROUPS

The ground is now, I hope, sufficiently prepared to enable us to proceed methodically to consider the four groups of men who devoted their lives to the service of truth, without laying the flattering unction to their souls that they possessed or could fully grasp it; by their combined efforts the new philosophy of life has gradually assumed a more and more definite shape.

404 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

These groups are the theologians, the mystics, the humanists and the natural scientists, in which the last-named category the philosophers in the narrower sense of the word are included. For the sake of convenience we shall retain the groups thus established, but we must avoid attaching to such a definition any wider significance than that of a convenient and practical handle for our purpose, for the four classes merge into each other at a hundred points.

THE THEOLOGIAN

Were it my intention to defend any artificial thesis, the group of the theologians would trouble me considerably; indeed I should be tortured with the feeling of my incompetence. But disregarding all technical details which may be beyond my comprehension, I need only open my eyes to see theologians of the character of Duns Scotus as direct pioneers of the Reformation, and not only of the Reformation — for that remained from a religious point of view a very unsatisfactory piece of patchwork, or, as Lamprecht optimistically says, “a leaven for the religious attitude of the future,” — but also as the pioneers of a far-reaching movement of fundamental importance in the building up of a new Philosophy. We know what metaphysical acumen Kant employs in his *Critique of Pure Reason* to prove that “all attempts to establish a theology by the aid of speculation alone are fruitless and from their inner nature null and void”; * this proof was indispensable for the foundation of his philosophy; it was Kant, the all-destroyer, as Moses Mendelssohn fitly named him, who first shattered the sham edifice of Roman theology. The very earliest theologians, who followed the “way of truth“ had

* See the section *Critique of all Speculative Theology* and also the last of the *Prolegomena to every Future System of Metaphysics*.

405 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

undertaken the same task. Duns Scotus and Occam were not of course in a position, as Kant was, to undermine the “sham edifice“ of the Church by the direct method of natural science, but for all practical purposes they had with adequate power of conviction attained exactly the same end, by the *reductio ad absurdum* of the hypothesis which was opposed to them. This fact was bound to lead with mathematical necessity to two immediate consequences: first, the freeing of reason with all that pertained to it from the service of theology, where it was of no use; secondly, the basing of religious faith upon another principle, since that of reason had proved useless. And in fact, as far as the freeing of

reason is concerned, we already see Occam joining hands with Roger Bacon, a member of his own order, and demanding the empirical observation of nature; at the same time we see him enter the sphere of practical politics to demand wider personal and national freedom. This was a demand of freed reason, for fettered reason had tried to prove the universal *Civitas Dei* (in Occam's day by Dante's testimony) to be a divine institution. And in regard to the second point it is clear that, if the doctrines of religion find no guarantee in the reasoned conclusions of the brain, the theologian must endeavour with all the more energy to find this guarantee elsewhere, and the only available source was in the first place to be found in Holy Scripture. However paradoxical it may at first appear, it is nevertheless a fact that it was the violent, intolerant, narrow-minded orthodoxy of Scotus, in contrast to the occasionally almost free-thinking imperturbability of a Thomas, playing in a spirit of superiority with Augustinian contradictions, which pointed the way to emancipation from the Church. For the tendency of Thomas's thought, which the Roman Church so strongly supported, in reality emancipated it entirely from the doctrine of Christ.

406 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

The Church with its Church Fathers and Councils had already pressed itself so much into the foreground that the Gospel had seriously lost credit; now it was proved that the dogmas of faith "had to be so," as reason could at any moment demonstrate that this is a logical necessity. To refer further to Holy Scripture would be just as foolish as if a captain, on going to sea, were to take a few pailfuls of water from the river that feeds the ocean and throw them over the bowsprit, for fear he should not have sufficient depth of water. But even before Thomas Aquinas had started to build his Tower of Babel, many profoundly sensitive minds had felt that this tendency which the Romish Church had introduced in practice and Anselm in theory, meant the death of all sincere religion; the greatest of these was Francis of Assisi. Certainly this extraordinary man belongs to the group of the Mystics, but he also deserves mention here among the theologians, for it was from him that the champions of true Christian theology derived their inspiration. That, indeed, seems paradoxical, for no saint was less of a theologian than Francis; but it is an historical fact, and the paradox disappears when we see that it is his emphasising of the importance of the Gospel and of Jesus Christ that forms the connection. This layman, who forces his way into the Church, pushes the priesthood aside, and proclaims the Word of Christ to all people, represents a violent reaction on the part of men longing for religion, against the cold, incomprehensible, argumentative and stilted faith in dogma. Francis, who from youth had been subject to Waldensian influence, doubtless knew the Gospel well; * we should almost have said it was a miracle, did we not know it was the merest accident, that he was

not burned as a heretic; his religion can be expressed in the words of Luther: "The law of Christ is not doctrine but life, not word

* See p. [132](#) and cf. the conclusion of the note on [p. 96](#).

407 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

but being, not sign but fullness itself." * The Gospel which Francis rescued from oblivion became the rock of refuge to which the northern theologians retired, when they had convinced themselves that theological rationalism was untenable and dangerous. And they did so with the passion of combative conviction, urged on by the example of Francis. Duns teaches in direct contrast to Thomas that the highest bliss of heaven will not be Knowing but Loving. The influence which such a tendency must in time acquire is clear; we have already seen how highly Scotus and Occam were esteemed by Luther, while he called Thomas a gossip. The recognition of the fundamental importance of the Biblical Word, the emphasising of the evangelical life in contrast to dogmatic doctrine must inevitably result. Even the more external movement of revolt against the pomp and greed and the whole worldly tendency of the Curia was so self-evident a conclusion from these premises, that we find even Occam attacking all these abuses, and Jacopone da Todi, the author of *Stabat Mater*, intellectually the most pre-eminent of the Italian Franciscans of the thirteenth century, calls upon men to revolt openly against Pope Boniface VIII., and for so doing has to spend the best years of his life in an underground prison. And though Duns Scotus himself emphasises the importance of works almost more than any one else, while in reference to grace and faith he is not prepared to go even as far as Thomas, it is only a very superficial thinker who sees in this anything specifically Roman, and does not realise that this very doctrine necessarily paves the way for that of Luther: for the whole aim of these Franciscans is to make will, and not formal orthodoxy, the central point of religion; this makes religion something lived, experienced, immediately present. As Luther says, "Faith is Will essentially good"; and in another

* *Von dem Missbrauch der Messe*, Part III.

408 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

passage, "Faith is a living, busy, active, mighty thing, so that it could not but unceasingly do good." * Now this "Will," this "Doing" are the things upon which Scotus and Occam, taught by Francis, lay all emphasis, and that, too, in contrast to a cold, academic creed. Certain much-read authors of the present day use the terms "faith" and "good works" in a most frivolous manner; without joining issue with those to whom the practice of falsehood seems a "good work," I ask every unbiased reader to

consider Francis of Assisi and to say what is the essence of this personality. Every one must answer “the power of faith.” He is faith incorporate: “not doctrine but life, not word but being.” Read the history of his life. It was not priestly admonition, not sacramental consecration that led him to God, but the vision of the Cross in a ruined chapel near Assisi and Christ's message in the diligently studied Gospel. † And yet Francis — as also the Order which he founded — is rightly regarded by us as the special Apostle of good works. And now look at Martin Luther — the advocate of redemption by faith — and say whether he has done no works, whether on the contrary he did not consecrate his life to working, whether indeed he was not the very man who revealed to us the secret of good works, when he said they must be *eitel freie Werke*, “nothing but free works, done only to please God, not for the sake of piety ... for wherever they contain the false supplement and wrong-headed idea that we wish by works to become pious and blessed, they are not good but utterly culpable, for they are not free.” ‡ The learned may shake their heads as they will, we laymen recognise the fact that a Francis of Assisi has led up to a Duns

* Cf. The *Vorrede auf die Epistel Pauli an die Römer*.

† See, for example, Paul Sabatier: *Vie de S. François d'Assise*, 1896, chap. iv.

‡ *Von der Freiheit eines Christenmenschen* pp. 22, 25.

409 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

Scotus and the latter to a Martin Luther; for it is the impulse of freedom — the freeing of the personality that is at the root of this movement. The whole life of Francis is a revolt of the individual — against his family, against all society around him, against a thoroughly corrupt priesthood and a Church that had fallen away from Apostolic tradition; and while the priesthood prescribes to him definite paths as alone conducing to bliss, he undauntedly goes his own way and as a free man holds commune directly with his God. Such a view raised to the sphere of theological philosophy must needs lead to almost exclusive emphasising of freedom of will, and this is exactly what took place in the case of Scotus. We are bound to admit that the latter with his one-sided emphasising of *liberum arbitrium* shows less philosophic depth than his opponent Thomas, but all the more profundity in religion and (if I may so say) in politics. For hereby this theology succeeds — in direct contrast to Rome — in making the individual the central point in religion: “Christ is the door of salvation: it is for man to enter in or not!” Now it is this accentuation of free personality that is the only important matter — not subtleties concerning grace and merit, faith and good works. This path led to an anti-Roman, anti-sacerdotal conception of the Church and to an altogether new religion which was spiritual, not historical and materialistic. That very soon became clear. Luther, the political hero, did

indeed close the door for a long time against this natural and inevitable religious movement. Like Duns Scotus he too enveloped his healthy, strong, freedom-breathing perception in a tissue of over-subtle theological dogmas, and never freed himself from the historical and therefore intolerant conceptions of a faith which had grown out of Judaism; but this attitude gave him the right strength for the right work: in his struggle for the Fatherland and the dignity of the

410 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

Teutonic peoples he proved victorious, whereas his rigid, monkish theology broke like an earthen pitcher, being too small to hold all that he himself had poured into it. It was not till the nineteenth century that we again took those great theologians as our starting-point, to enable us to pursue the path to freedom even in the sphere of theology.

Let us not under-estimate the value of the theologians for the development of our culture! Whoever with more knowledge than I possess makes a further study of what has here been briefly sketched will, I think, find the work of these men even up to our own times manifoldly blessed. A learned Roman theologian, Abelard, exclaims even in the twelfth century, "*Si omnes patres sic, at ego non sic!*"* and it would be a good thing if a great many theologians of our century possessed the same courage. See what a Savonarola — the man whose fiery spirit inspired a Leonardo, a Michael Angelo, a Raphael — does for freedom, when from the pulpit he cries: † "Behold Rome, the head of the world, and from the head turn the eyes upon the limbs! from the sole of the foot to the crown of the head not one part is sound; we live among Christians, have interaction with them; but they are not Christians who are Christians in name only; it were truly better to live among the heathen!" — this monk, I say, when he utters such words before thousands and seals them with his death at the stake, does more for freedom than a whole academy of free-thinkers; for freedom asserts itself not by opinions but by attitude, it is "not word, but being." So too, in the nineteenth century, a pious, inwardly religious [Schleiermacher](#) has certainly done more in the interests of a living, religious philosophy than a sceptical David Strauss.

* Quoted from Schopenhauer: *Über den Willen in der Natur* (Section on *Physische Astronomie*).

† Sermon at the Feast of the Epiphany, 1492.

411 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

THE MYSTICS

The real High School of freedom from hieratic and historical shackles

is mysticism, the *philosophia teutonica*, as it was called. * A mystical philosophy, when completely worked out, dissolves one dogmatic theory after another as allegory; what remains is pure symbol, for religion is then no longer a creed, a hope, a conviction, but an experience of life, an actual process, a direct state of mind. [Lagarde](#) somewhere says, "Religion is an unconditional present"; † this is the view of a mystic. The most perfect expression of absolutely mystical religion is found among the Aryan Indians; but scarcely a hair's-breadth separates our great Teutonic mystics from their Indian predecessors and contemporaries; only one thing really distinguishes them: Indian religion is genuinely Indo-Teutonic, mysticism finds in it a natural, universally recognised place, but there is no place for mysticism in such a conjunction as that of Semitic history with pseudo-Egyptian magic, and so it was and is at best merely tolerated, though mostly persecuted by our various sects. The Christian Churches are right from their point of view. Listen to the fifty-fourth saying of Meister Eckhart: "You know that all our perfection and all our bliss depends on this, that man should pass through and over all creation, all temporality and all being, and go into the depths which are unfathomable." That is essentially Indian and might be a quota-

* Concerning the German people as a whole Lamprecht testifies that "the basis of its attitude to Christianity was mystical" (*Deutsche Geschichte*, 2nd ed. vol. ii. p. 197). This was absolutely true till the introduction by Thomas Aquinas of obligatory rationalism, supplemented later by the materialism of the Jesuits.

† The theologian Adalbert Merx says in his book, *Idee und Grundlinien einer allgemeinen Geschichte der Mystik*, 1893, p. 46: "One fact in mysticism is firmly established, that it so completely possesses, reveals and represents the fact or experience in religion, religion as a phenomenon ... that a real philosophy of religion without historical knowledge of mysticism is out of the question."

412 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

tion from the Brihadâranjaka-Upanishad. No sophistry could succeed in proving a connection between this religion and Abrahamitic promises, and no honest man will deny that in a philosophy which rises above "creation" and "temporality," the Fall and the Redemption must be merely symbols of an otherwise inexpressible truth of inner experience. The following passage from the forty-ninth Sermon of Eckhart is also apposite: "So long as I am this or that or have this or that, I am not all things and have not all things; but as soon as you decide that you are not, and have not, this or that, then you are everywhere; as soon, therefore, as you are neither this nor that, you are all things." * This is the doctrine of Ātman, and to it the theology of Duns Scotus is just as irrelevant as that of Thomas Aquinas. Before leaving the subject, upon one thing I must insist. The religion of Jesus Christ was just such a mystical religion; His deeds and words prove it. His saying, "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you," † cannot be interpreted by empiricism

or history.

Naturally, I cannot here enter into a fuller exposition of mysticism, that would be seeking in a few lines to fathom human nature where it is “unfathomable”; my duty consists solely in so presenting the subject that even the uninitiated will at once perceive that it is the necessary tendency of mysticism to free men from ecclesiastical tenets. Fortunately — I may well say so — it is not the Teutonic nature to pursue thoughts to their last consequences, in other words, to let them tyrannise over us, and so we see Eckhart in spite of his Ātman doctrine remaining a good Dominican — escaping the Inquisition, it is true, by the skin of his teeth ‡ — but

* Pfeiffer's edition, p. 162.

† See vol. i. [p. 187.](#)

‡ It was not till after his death that his doctrines were condemned as heretical and his writings so diligently destroyed by the Inquisition that most of them are lost.

413 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

signing all necessary orthodox confessions, and we never find that — in spite of all the recommendations of the *sopor pacis* (the sleep of peace) by Bonaventura (1221—1274) and others — quietism has with us as with the Indians drained the veins of life. For that reason I shall limit myself to the narrow compass of this chapter, and only briefly point out what a destructive influence the army of Mystics exercised on the alien traditional religion, and how on the other hand they did so much to create and promote a new philosophy in keeping with our individuality. Usually too little is made both of the negative and of the positive activity of these men.

Very striking is, in the first place, their dislike for Jewish doctrines of religion; every Mystic is, whether he will or not, a born Anti-Semite. Pious minds like Bonaventura get over the difficulty by interpreting the whole Old Testament allegorically and giving a symbolical meaning to the borrowed mythical elements — a tendency which we find fully developed five hundred years earlier in Scotus Erigena, and which we may trace still further back, to Marcion and Origines. * But this does not satisfy those souls in their thirst after true religion. The strictly orthodox Thomas à Kempis prays with pathetic simplicity to God, “Let it not be Moses or the Prophets that speak to me, but speak thyself ... from them I hear words indeed, but the spirit is absent; what they say is beautiful, but it warms not the heart.” † This feeling we meet with in almost all the Mystics, but nowhere so beautifully expressed as by the great Jacob Böhme (1575—1624). In regard to many passages in the Bible, after he has explained all that he can (*e.g.*, the whole history of creation), symbolically and allegorically, and sees that he cannot proceed any further, he simply exclaims, “Here the eyes of Moses are veiled,”

* See pp. [44](#) and [89](#).

† *De Imitatione Christi*, Book III, chap. ii.

414 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

and goes on to interpret the matter freely in his own way! * The contradiction is more serious when we come to conceptions of heaven and especially of hell. To be quite candid, we must admit that the conception of hell is really the blot of shame upon ecclesiastical doctrine. Born amid the scum of raceless slaves in Asia Minor, nurtured during the hopelessly chaotic, ignorant, bestial centuries of the declining and fallen Roman Empire, it was always repulsive to noble minds, though but few were able to rise so completely above it as Origenes and that incomprehensibly great mind, Scotus Erigena. † We can easily comprehend how few could do so, for ecclesiastical Christianity had gradually grown into a religion of heaven and hell; everything else was of little moment. Take up any old chronicles you like, it is the fear of hell that has been the most effectual, generally the sole religious motive. The immense estates of the Church, her incalculable incomes from indulgences and suchlike, she owes almost solely to the fear of hell. At a later period the Jesuits, by frankly making this fear of hell the central point of all religion, ‡ acted quite logically and soon earned the reward of consistent sincerity; for heaven and hell, reward and punishment form to-day more than ever the real or at least the effectual basis of our Church ethics. §

“Ôtez la crainte de l'enfer à un chrétien, et vous lui

* See, for example, *Mysterium magnum, oder Erklärung über das erste Buch Mosis*, chap. xix. § 1.

† See pp. [48](#) and [129](#). The extraordinary popularity of Erigena's *Division of Nature* in the thirteenth century (see pp. [274](#) and [341](#)) shows how universal was the longing to get rid of this frightful product of Oriental imagination. Luther, in spite of all orthodoxy, is often inclined to agree with Erigena, he, too, writes in his *Vierzehn Trostmittel* i. I., “Man has hell within himself.”

‡ See p. [111](#), &c.

§ The Jesuits are only more consistent than the others. I remember seeing a German girl of twelve years of age lying in convulsions after a lesson on religion. The Lutheran Duodecimo-Pope had inspired the innocent child with such terror of hell. Teachers of this kind should be cited before a criminal court.

415 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

ôtez sa croyance“, says Diderot not quite unjustly. * If we take all these facts into consideration, we shall comprehend what an effect must have been produced by the beautiful doctrine of Eckhart: “Were there no Hell and no Kingdom of Heaven, yet I would love God — Thee, Thou sweet father, and Thy sublime nature“; and, “The right, perfect essence of the Spirit is to love God for His own goodness, though there were no Heaven

and no Hell.“ † Some fifty years later the unknown author of the *Theologia deutsch*, that splendid monument of German mysticism in Catholic garb, expresses himself still more definitely, for he entitles his tenth chapter, “How perfect men have lost their fear of hell and desire of heaven,” and shows that perfection consists in freedom from these conceptions: “The freedom of those men is such that they have lost fear of pain or hell, and hope of reward or heaven, and live in pure submission and obedience to everlasting goodness, in the complete freedom of fervent love.” It is scarcely necessary to prove that between this freedom and the “quaking fear,” which Loyola holds to be the soul of religion, ‡ there is a gulf deeper and wider than that which separates planet from planet. There two radically different souls are speaking, a Teutonic and a non-Teutonic. § In the following chapter this “man of Frankfort,” as he is called, goes on to say that there is no hell in the ordinary, popular sense of a future penitentiary, but that hell is a phenomenon of our present life. This priest is obviously

* *Pensées philosophiques*, xvii.

† Cf. the Twelfth Tractate and the glossary to it. Francis of Assisi also laid almost no stress on hell and very little on heaven (Sabatier, as above, p. 308).

‡ See vol. i. [p. 569](#).

§ I remind the reader that Walfila could not translate the ideas hell and devil into Gothic, since this fortunate language knew no such conception (p. [111](#)). Hell was the name of the friendly goddess of death, as also of her empire, and points etymologically to *bergen* (to hide), *verhüllen* (to conceal), but by no means to *Infernum* (Heyne); *Teufel* has been formed from *Diabolus*.

416 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

at one with Origenes and Erigena and comes to the conclusion that “hell passes away and heaven continues to exist.” One further remark most emphatically characterises his opinion. He calls heaven and hell “two good, sure ways for man in this age,” he assigns to neither of these “ways” any preference over the other and expresses the opinion that “in hell a man may be quite at his ease and as safe as in heaven!” This view, which we find in this form or in a similar form among other Mystics, *e.g.*, Eckhart's pupils Tauler and Seuse, is especially often and clearly expressed by Jacob Böhme: it is the expression of a philosophy which has pursued the thought further, and is on the point of passing from a negative conclusion to a positive conception. Thus to the question, “Whither does the soul go when the body dies, be it blessed or condemned?” he gives the answer, “The soul does not require to leave the body, but the external, mortal life and the body separated themselves from it. The soul has previously had heaven and hell within it ... for heaven and hell are everywhere present. It is merely a turning of the will towards the love of God or towards the wrath of God, and such may take place while the body is still alive.” * Here nothing remains vague; for we

manifestly stand with both feet on the foundation of a new religion; it is not new in so far as Böhme can point in this case to the words of Christ: “The Kingdom of God cometh not with outward signs“; “The world of angels is within the place (*in loco*) of this world“; † but it is a new religion as compared with all Church doctrines. In another passage he writes “The right, holy man, who is concealed in the visible man, is in Heaven as

* *Der Weg zu Christo*, Book VI. §§ 36, 37. This conception is Indo-European and proves at once the race of the author. When the Persian Omar Khayyám sent out his soul to get knowledge, it returned with the news, “I myself am Heaven and Hell“ (*Rubáiyát*).

† *Mysterium magnum* 8, 18.

417 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

well as God, and Heaven is in him.“ * And Böhme fearlessly goes further and denies the absolute difference between good and evil; the inner foundation of the soul, he says, is neither good nor bad, God himself is both: “He is himself all Existence, he is Good and Evil, Heaven and Earth, Light and Darkness“; † it is the will that first “distinguishes“ in the mass of indifferent actions, it is by the will that the action of the doer becomes good or evil. This is pure Indian doctrine; our theologians have long since and without difficulty proved that it simply contradicts the doctrine of the Christian Church. ‡

While the mystics already named and the incalculable number of others who held similar views, whether Protestants or Catholics, remained inside the Church, without ever thinking how thoroughly they were undermining that toilsomely erected structure, there were large groups of Mystics who perhaps did not go so far in viewing the essence of religion in the light of inward experience as the *Theologia deutsch* and Jacob Böhme, or as the saintly Antoinette Bourignon (1616—80), who wished to unite all sects by abolishing the doctrines of Scripture and emphasising only the longing for God: but these teachers directly attacked all ecclesiasticism and priesthood, dogmas, scripture and sacrament. Thus Amalrich of Chartres (died 1209), Professor of Theology in Paris, rejected the whole Old Testament and all sacraments, and accepted only the direct revelation of God in the heart of each individual. This gave rise to the league of the “Brothers of the Free Spirit,“ which was, it seems, a rather licentious and outrageous society. Others again, like Johannes Wessel (1419—89) by greater moderation achieved greater success; Wessel is essentially a

* *Sendbrief* dated 18.1.1618, § 10.

† *Mysterium magnum* 8, 24.

‡ Cf., for example, the short work of Dr. Albert Peip: *Jakob Böhme*, 1860, p. 16 f.

418 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

mystic and regards religion as an inner, present experience, but in the figure of Christ he sees the divine motive power of this experience, and far from wishing to destroy the Church, which has handed down this valuable legacy, he desires to purify it by destroying the chimeras of Rome. Staupitz, the protector of Luther, holds very similar views. Men like these, who imperceptibly merge into the class of the theologians like Wyclif and Hus, are vigorous pioneers of the Reformation. Mysticism, in fact, had in so far a great deal to do with the Reformation, as Martin Luther in the depths of his heart was a mystic: he loved Eckhart and was responsible for the first printed edition of the *Theologia deutsch*; in particular, his central theory of present conversion by faith can only be understood through mysticism. On the other hand, he was annoyed by the “fanatics“ who would soon, he thought, have spoiled his life-work. Mystics like Thomas Münzer (1490—1525), who began by abusing the “delicately treading reformers“ and then openly revolted against all secular authority, have done more harm than anything else to the great political Church-reform. And even such noble men as Kaspar Schwenkfeld (1490—1561) merely frittered away their powers and awakened bitter passions by abandoning contemplative mysticism for practical Church reform. A Jacob Böhme, who quietly remains in the Church, but teaches that the sacraments (baptism and communion) are “not essentials“ of Christianity, effects much more. * The sphere of the genuine mystic's influence is within not without. Hence in

* Cf. *Der Weg zu Christo*, Book V. chap. viii., and *Von Christi Testament des Heiligen Abendmahles*, chap. iv. § 24. “A proper Christian brings his holy Church with him into the congregation. His heart is the true Church, where he should worship. Though I go to church for a thousand years and to sacrament every week and be absolved daily: if I have not Christ in me, all is false and useless vanity, a worthless, futile thing, and not forgiveness of sins“ (*Der Weg zu Christo*, Book. V. chap. vi. § 16). Concerning preaching he says:

419 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

the sixteenth century we see the good Protestant tinker Bunyan and the pious Catholic priest Molinos doing more sound and lasting work than crowds of free-thinkers to free religion from narrowly ecclesiastical and coldly historical conceptions. Bunyan, who never harmed a soul, spent the greater part of his life in prison, a victim of Protestant intolerance; the gentle Molinos, hounded like a mad dog by the Jesuits, submitted in silence to the penances imposed by the Inquisition and died from their severity. The influence of both lasted, raising to a higher level the minds of religious men within the Churches; in this way they surely paved the way for secession.

Now that I have indicated how mysticism in countless respects broke up and destroyed the un-Teutonic conceptions which had been forced upon us, it remains for me to indicate how infinitely stimulating and helpful the Mystics at all times were in the building up of our new world and our new Philosophy.

Here we might be inclined to distinguish with Kant — who, like Luther, is closely bound up with the Mystics, though he might not wish to have much to do with them, — between “dreamers of reason“ and “dreamers of feeling.“ * For as a matter of fact, two distinct leading tendencies are noticeable, the one towards the Moral and Religious, the other rather to the Metaphysical. But it would be difficult to follow out the distinction, for metaphysics and religion can never be fully separated in the mind of the Teuton. How important, for example, is the complete transference of Good and Evil to the will, which on close inspection we find already indicated in Duns Scotus and clearly expressed in Eckhart and Jacob Böhme. For this the will must be free. Now

“The Holy Ghost preaches to the holy hearer from all creatures; in all that he sees he beholds a preacher of God“ (§ 14).

* *Traüme eines Geistersehers*, &c., Part I. 3.

420 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

the feeling of necessity comes into all mysticism, since mysticism is closely bound up with nature, in which necessity is everywhere seen at work. * Hence Böhme at once calls nature “eternal,“ and denies its creation out of nothing: there he reasoned like a philosopher. But how to save freedom? Here, clearly, a moral and a metaphysical problem clutch at each other like two men drowning: and in fact things looked black till the great Kant, in whose hands the various threads which we are following — theology, mysticism, humanism and natural science — were joined, came to the rescue. It is only by the perception of the transcendental ideality of time and space that we can save freedom without fettering reason, that is, we can do so only by realising that our own being is not completely exhausted by the world of phenomena (including our own body), that rather there is a direct antagonism between the most indubitable experiences of our life and the world which we grasp with the senses and think with the brain. For example, in reference to freedom, Kant has laid down once for all the principle that “no reason can explain the possibility of freedom“; † for nature and freedom are contradictions; he who as an inveterate realist denies this will find that, if he follows out the question to its final consequences, “neither nature nor freedom remains.“ ‡ In presence of nature, freedom is simply unthinkable. “We understand quite well what freedom is in a practical connection, but in theory, so far as its nature is concerned, we cannot without contradiction even think of trying to understand it“; § for,

“the fact that my will moves my arm is not more comprehensible to

* Cf. the remarks on [p. 240 f.](#) (vol. i.)

† *Über die Fortschritte der Metaphysik* III.

‡ *Critique of Pure Reason* (Explanation of the Cosmological Idea of Freedom).

§ *Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft*, Part 3, Div. 2, Point 3 of the General Note.

421 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

me than if some one were to say that my will could also hold back the moon in its course; the difference is merely this, that I experience the former, while the latter has never occurred to my senses.“ * But the former — the freedom of my will to move my arm — I experience, and hence in another passage Kant comes to the irrefutable conclusion: “I say now, every being that cannot act but under the idea of freedom is for that very reason practically and really free.“ † In such a work as this I must, of course, avoid all minute metaphysical discussion, though indeed nothing short of that would make the matter really clear and convincing, but I hope that I have said enough to make every one feel how closely religion and philosophy are here connected. Such a problem could never suggest itself to the Jews, since their observation of nature and of their own selves was never more than skin-deep, and they remained on the childish standpoint of empiricism hooded on both sides with blinkers; much less need we mention the refuse of humanity from Africa, Egypt and elsewhere, which helped to build up the Christian Church. In this sphere therefore — where the deepest secrets of the human mind were to be unlocked — a positive structure had to be built from the very foundations; for the Hellenes had contributed little ‡ to this purpose and the Indians were as yet unknown. Augustine — in his true nature a genuine mystic — had pointed the way by his remarks on the nature of time ([p. 78](#)), and likewise Abelard in regard to space (vol. i. [p. 502](#)), but it was the Mystics proper who first went to the root of the matter. They never grow tired of emphasising the ideality of time and space. “The moment contains eternity,” says Eckhart more than once. Or again: “Everything that is in God is a present moment, without renewal

* *Träume eines Geistersehers*, Teil 2, Hauptstück 3.

† *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*, 3rd section.

‡ See vol. i. [p. 85 f.](#)

422 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

or future creation.“ * Here, as so often, the Silesian shoemaker is especially convincing, for with him such perceptions have lost almost all their abstract flavour and speak directly from the mind to the mind. If time is only a conditional form of experience, if God is in no way “subject

to space“ † then Eternity is nothing future, we already grasp it perfectly and completely, and so Böhme says in his famous lines:

Weme ist Zeit wie Ewigkeit
Und Ewigkeit wie diese Zeit,
Der ist befreit von allem Streit. ‡

The other closely related problem of the simultaneous sway of freedom and necessity was likewise always present to the Mystics; they speak often of their “own“ mutable will in contrast to the “everlasting“ immutable will of necessity, and so forth; and though it was Kant who first solved the riddle, yet a contemporary of Jacob Böhme, the great “dreamer of feeling,” approached very near to it. Giordano Bruno (1548—1600), one of the greatest “dreamers of reason“ of all times, propounds the paradox that freedom and necessity are synonymous! Here we see the audacity of true mystical thought; it is not restrained by the halter of purely formal logic, it looks outwards with the eye of the genuine investigator and admits that the law of nature is necessity, but then it probes its own inner soul and asserts “my law is freedom.“ § So much for the positive contribution of the Mystics to modern metaphysics.

* Sermon 95, in Pfeiffer's edition.

† *Beschreibung der drei Prinzipien göttlichen Wesens*, chap. xiv. § 85.

‡ Whoever regards time as eternity and eternity as present time is freed from all conflict.

§ Cf. *De immenso et innumerabilibus* I. II., and *Del infinito, universo e mondi*, towards the end of the First Dialogue. Here by the intuition of genius the same thing is discovered as was established two hundred years later by the brilliant critical judgment of Kant, who says: “Nature and freedom can be attributed without contradiction to the same thing, but in different connections, at one time to the thing as it appears at another to the thing itself.“ (*Prolegomena*, § 53).

423 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

Still more important is the part they played in the establishment of a pure doctrine of morals. The most essential points have been already mentioned: ethical merit centred in Will, purely as such; religion not a matter of future reward and future punishment, but a present act, a grasping of Eternity at the present moment. This gives rise to an utterly different idea of sin, and consequently of virtue, from that which the Christian Church has inherited from Judaism. Thus Eckhart, for example, says: “That man cannot be called virtuous who does works as virtue commands, but only the man who does these works out of virtue; not by prayer can a heart become pure, but from a pure heart the pure prayer flows.“ * We find this thought in all Mystics in countless passages, it is the central point of their faith; it forms the kernel of Luther's religion; † it was most completely expressed by Kant, who says: “There is nothing in the world nor anything outside of it which can be termed absolutely and altogether good, except a good Will. A good Will is

esteemed to be so not by the effect which it produces nor by its fitness for accomplishing any given end, but by its mere good volition, that is, it is good in itself ... even though it should happen that, owing to an unhappy conjunction of events or the scanty endowment of unkind nature, this good volition should be deprived of power to execute its benign intent, executing nothing and only retaining the good Will, still it would shine like a jewel in itself and by virtue

* *Spruch* 43. *Cf.*, too, Sermon 13, where he says that all works shall be done “without any why.” “I say verily, as long as you do works not from an inward motive but for the sake of heaven or God or your eternal salvation, you are acting wrongly.”

† *Cf.* the whole work on *Die Freiheit eines Christenmenschen*. How new and directly anti-Roman this thought appeared is very clear from Hans Sachs' *Disputation zwischen einem Chorherrn und Schuchmacher* (1524), in which the shoemaker especially defends, as being “Luther's idea,” the doctrine that “good works are not done to gain heaven or from fear of hell.”

424 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

of its native lustre. The usefulness or fruitlessness of acts cannot add to or detract from this lustre.” * Unfortunately, I must limit myself to this central point of Teutonic ethics; everything else is derived from it.

But I must mention one thing more before taking leave of the Mystics — their influence upon natural science. Passionate love of nature is strongly marked in most of the Mystics, hence the extraordinary power of intuition which we notice in them. They frequently identify nature with God, often they put nature alongside of God as something Eternal, but they hardly ever fall into the hereditary error of the Christian Church, that of teaching men to despise and hate nature. It is true that Erigena is still so much under the influence of the Church Fathers that he regards the admiration of nature as a sin comparable to breach of marriage vows, † but how different is the view of Francis of Assisi! Read his famous Hymn to the Sun, which he wrote down shortly before his death as the last and complete expression of his feelings, and sang day and night till he died, to such a bright and cheerful melody that ecclesiastically pious souls were shocked at hearing it from a death-bed. ‡ Here he speaks of “mother” earth, of his “brothers” the sun, wind and fire, of his “sisters” the moon, stars and water, of the many-coloured flowers and fruits, and lastly of his dear “sister,” the *morte corporale*, and the whole closes with praise, blessing and thanks to the *altissimu, bon signore*. § In this last, most heartfelt hymn of praise

* *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*, Division 1. *Cf.*, too, the concluding part of the *Träume eines Geistersehers*, and especially the beautiful interpretation of the passage in *Matthew* XXV. 35-40, a proof that in the eyes of God only those actions have a value which a man performs without thinking of the possibility of reward. This interpretation is found in his *Religion innerhalb der Grenzen*, Section 4, Part I., close of first division.

† *De divisione naturae* 5, 36.

‡ Sabatier, *loc. cit.* p. 382.

§ By this song Francis proves himself a pure Teuton in absolute

425 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

this holy man does not touch upon a single dogma of the Church. Few things are more instructive than a comparison between these outpourings of a man who had become altogether religious and now gathers his sinking strength to sing exultingly to all nature this rapturous unecclesiastical *tat tvam asi* * and the orthodox, soulless, cold confession of faith of the learned, experienced politician and theologian Dante in the twenty-fourth canto of his *Paradiso*. † Dante with his song closed an old, dead age, Francis began a new one. Jacob Böhme puts nature above Holy Scripture: “There is no book in which you will find more of divine wisdom than the book of nature spread before you in the form of a green and growing meadow; there you will see the wondrous power of God, you will smell and taste it, though it be but an image ... but to the searcher it is a beloved teacher, he will learn very much from it.” ‡ This tendency of mind revolutionised our natural science. I need only refer to Paracelsus, whose importance in almost all the natural sciences is daily becoming more and more recognised. The great and enduring part of this remarkable man's work is not the discovery of facts — by his unfortunate connection with magic and alchemy he spread many absurd ideas — but the spirit with which he inspired natural science. Virchow, who is certainly not prejudiced in favour of mysticism, and who shows poor courage in calling Paracelsus a “charlatan,” nevertheless expressly declares that it was he who delivered

contrast to Rome. Among the Aryan Indians we find farewell songs of pious men, which correspond almost word for word to that of Francis. Cf. the one translated by Herder in his *Gedanken einiger Brahmanen*:

Earth, thou my mother, and thou father, breath of the air,
And thou fire, my friend, thou kinsman of mine, O stream,
And my brother, the sky, to all I with reverence proclaim
My warmest thanks, &c.

* “That thou art also”: *i.e.*, man's recognition of himself.

† Cf., too, [p. 106](#), note 2.

‡ *Die drei Principien göttlichen Wesens*, chap. viii. § 12.

426 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

the death-blow to ancient medicine and gave science the “idea of life.” * Paracelsus is the creator of real physiology, neither more nor less; and that is so very high an honour that a soberly scientific historian of medicine speaks of “the sublimely radiant figure of this hero.” † Paracelsus was a fanatical mystic; he said that “the inner light stands high above bestial reason”; hence his extreme one-sidedness. He would,

for example, have little to do with anatomy; it seemed to him “dead,” and he said that the chief thing was “the conclusion to be drawn from great nature — that is to say, the outward man — concerning the little nature of the individual.” But in order to get at this outward man, he established two principles which have become essential in all natural science — observation and experiment. In this way he succeeded in founding a rational system of pathology: “Fevers are storms, which cure themselves,” &c.; likewise rational therapeutics: “The aim of medicine should be to support nature in her efforts to heal.” And how beautiful is his admonition to young doctors: “The loftiest basis of medicine is love ... it is love which teaches art and outside of love no doctor is born.” ‡ One more service of this adventurous mystic should be mentioned: he was the first to introduce the German language into the University! “Truth and freedom” was, in fact, the motto of all genuine mysticism; for that reason its apostles banished the language of privileged hypocritical learning from the lecture-rooms and firmly refused to wear the red livery of the faculty:

* Croonian Lecture, delivered in London on March 16, 1893.

† Hirschel, *Geschichte der Medicin*, 2nd ed. p. 208. Here the reader will find a detailed appreciation of Paracelsus, from which some of the following facts are taken.

‡ Cf. Kahlbaum: *Theophrastus Paracelsus*, Basel, 1894, p. 63. This lecture brings to light much new material which proves how false were the charges brought against the great man — drunkenness, wild life, &c. The fable that he could not write and speak Latin fluently is also disproved.

427 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

“the universities supply only the red cloak, the trencher cap and a four-cornered fool.” * Mysticism achieved a great deal more, especially in the sphere of medicine and chemistry. Thus the mystic van Helmont (1577—1644) discovered laudanum to deaden pain, and carbonic acid; he was the first to recognise the true nature of hysteria, catarrh, &c. Glisson (1579—1677), who by his discovery of the irritability of living tissue very greatly advanced our knowledge of the animal organism, was a pronounced mystic, who said of himself that “inner thought” guided the scalpel. † We could easily add to the above list, but all that we require is to point to the fact. The mystic has — as we see in the case of Stahl with his phlogiston ‡ and of the great astronomer Kepler, an equally zealous mystic and Protestant — thrown many flashes of genius upon the path of natural science and the philosophy based thereon. The mystic was neither a reliable guide nor a reliable worker; but yet his services are not to be overlooked. Not only does he discover much, as we have just seen, not only does he fill with his wealth of ideas the frequently very empty arsenal of the so-called empiricists (Francis Bacon, for example, copies chapter after chapter from Paracelsus without any acknowledgment); but he possesses a peculiar instinct of his own, which nothing in the world

can replace and which more cautious men must know how to turn to account. The philosopher Baumgarten recognised even in the eighteenth century that “vague perception often carries within it the germs of clear perception.” § Kant has made a profound remark in this connection.

* It is noteworthy that the idea and term “Experience“ (*Erfahrung*) were introduced into German thought and the German language by Paracelsus, the mystic (*cf.* Eucken: *Terminologie*, p. 125).

† In the lecture mentioned above Virchow proves that Glisson and not Haller originated the doctrine of irritability.

‡ *Cf.* p. [322 f.](#)

§ Quoted from Heinrich von Stein: *Entstehung der neueren Aesthetik*, 1886, p. 353 f.

428 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

As is well known, this philosopher recognises no interpretation of empirical phenomena but the mechanical, and that, as he convincingly proves, because “only those causes of world-phenomena which are based upon the laws of motion of mere matter are capable of being comprehended“; but this does not prevent him from making the remark, which is worth taking to heart, concerning Stahl's nowadays much ridiculed idea of life-power: “Yet I am convinced that Stahl, who is fond of explaining the animal changes organically, is often nearer the truth than Hofmann, Boerhaave and others, who leave out of account the immaterial forces and cling to the mechanical causes.“ * And so it seems to me that these men who are “nearer the truth“ have done great service in the building up of modern science and philosophy, and we cannot afford to neglect them either now or in the future.

From this point there runs a narrow path along the loftiest heights — accessible only to the elect — leading over to that artistic intuition closely related to the mystical, the importance of which Goethe revealed to us before the end of the eighteenth century. His discovery of the intermaxillary bone was made in the year 1784, the metamorphosis of plants appeared in 1790, the introduction to comparative anatomy 1795. Here that gushing enthusiasm which had awakened Luther's scorn, that “raving with reason and feeling“ which so angered the mild-tempered Kant, were elevated and purified to “seeing,“ after a night lit up by will-o'-the-wisps, a new day had dawned, and the genius of the new Teutonic philosophy could print together with his *Comparative Anatomy* the splendid poem which begins:

Wagt ihr, also bereitet, die letzte Stufe zu steigen
Dieses Gipfels, so reicht mir die Hand und offnet den freien
Blick ins weite Feld der Natur....

* *Träume eines Geistersehers*, Teil i. Hauptst. 2.

429 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

and closes with the words:

Freue dich, höchstes Geschöpf der Natur; du fühltest dich fähig,
Ihr den höchsten Gedanken, zu dem sie schaffend sich
aufschwang,
Nachzudenken. Hier stehe nun still und wende die Blicke
Rückwärts, prüfe, vergleiche, und nimm vom Munde der Muse,
Dass du schauest, nicht schwärmst, die liebliche, volle Gewissheit.
*

THE HUMANISTS

It is self-evident that the Humanists, in a certain sense, form a direct contrast to the Mystics; yet there is no real contradiction between them. Thus Böhme, though not a learned man, has a very high opinion of the heathen, in so far as they are “children of free will,” and says that “in them the spirit of freedom has revealed great wonders, as we see from the wisdom which they have bequeathed to us;” † indeed, he boldly asserts that “in these intelligent heathens the inner sacred kingdom is reflected.” ‡ Almost all genuine Humanists, when they have the necessary courage, devote much thought to the already discussed central problem of all ethics and are all without exception of the opinion of Pomponazzi (1462—1525) that a virtue which aims at reward is no virtue; that to regard fear and hope as moral motives is childish and worthy only of the uneducated mob; that the idea of immortality should be considered from a purely philosophical standpoint and has nothing to do with the theory of morals, &c. §

The Humanists are just as eager as the Mystics to

* If ye dare, thus armed, to ascend the last pinnacle of this height give me your hand and open your eyes freely to survey the wide field of nature....

Rejoice, thou sublimest of nature's creatures! Thou feelest the power to follow her in the loftiest thought to which she soared in the act of Creation. Here pause in peace, turn back thine eyes, probe, compare, and take from the lips of the muse the sweet full certainty that thou seest and art no dreamer of dreams.

† *Mysterium pansophicum* 8, Text, § 9.

‡ *Mysterium magnum*, chap. xxxv. § 24.

§ *Tractatus de immortalitate animae*. (I quote from F. A. Lange.)

430 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

tear down the philosophy of religion imposed upon us by Rome and to build up a new one in its place, but their chief interests and efforts lie in a different direction. Their weapon of destruction is scepticism; that of the Mystics was faith. Even when humanism did not lead to frank scepticism, it always laid the foundation of very independent judgment. * Here we should at once mention Dante, who honours Virgil more than any of the Church Fathers, and who, far from teaching seclusion and

asceticism, considers man's real happiness to lie in the exercise of his individual powers. † Petrarch, who is usually mentioned as the first real humanist, follows the example of his great predecessor: he calls Rome an “*empia Babilonia*” and the Church an “impudent wench:”

Fondata in casta et humil povertate,
Contra i tuoi fondatori alzi le corna,
Putta sfacciata!

Like Dante he upbraids Constantine, who by his fatal gift, *mal nate ricchezze*, has transformed the once chaste, unassuming bride of Christ into “a shameless adulteress.” ‡ But scepticism soon followed so inevitably in the train of humanistic culture that it filled the College of Cardinals and even ascended the Papal stool; it was the Reformation in league with the narrow Basque mind that first brought about a pietistic reaction. Even at the beginning of the sixteenth century the Italian humanists establish the principle, *intus ut libet, foris ut moris est*, and Erasmus publishes his immortal *Praise of Folly*, in which churches, priesthood, dogmas, ethical doctrine, in

* Cf. especially Paulsen: *Geschichte des gelehrten Unterrichts*, 2nd ed. i. 73 f.

† *De Monarchia* iii, 15.

‡ *Sonetti e canzoni* (in the third part). The first to prove the invalidity of the pretended gift of Constantine were the famous humanist Lorenzo Valla and the lawyer and theologian Krebs (see vol. i. [p. 562](#)). Valla also denounced the secular power of the Pope in whatever form, for the latter was *vicarius Christi et non etiam Caesaris* (see Döllinger: *Papstfabeln*, 2nd ed. p. 118).

431 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

short, the whole Roman structure, the whole “foul-smelling weeds of theology,” as he calls them, are so denounced that some have been of opinion that this one work contributed more than anything else to the Reformation. * Similar methods and equal ability are revealed with as much force in the eighteenth century by Voltaire.

The most important contribution of the Humanists towards the construction of a new Teutonic philosophy is the relinking of our intellectual life to that of the related Indo-Europeans, in particular to that of the Hellenes, † and as a result of this the gradual development of the conception “man.” The Mystics had destroyed the idea of time and so of history — a perfectly justifiable reaction against the abuse of history by the Church; it was the task of the Humanists to build up true history anew, and so to put an end to the evil dream which the Chaos had conjured up. From Picus of Mirandola, who sees the divine guidance of God in the intellectual achievement of the Hellene, down to that great Humanist Johann Gottfried Herder, who asks himself “whether God might not after all have a plan in the vocation and institution of the human race,” and who collects the “Voices” of all peoples, we see the historical horizon being extended, and we notice how this contact with

the

* All the first great Humanists of Germany are anti-scholastic — (Lamprecht, as above, iv. p. 69). It is not right to reproach men like Erasmus, Coornhert, Thomas More, &c., for not joining the Reformation later. For such men were in consequence of their humanistic studies intellectually far too much in advance of their time to prefer a Lutheran or Calvinistic dogmatism to the Romish. They rightly felt that scepticism would always come to terms more easily with a religion of good works than with one of faith; they anticipated — correctly as it turned out — a new era of universal intolerance, and thought that it would be more feasible to destroy one single utterly rotten Church from within than several Churches which from the humanistic standpoint were just as impossible, but had been steeled by conflicts. Regarded from this high watch-tower the Reformation meant a new lease of life to ecclesiastical error.

† The Indologists were the real humanists of the nineteenth century. Cf. my small work [Arische Weltanschauung](#), 1905.

432 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

Hellenes led to a more and more distinct endeavour to arrange and thus give shape to experiences. And while the Humanists, in thus seeking inspiration outside, certainly over-estimated their own capacity just as much as the Mystics did in seeking it inwardly, yet many splendid results were achieved in both cases. I have shown how introspection led the Mystics to discoveries in outward nature — an unexpected, paradoxical result; the Humanists struck out in the opposite direction, but with equal success; in their case it was the study of mankind around them that conduced to the strict delimitation of national individuality and to the decisive emphasising of the importance of the individual personality. It was philologists, not anatomists, who first propounded the theories of absolutely different human races, and though there may be a reaction at the present day, because the linguists have been inclined to lay too much stress on the single criterion of language, * yet the humanistic distinctions still hold and always will hold good; for they are facts of nature, facts, moreover, which can be more surely derived from the study of the intellectual achievements of peoples than from statistics of the breadth of skulls. So too out of the study of the dead languages there resulted a better knowledge of the living ones. We have seen how in India scientific philology was the outcome of a fervent longing to understand a half-forgotten idiom (vol. i. [p. 432](#)); the same thing took place among ourselves. A thorough knowledge of foreign, but related languages led to an ever more and more exact knowledge of the thorough development of our own. It must be confessed that this led, in so far as language is concerned, to a dark period of transition; the strong primal instinct of the people became awakened and, as usual, pedantic learning played havoc with this most sacred heritage, yet on the whole our languages came forth in purer beauty from the classical furnace;

* Cf. vol. i. [p. 264](#).

433 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

they were less powerful perhaps than before, but more pliant, more flexible and thus more perfect instruments for expressing the thoughts of a more advanced culture. The Roman Church, not the Humanists, as is so often ignorantly asserted, was the enemy of our language; on the contrary, it was the Humanists who, in league with the Mystics, introduced the native languages into literature and science; from Petrarch, the perfecter of the poetical language of Italy, and Boccaccio (one of the greatest of the early Humanists), the founder of Italian prose, to Boileau and Herder, we see this everywhere, and in the universities it was, in addition to Mystics, like Paracelsus, pre-eminent Humanists, like Christian Thomasius, who forcibly introduced the mother-tongues, and thus rescued them, even in the circles of learning, from that contempt into which they had fallen owing to the enduring influence of Rome. We can scarcely estimate what this means for the development of our philosophy. The Latin tongue is like a lofty dam which dries up the intellectual field and shuts out the element of metaphysics; it has no sense of the mysterious, there is no walking on the boundary between the two realms of the Explorable and the Inexplorable; it is a legal and not a religious language. Indeed we can boldly assert that without the vehicle of our own Teutonic languages we should never have succeeded in giving shape and expression to our philosophy. *

But however great this service may be, it by no means

* It would be extremely profitable and illuminating, though out of place here, to consider how inevitably our various modern languages have influenced the philosophies which are expressed by them. The English language, for example, which is richer almost than any other in poetical suggestive power, cannot follow a subtle thought into its most secret windings; at a definite point it fails, and so proves itself suitable only for sober, practical empiricism or poetical raptures; on both sides of the line separating these two spheres it remains too far from the boundary-line itself to be able to pass easily, to float backwards and forwards, from the one to the other. The German

434 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

exhausts the contribution of the Humanists to our work of culture. This emphatic — I might almost say sculptural — chiselling of the distinct, this assertion of the justification, or I may say of the sacred character of the Individual, led for the first time to the conscious acknowledgement of the value of personality. It is true that this fact was already implicitly embodied in the tendency of thought of a Duns Scotus (p. 409); but it only became common property through the works of the Humanists. The idea of Genius — that is, of personality in its highest potentiality — is what is essential. The men whose knowledge embraced a wide sphere gradually noticed in how various a degree the personality reveals itself

autonomously, and so as absolutely original and creative. From the beginning of the Humanistic movement we can trace the dawn of this inevitable perception, till in the Humanists of the eighteenth century it became so dominant that it found expression on all sides and in the most varying forms, from Winckelmann's brilliant intuition, which confined itself to the most clearly visible works, to Hamann's endeavours to descend by dark paths to the innermost souls of creative spirits. The finest remark was made by Diderot in that monument of Humanism, the great French Encyclopaedia: it is, he says, *l'activité de l'âme* — i.e., the higher activity of the soul — which makes up genius. What in the case of others is remembrance, is in the case of genius actual intuitive perception; in genius everything springs into life and remains living.

language, though less poetical and compact, is an incomparably better instrument for philosophy; in its structure the logical principle is more predominant, and its wide scale of shades of expression allows the finest distinctions to be drawn; for that reason it is suited both for the most accurate analysis and the indications of perceptions that cannot be analysed. In spite of their brilliant talents the Scottish philosophers have never risen above the negative criticism of Hume; Immanuel Kant, of Scottish descent, received the German language as his birthright and could thus create a philosophy which no skill can translate into English (*cf.* vol. i. [p. 298](#)).

435 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

“If genius has passed by, it is as if the essence of things were transformed, for genius diffuses its character over everything that it touches.” * Herder makes a similar remark: “The geniuses of the human race are the friends and saviours, guardians and helpers of the race. A beautiful act, which they inspire, exercises an endless and indelible effect.” † Diderot and Herder rightly distinguish between genius and the greatest talent. Rousseau also distinguishes genius from talent and intellect, but he does it, after his fashion, in a more subjective way, by expressing the opinion that he who does not possess genius himself will never understand wherein it consists. One of his letters contains a profound remark: “*C'est le génie qui rend le savoir utile.*” ‡ Besides this, Rousseau has devoted a whole essay to the Hero, who is the brother of the genius, and like him a triumph of personality; Schiller indicates the affinity of the two by characterising the ideas of the genius as “heroic.” “Without heroes no people,” cried Rousseau, and thereby gave powerful expression to the Teutonic view of life. And what stamps a man as a hero? It is pre-eminence of Soul; not animal courage — he emphasises this in particular — but the power of personality. § Kant defines genius as “the talent to discover that which cannot be taught or learned.” ¶ It would be easy to multiply these few quotations by the hundred, to such an extent had humanistic culture gradually brought into the foreground of human interest the question of the importance of personality in contrast to the tyranny of so-called super-personal revelations and laws.

It was distinction between

* See the article *Génie* in the *Encyclopédie*: one must read the whole six pages of the article. Interesting remarks on the same subject in Diderot's essay *De la Poésie dramatique*.

† *Kalligone*, Part II. v. 1.

‡ *Lettre à M. de Scheyb*, 15 Juillet 1756.

§ *Dictionnaire de musique* and *Discours sur la vertu la plus nécessaire aux héros*.

¶ *Anthropologie* § 87c.

435 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

individuals (a matter absolutely unknown to mysticism) which first revealed the full importance of pre-eminent personalities as the true bearers of a culture, genuine, liberal, and capable of development; that is why this distinction was one of the most beneficial achievements of the rise and for the rise of our new culture; for it put really great men on the pedestal to which they rightly belong, and where every one can clearly see them. Nothing short of this is freedom — unconditionally to acknowledge human greatness, in whatever way it may arise. This “greatest bliss,” as Goethe called it, the Humanists won back for us; henceforth we must strive with all our power to keep it. Whoever would rob us of it, though he came down from heaven, is our mortal foe.

I do not intend to say anything more about the Humanists, for what I could say would only be a repetition of what is universally known; in their case I may take it for granted, as I could not in the case of the Mystics, that the facts, as also their importance, are on the whole correctly estimated; it was only necessary to emphasise that brilliant central point — the emancipation of the individual — because it is generally overlooked; it is only by the eye of genius that we can attain a bright and radiant philosophy, and it is only in our own languages that it can win its full expression.

THE NATURALIST-PHILOSOPHERS

All men of culture are equally familiar with this last group of men struggling for a new philosophy — the Naturalist-Philosophers. In their case, too, I can limit myself to the indications demanded by the nature and aim of this chapter. I am, however, forced to a certain detail because it is essential that I should, more emphatically and clearly than is usual, bring home to the reader who is not widely read in philosophy, the

437 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

importance of this essential feature of our culture; this detail will, I hope, serve as an enlightenment of our understanding.

The essential point is this, that men, in their desire to understand the

world, are no longer satisfied with authoritative, superhuman claims, but turn once more to the world itself and question it; for centuries that had been forbidden. If we examine the matter closely, we shall see that this is a peculiarity common to all the groups which represent the awakening of Teutonism. For the Mystic absorbs himself into the world of his own mind, and also, therefore, into the great world — and grasps with such might the direct presence of his individual life that testimony of Scripture and doctrine of faith fade into something subsidiary; his method might be described as the rendering of the subjectively given material of the world into something objective. The task of the Humanist, on the other hand, is to collect and test all the different human evidences — truly a weighty document of the world's history; the mere endeavour proves an objective interest in human nature as a whole, and no other method could more quickly undermine the false pretensions of so-called authority. Even in the case of theology this new tendency had asserted itself; for Duns Scotus, by desiring completely to separate reason and world from faith, freed them and gave them independent life, while Roger Bacon, a brother of the same order, demanded a study of nature fettered by no theological considerations, and thereby gave the first impulse to true naturalist philosophy. I say “naturalist philosophy,” not “nature philosophy,” for the latter expression is claimed by definite systems, whereas I wish merely to lay stress upon a method. *

* By “nature philosophy” we understand in the first place the childlike and childish materialism, the use of which, “as manure to enrich the ground for philosophy” (Schopenhauer), cannot be denied, and in the second place its opposite, the transcendental idealism of Schelling, the good of which is, I suppose, to be estimated according to

438 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

But this method is a matter of primary importance, inasmuch as it forms the bond of union, and has enabled our philosophy, in spite of differences of aim and of attempted solutions, to develop itself on the whole as a combined entity and to become a genuine element of culture, because it has paved the way for, and, to a certain degree, has already established, a new philosophy. The essence of this method is observation of nature, wholly disinterested observation, aiming solely at the discovery of truth. Such philosophy as this is philosophy in the shape of science; this it is which distinguishes it not only from theology and mysticism, but also — as we should be careful to note — from that dangerous and ever barren type, philosophy in the shape of logic. Theology is justified by the fact that it serves either a great idea or a political purpose, mysticism is a direct phenomenon of life; but to apply mere logic to the interpretation of the world (the outer and the inner); to raise logic, instead of intuition or experience, to the position of lawgiver, means nothing but fettering truth with manacles, and betokens (as I have tried

to prove in the first chapter) nothing less than a new outbreak of superstition. That is why we see the new period of naturalist philosophy start with a general revolt against Aristotle. The Greek had not only analysed the formal laws of thought and so made their use more sure, for which he deserved the gratitude of all future generations, but he had also undertaken to solve all problems, even those which it might be impossible to investigate, by means of logic; this had rendered science impossible. * For the silent assumption of logic as law-giver is, that man is the measure of all things, whereas in reality, as a merely logical being, he is not even the measure of himself. Telesius

the old aesthetic dogma, that a work of art is to be valued the more highly the less it serves any conceivable purpose.

* Cf. the remarks on [p. 89](#) (vol. i.) and under "Science," [p. 303 f.](#) (vol. ii.).

439 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

(1508-86), a great Neapolitan mathematician and naturalist, a forerunner of Harvey as regards the discovery of the circulation of the blood, was perhaps the first to make it his special task to clear the hapless human brain of this Aristotelian cobweb. Roger Bacon had, it is true, already made a timid start, and Leonardo, with the coolness of genius had called Aristotle's doctrine of soul and of God a "lying science" (vol. i. [p. 82](#)); Luther, too, in his early days, while still within the fold of the Roman Church, is said to have been a violent opponent of Aristotle, and to have intended to purge philosophy from his influence; * but now there came forward men who had the courage with their own hands to sweep aside the falsehood, in order to find room for the truth. They contended not solely and not chiefly against Aristotle, but against the whole prevailing system, according to which logic, instead of being a handmaid, sat as Queen upon the throne. Campanella, with his theory of perception, and Giordano Bruno were the immediate disciples of Telesius; both helped bravely to hurl down the logical idol with the feet of clay. Francis Bacon, who, although not to be compared with these two as a philosopher, yet exercised a much wider influence, was directly dependent upon Telesius on the one hand and Paracelsus on the other, that is, upon two sworn Anti-Aristotelians. With his criticism of all Hellenic thought he certainly shot far beyond the mark, but precisely by this he succeeded in more or less making *tabula rasa* for genuine science and scientific philosophy, that is, for the only correct method which he has brilliantly characterised in the introduction to his *Instauratio Magna* as *inter empiricam et rationalem facultatem conjugium verum et legitimum*. It was not long

* This assertion I take from the *Discours de la conformité de la foi avec la raison*, § 12, of Leibniz. At a later period Luther expressed the opinion: "I venture to say that a potter has more knowledge of the things of nature than is to be found in those books (ot

Aristotle).“ See his *Sendschreiben an den Adel*, Punkt 25.

440 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

before out of the fold of the Roman Church a Gassendi (1592-1655) appeared, whose *Anti-Aristotelian Exercises* are described by Lange as “one of the keenest and most exultant attacks upon Aristotelian philosophy”; though the young priest considered it more prudent to leave only fragments of his book unburnt, it still remains a sign of the times, and all the more so, as Gassendi became one of the principal stimulators of the sciences of observation and of the strictly mathematical and mechanical interpretation of natural phenomena. Aristotle had taken the fatal step from observation of nature to theology; now comes a theologian who destroys the Aristotelian sophisms and leads the human mind back to pure contemplation of nature.

THE OBSERVATION OF NATURE

The principal point in the new philosophical efforts — from Roger Bacon in the thirteenth century to Kant at the beginning of the nineteenth — is therefore the systematic emphasising of observation as the source of knowledge. From this time forth the practice of faithful observation became the criterion of every philosopher who is to be taken seriously. The word nature must of course be taken in the most comprehensive sense. Hobbes, for example, studied chiefly human society, not physics or medicine, but in this division of nature he has proved his capacity of observation and shown that he is scientific by the fact that he confined himself almost exclusively to the subject with which he was best acquainted, namely, the State. Yet it is a fact that all our epoch-making philosophers have won their spurs in the “exact” sciences, and they possess in addition an extensive culture, that is to say, they are masters of method, and of the material dealt with. Thus René Descartes (1596-1650) is essentially a mathematician, and that meant in those days, when mathematics were being daily developed out

441 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

of the needs of the discoverers, a natural scientist and astronomer. Nature, therefore, in her phenomena of motion was familiar to him from his youth. Before he began to philosophise, he became in addition a keen anatomist and physiologist, so that he was able not only as a physicist to write a treatise on the Nature of Light, but also as embryologist one on the Development of the Foetus. Moreover, he had with philosophic intent “read diligently the great book of the world” (as he himself tells us); he had been soldier, man of the world, courtier; he had practised the art of music so successfully that he was impelled to publish an *Outlines of*

Music; he so applied himself to swordsmanship that he was able to issue a *Theory of Fencing*; and he did all this, as he expressly tells us, in order to be able to think more correctly than the scholars who spend all their lives in their study. * And now, disciplined by the accurate observation of outward nature, this rare man turned his glance inwards and observed nature in his own self. This attitude is henceforth — in spite of divergences in the individual — typical. Leibniz, it is true, was little more than a mathematician, but this made it impossible for him — in spite of the scholasticism with which he was from youth imbued — to depart from the mechanical interpretation of natural phenomena; it is all very well for us to-day to laugh at the “pre-established harmony,” but we should not forget that this monstrous supposition proves loyal adherence to natural scientific method and perception. †

* *Discours de la méthode pour bien conduire sa raison et chercher la vérité dans les sciences*, Part I.

† The system of Leibniz is a last heroic effort to enlist scientific method in the service of an historical, absolute theory of God, which in reality destroys all scientific knowledge of nature. In contrast to Thomas Aquinas, this attempt to reconcile faith and reason proceeds from reason, not from faith. However, reason here means not only logical ratiocination, but great mathematical principles of true natural science; and it is just because there is in Leibniz an insuperable

442 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

Locke was led to philosophic speculation by medical studies; Berkeley, though a minister, in his youth made a thorough study both of chemistry and physiology, and his brilliant *Theory of Vision* intuitively divines much that was later confirmed by exact science, thus testifying to the success of the correct scientific method when supported by great talents. Wolf was a remarkably capable man, not only in the sphere of mathematics, but likewise in that of physics, and he had also mastered the other natural sciences of his time. Hume certainly, so far as I know, read more diligently in “the book of the world,” as Descartes calls it, than in that of nature; history and psychology — not physics or physiology — were the field of his exact studies; this very fact has cramped his philosophical speculation in certain directions; he who has a keen eye for such things will soon observe that the fundamental weakness of Hume's thought is, that it is fed not from without, but only from within, and this always

element of empirical, irrefutable truth, while Thomas operates only with shadows, that the absurdity of Leibniz' system is more apparent. A man who was so absolutely ignorant of nature as Thomas could mislead himself and others by sophisms; but Leibniz was forced to show that the supposition of a double kingdom — Nature and Supernature — is altogether impossible, and that simply because he was familiar with the mathematical and mechanical interpretation of natural phenomena. Thereby the brilliant attempt of Leibniz became epoch-making. As a metaphysician he belongs to the great thinkers; that is proved by the one fact that he asserted the transcendental ideality of space and sought to prove it by profound mathematical and philosophical

arguments (see details in Kant: *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Naturwissenschaft*, 2nd Section, Theorem 4, Note 2). His greatness as a thinker in pure natural science is proved by his theory that the sum of forces in nature is unchangeable, whereby the so-called law of Conservation of Energy, of which we are so proud as an achievement of the nineteenth century, was really enunciated. No less significant is the extremely individualistic character of his philosophy. In contrast to the All-pervading Unity of Spinozism (an idea which was repugnant to him), "individuation," "specification" is for him the basis of all knowledge. "In the whole world there are not two beings incapable of being distinguished," he says. Here we see the genuine Teutonic thinker. (Particularly well discussed in Ludwig Feuerbach's *Darstellung der Leibnizschen Philosophie*, § 3).

443 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

means a predominance of logic at the cost of constructive, gropingly inventive imagination, and explains Hume's purely negative result in spite of his extraordinary intellectual powers; as a personality he is incomparably greater than Locke, yet I do not think I err in saying that the latter gave birth to many more constructive ideas. And yet we count him among the natural investigators, for within the purely human sphere he has observed more acutely or truly than any of his predecessors, and never departed from the method which he propounded in his first work: observation and experiment. * Finally, in the case of Kant, comprehensive knowledge in all branches and thorough study of natural science during a whole long life form features which are too often overlooked. Herder, his pupil, tells us: "The history of man, of races, of nature, physics, mathematics and experience were the sources from which he drew the inspiration which revealed itself in his lectures and conversation; nothing worth knowing was indifferent to him." Kant's literary work in the service of science stretches from his twentieth to his seventieth year, from his *Gedanken von der wahren Schätzung der lebendigen Kräfte*, which he began to work out in the year 1744, to his essay: *Etwas über den Einfluss des Mondes auf die Witterung*, which appeared in 1794. For thirty years his most popular lectures were those which he delivered in winter on anthropology and in summer on physical geography; and his daily companion in his last years, Wasianski, tells us that to the very last Kant's animated conversation at table dealt chiefly with meteorology, physics, chemistry, natural history

* We must also note the fact that Hume would scarcely have attained his philosophical results without the achievements of the philosophical thought around him, particularly those of the French scientific "sensualists" of his time. In many ways Hume seems to me to have more affinity with such Italian Humanistic sceptics as Pomponazzi and Vanini than with the genuine group of those who observe nature and draw their philosophy therefrom.

444 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

and politics. * It is true that Kant was only a thinker about natural observations, not (so far as I know) himself an observer and experimenter, as Descartes had been; but he was an excellent indirect observer, as is proved by such writings as his description of the great earthquake of November 1, 1755; his thoughts on the volcanoes of the moon, on the theory of winds and many other things; and I need hardly remind the reader that Kant's philosophic thoughts in cosmic nature have produced two immortal works, the *Allgemeine Naturgeschichte und Theorie des Himmels oder Versuch von der Verfassung und dem mechanischen Ursprunge des ganzen Weltgebäudes* (1755), dedicated to Frederick the Great, and the *Die Metaphysischen Anfangsgründe der Naturwissenschaft* (1786). The method which Kant learnt from successful observation of nature and which had been perfected by the same observation penetrates all his life and thought, so that he has been compared as a discoverer with Copernicus and Galilei ([p. 292 note](#)). In his *Critique of Pure Reason* he says that his method of analysing human reason is "a method copied from that of the naturalist," † and in another passage he says: "The true method of metaphysics is fundamentally the same as that which Newton introduced into natural science, and was so useful there." And what is this method? "By sure experiences to seek the rules which govern certain phenomena of nature"; in the sphere of metaphysics therefore, "by sure, inner experience." ‡ What I have here made it my endeavour to trace in general and rough outlines can be worked out in the most minute detail by every thinking person. Thus, for example, the central point of Kant's whole activity

* *Immanuel Kant in seinen letzten Lebensjahren*, 1804, p. 25; new edition by Alfons Hoffmann, 1902, p. 298.

† Note in the Preface to the second edition.

‡ *Untersuchung über die Deutlichkeit der Grundsätze der natürlichen Theologie und der Moral*, second Thought.

445 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

is the question of the moral nucleus of individuality: to get at that, he first of all analyses the mechanism of the surrounding cosmos; afterwards, by twenty-five more years of continuous work, he analyses the inner organism of thought; then he devotes twenty more years to the investigation of the human personality thus revealed. Nothing could show more clearly how far observation is here the informing principle than Kant's high estimate of human individuality. The Church Fathers and scholastics had never been able to find words enough to express their contempt of themselves and of all men; it had already been an important symptom when, three hundred years before Kant, Mirandola, that star in the dawn of the new day, wrote a book entitled *On the Dignity of Man*; helpless mankind had under the long sway of the Empire and the Pontificate forgotten that he possessed such a dignity; in the meantime,

he himself, his achievements and his independence had grown, and a Kant, who lived in the society of a very few and not very notable people in distant Königsberg, and whose only other intercourse was with the sublimest minds of humanity and above all with his own, formed for himself from direct observation of his own soul a high conception of inscrutable human personality. This conviction we meet everywhere in his writings, and thereby get a glimpse into the depths of this wonderful man's heart. Already in that *Theorie des Himmels* which is intended to reveal only the mechanism of the structure of the world, he exclaims: "With what reverence should the soul not regard its own being!" * In a later passage he speaks of the "sublimity and dignity which we conceive as belonging to that person who fulfils all duties." † But ever profounder becomes the thought of the thinker:

* Teil 2, Hauptstück 7.

‡ *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*, Abschnitt 2, Teil 1.

446 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

"In man there is revealed a profundity of divine qualities which make him feel a tremor of holy awe at the greatness and sublimity of his own true calling." * And in his seventieth year, as an old man he writes: "The feeling of the sublimity of our own vocation enraptures us more than all beauty." † This I quote only as an indication of what the scientific method leads to. As soon as in Kant it had revealed to reason a new philosophy which had grown out of, and was therefore in keeping with, natural investigation, it at the same time gave the heart a new religion — that of Christ and of the Mystics, the religion of experience.

But now we must look at this characteristic of our new philosophy, the complete devotion to nature, from another point of view: we must regard it purely theoretically, in order not only to recognise the fact but also to comprehend its importance.

EXACT NOT-KNOWING

A specially capable and thoroughly matter-of-fact modern scientist writes: "The boundary-line between the Known and the Unknown is never so clearly perceived as when we accurately observe facts, whether as directly offered by nature, or in an artificially arranged experiment." ‡

These words are spoken without any philosophical reserve, but they will contribute towards giving us a first insight which may be gradually deepened. Any man who has busied himself with practical scientific work must in the course of a long life have noticed that even naturalists have no clear idea of what they do not

* *Über den Gemeinspruch: das mag in der Theorie richtig sein, taugt aber nicht für die*

Praxis, 1.

† *Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft*, St. 1 (Note to Introduction).

‡ Alphonse de Candolle: *Histoire des sciences et des savants depuis deux siècles*, 1885, p. 10.

447 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

know, till in each case exact investigation has shown them how far their knowledge extends. That sounds very simple and commonplace, but it is by no means self-evident and so difficult to introduce into practical thought that I do not believe that any one who has not gone through the discipline of natural science will fully appreciate De Candolle's remark. * For in every other sphere self-deception may go so far as to become complete delusion; the facts themselves are mostly fragmentary or questionable, they are not durable or unchangeable, repetition is therefore impossible, experiment out of the question — passion rules and deception obeys. Moreover, the knowledge of knowledge can never replace knowledge of a fact of nature; the latter is knowledge of quite a different kind; for here man finds himself face to face not with man, but with an incommensurable being, over which he possesses no power, a being which we can designate, in contrast to the ever-combining, confusing, anthropomorphically systematising human brain, as unvarnished, naked, cold, eternal truth. What manifold advantages, positive and negative, such interaction would have

* In a company of university teachers some years ago I heard a discussion on psychological-physiological themes; starting from the localisation of the functions of speech in Broca's brain convolution, one learned gentleman expressed the opinion that every single word was "localised in a particular cell"; he ingeniously compared this arrangement with a cupboard possessing some few thousand drawers, which could be opened and shut at will (something like the automatic restaurants to-day). It sounded quite charming and not a bit less plausible than the command in the fairy-tale, "Table, be spread." As my positive knowledge in regard to histology of the brain was derived from lectures and demonstrations attended years before, and was consequently very limited, and as I had made a practical study only of the rough outlines of the anatomy of this organ, I begged the gentleman in question to give me more definite information, but it turned out that he had never been in a dissecting hall in his life, and had never seen a brain (except in the pretty woodcuts of text-books): hence he had no idea at all of the boundary-line between the known and the unknown.

448 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

for the widening and development of the human mind is self-evident. I have already proved that the natural investigator, in particular, in the empirical sphere takes the first step towards increase of knowledge by exactly defining what he does not know; * but we can easily comprehend what an influence such a schooling must exercise upon philosophic thought; a serious man will no longer with Thomas Aquinas talk of the

condition of bodies in hell, since he must admit that he knows almost nothing about the condition of the human body upon earth. Still more important are the positive gains — to which I have already referred ([p. 261](#)) — and the explanation of this is that nature alone is inventive. As Goethe says: “It is only creative nature that possesses unambiguous certain genius.” † Nature gives us material and idea at the same time; every form testifies to that. And if we take nature not in the narrow nursery sense of astronomy and zoology, but in the wider application to which I have referred when discussing the individual philosophers, we shall find Goethe's remark everywhere confirmed; nature is the unambiguous genius, the real inventor. But here we should carefully note the following fact: Nature reveals herself not only in the rainbow or in the eye which perceives the rainbow, but also in the mind which admires it and in the reason which thinks about it. However, in order that the eye, the mind, the reason may consciously see and appropriate to themselves the genius of nature, a particular faculty and special schooling are required. Here, as elsewhere, the important thing is the direction given to the intellect; ‡ if this is settled, time and practice will accomplish the rest. Here we may say with Schiller: “The direction is at the same time the accomplishment,

* See [p. 279](#).

† *Vorträge zum Entwurf einer Einleitung in die vergleichende Anatomie*, ii.

‡ See pp. [182](#), [277](#).

449 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

and the journey is ended as soon as begun.“ * Thus Locke's life-work, the *Essay on the Human Understanding*, might have been written at any time during the preceding two thousand five hundred years, if only some one had felt inclined to apply himself to nature. Learning, instruments, mathematical or other discoveries are not required, but only faithful observation of Self, questioning of Self in the same way as we should observe and question any other phenomenon of nature. What hindered the much greater Aristotle from achieving this but the anthropomorphic superficiality of Hellenic observation of nature, which, like a comet following a hyperbolic course approached every given fact with frenzied speed, soon afterwards to lose sight of it for ever? What hindered Augustine, who possessed profound philosophical gifts, but his systematic contempt of nature? What Thomas Aquinas but the delusion that he knew everything without observing anything? This turning towards nature — this new goal of the intellect, an achievement of the Teutonic soul — signifies, as I have said, a mighty, indeed almost incalculable, enrichment of the human mind: for it provides it constantly with inexhaustible material (*i.e.*, conceptions) and new associations (*i.e.*, ideas). Now man drinks directly from the fountain of all invention, all

genius. That is an essential feature of our new world, which may well inspire us with pride and confidence in ourselves. Formerly man resembled the pump-driving donkeys of Southern Europe. He was compelled all day long to turn round in the circle of his own poor self, merely to provide some water for his thirst; now he lies at the breasts of Mother Nature.

We have already advanced further than the remark of Alphonse de Candolle seemed to lead us; the knowledge of our ignorance introduced us to the inexhaustible

* *Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen*, Bf. 9.

450 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

treasure-house of nature and showed us the lost path to the ever-bubbling source of all invention. But now we must follow the thorny path of pure philosophy and here also we shall find that the same principle of exact distinction between the Known and the Unknown will be of essential service.

When Locke observes and analyses his understanding, he gets out of himself, so to speak, in order to be able to regard himself as a piece of nature; but here, there clearly lies an insurmountable obstacle in the way. With what shall he observe himself? After all it is a case of nature looking at nature. Every one at once comprehends, or at least dimly feels, how correct and far-reaching this consideration is. But a second consideration, requiring a little more reflection, must be added to the first before it really bears fruit. Let me give an example. When that other profound thinker, Descartes, in contrast to Locke, regards not himself, but surrounding nature — from the revolving planet to the pulsating heart of the newly dissected animal — and discovers everywhere the law of mechanism, so that he teaches the doctrine that even mental phenomena must be caused by movements, * very little reflection is required to con-

* The fact that Descartes, who “explains by principles of physics all mental phenomena of animal life“ (see *Principia Philosophiae*, Part II. 64, as also the first paragraph), ascribed for reasons of orthodoxy a “soul“ to man, signifies all the less for his system of philosophy, as he postulates the complete separation of body and soul, so that there is no connection of any kind between them, and man, like every other phenomenon of sense, must be able to be explained mechanically. It is time that commentators stopped their wearisome prating about “*Cogito, ergo sum*“; it is not psychological analysis, that is Descartes' strong point; on the contrary, he has here, with the unblushing assurance of genius, to the never-ceasing terror of all logical nonentities, pushed aside right and left the things that might make a man pause, and so forced his way to the one great principle that all interpretation of nature must necessarily be mechanical, at least if it is to be comprehensible to the brain of man (at any rate of the *homo europaeus*). (For more details I refer the reader to the essay on Descartes in my *Immanuel Kant*.)

451 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

vince us that the old obstacle here again meets us, and that we cannot accept his conclusion as absolutely valid; for the thinker Descartes does not stand apart as an isolated observer, but is himself part and parcel of nature: here again it is a case of nature observing nature. We may look wherever we like, we always look inwards. Of course, if, with the Jews and the Christian scholastics, we ascribe to man a supernatural origin and a being outside of nature, then this dilemma does not exist, man and nature then stand opposite each other like Faust and Helena, and can join hands “over the cushioned glory of the throne,” Faust, the really living one, the human being, Helena, the apparently living, apparently comprehending, apparently speaking and loving shadowy form, Nature. * This is the central point; here world is separated from world, the science of the Relative from the dogmatism of the Absolute; here too (as we see, if not blinded by self-deception) begins the final separation between the religion of experience and all historical religion. Now if we adopt the Teutonic standpoint and can see the absolute necessity of Descartes's view — by which alone natural science as a connected whole is possible — then we must be struck by the following fact: when Locke desires to analyse his own understanding in regard to its origin and working, he is after all a portion of nature and in so far consequently a machine; he therefore, if I may say

* Thomas Aquinas actually ascribes such a shadowy existence to animals. He says: “The unreasoning animals possess an instinct implanted in them by divine reason, and through it they have inner and outer impulses resembling reason.” We see what a gulf separates these automata of Thomas from those of Descartes; for Thomas — like his followers of to-day, the Jesuit Wasmann, and the whole Catholic theory of nature — endeavours to make animals out to be machines, in order that it may still be possible to maintain the Semitic delusion that nature was created solely for man, whereas Descartes stands for the great conception, that every event must be interpreted as a mechanical process, the vital phenomena of animals and men no less than the life of the sun.

452 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

so, resembles a steam-engine that would desire to take itself to pieces in order to comprehend its own working; we can hardly suppose that such an undertaking would be quite successful; for that it may not cease to be, the locomotive must remain in activity, it could therefore only test a part of its apparatus, now in one place, now in another, or it might take to pieces some unimportant parts, but the really important things it could not touch; its knowledge would be a superficial description rather than a thorough insight, and even this description (*i.e.*, the locomotive's view of its own being) would not exhaust and fully master the object; it

would be essentially limited and determined by the structure of the locomotive. I know that the comparison is very lame, but, if it helps us, that is all that is wanted. In any case we have seen that Descartes' looking outwards is likewise mere contemplation of nature by nature, that is, looking inwards, so that the objection formerly urged applies also to his case. From this it is clear that we shall never be able to solve the problem, whether the interpretation of nature as mechanism is merely a law of the human intellect or also an extra-human law. Locke with his acuteness comprehended this and expressly admits that, "whatsoever we can reach with our thoughts is but a point, almost nothing." * The reader who pursues this train of thought further, as I cannot do for lack of space, will, I think, understand what I mean when I summarise the result of the discussion thus: Our knowledge of nature (natural science in the most comprehensive sense of the word and including scientific philosophy) is the ever more and more detailed exposition of something Unknowable.

But all this only deals with one side of the question. Our investigation of nature undoubtedly contributes to the "extension" of our knowledge; we are ever

* *Essay on the Human Understanding*, Book iv, chap. 3, § 23.

453 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

seeing more, and we are ever seeing more accurately, but that does not mean an "intensive" increase of knowledge, that is, we certainly know more than we did, but we are not wiser, we have not penetrated one hand's-breadth further into the heart of the riddle of the world. Yet the true benefit derived from our study of nature has been ascertained: it is an inner benefit, for it really directs us inwards, teaching us not to solve, but to grasp the world's riddle; that in itself is a great deal, for that alone makes us, if not more learned, at least more wise. Physics are the great, direct teachers of metaphysics. It is only by the study of nature that man learns to know himself. But in order to grasp this truth more fully we must now sketch in stronger outlines what has already been indicated.

I must remind the reader of what De Candolle said, that it is only by exact knowledge that the boundary between the Known and the Unknown can be perceived. In other words, it is only by exact knowledge that we clearly perceive what we do not know. I think that the above discussion has confirmed this in a surprising manner. It was the movement in the direction of exact investigation that first revealed to thinkers the inscrutability of nature, of which no one previously had had the slightest notion. Everything had seemed so simple that we only needed to lay hands upon it. I think we could easily prove that before the era of the great discoveries men were actually ashamed to observe and experiment: it seemed to them childish. How little notion they had of

there being any mystery is seen from the first efforts of natural investigation, such as those of Albertus Magnus and Roger Bacon: scarcely had they noted a phenomenon than they at once proceeded to explain it. Two hundred years later Paracelsus does experiment and observe diligently; he

454 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

even has the feverish mania for collecting new facts and he is penetrated with the sense of our boundless ignorance in regard to them; but he too is never for a moment at a loss for reasons and explanations. But the nearer we came to Nature, the further she retreated, and when our ablest philosophers wished fully to fathom Nature, the fact was established that she was inscrutable. That was the development from Descartes to Kant. Even Descartes, that profound master of mechanics, felt the need of devoting a whole essay to the question, "Do material things really exist?" Not that he seriously doubted the fact; but his consistently developed theory that all science had to deal with motion had forced upon him the conviction, which before his time had appeared only here and there in the form of sophistical trifling, that "from corporeal nature no single argument can be derived, which necessarily permits us to draw the conclusion that a body exists." And he himself was so startled at the irrefutable truth of this scientific result that he had, in order to get out of the difficulty, to have recourse to theology. As he says: "Since God is not a deceiver, I must conclude that He has not deceived me in reference to things corporeal." * Fifty years later Locke arrived by a different method at an absolutely analogous conclusion. "There can be no knowledge of the bodies that fall under the examination of our senses. How far soever human industry may advance useful and explicit philosophy in physical things, scientific knowledge will still be out of our reach, because we want perfect and adequate ideas of those very bodies which are nearest to us and most under our command ... we shall never be able to discover general, instructive, unquestionable truth concerning them." † Locke also got out of

* *Méditations métaphysiques*, 6. The first quotation is from the 2nd section, the second from the last.

† *Loc. cit.* Book IV. chap. iii. § 26, and chap. xix. § 4. In these

455 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

the difficulty by evading the problem and taking refuge in the arms of theology: "Reason is natural revelation whereby the eternal Father communicates to mankind a portion of truth," &c. The difference between Descartes and Locke consists only in this, that the mechanical thinker (Descartes) feels keenly the impossibility of proving by science

the existence of bodies, whereas the psychologist (Locke) grasps less fully the force of the mechanical considerations, but is struck by the psychological impossibility of concluding that a thing has being from the fact that he perceives its qualities. The new philosophy grew and deepened; but this conclusion remained irrefutable. Kant too had to testify that all philosophical attempts to explain the mathematical-mechanical theory of bodies “ends with the Empty and therefore Incomprehensible.” * Exact science has, therefore, not only in the sphere of empiricism done us the very great service of teaching us to distinguish exactly between what we know and what we do not know, but the philosophical deepening of exact science has also drawn a clear line between Knowledge and Non-knowledge: the whole world of bodies cannot be “known.”

theological subterfuges of the first pioneers of the new Teutonic philosophy lies the germ of the later dogmatic assumption of Schelling and Hegel of the identity of thought and being. What in the case of these pioneers had only been a rest by the wayside and at the same time a way of escape from the persecution of fanatical priests, was now made the corner-stone of a new absolutism.

* *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Naturwissenschaft*, last paragraph.

456 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

IDEALISM AND MATERIALISM

Lest the reader should fall into similar blunders, I must incidentally refer to two errors — idealism and materialism — which spring from the first result of the philosophical investigation of nature by Descartes and Locke. Though the world of bodies cannot be “known,” it is ingenious but ridiculous trifling to deny its existence, as Berkeley does (1685-1753); that is equivalent to asserting that, because I perceive the world of sense by my senses and have no other guarantee for its existence, therefore it does not exist; because I smell the rose only by means of my nose, therefore there is a nose (at least an ideal one) but no rose. Just as untenable is the other conclusion, which was drawn by thinkers inclined to take a too superficial view, and expressed most clearly by Lamettrie (1709-51) and Condillac (1715-80): as my senses only perceive things of sense, therefore only things of sense exist; because my intellect is a mechanism, which can grasp only “mechanically” what is perceived by my senses, therefore mechanism is complete world-wisdom. Both idealism and materialism are palpable delusions — delusions which base themselves on Descartes and Locke, and yet contradict the clearest results of their works. Moreover, these two views completely overlook an essential part of the philosophy of Descartes and Locke: for Descartes did not mechanically interpret the whole world, but only the world of phenomena; Locke analysed not the whole world but only the soul, when he expressed the opinion that there can be no science of bodies. The

great men of genius have always been liable to be thus misunderstood; let us, therefore, leave these misapprehensions on one side and see how our new philosophy continued to develop on the true heights of thought.

457 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

THE FIRST DILEMMA

I have already remarked that nature includes not only the rainbow and the eye that beholds it, but also the mind that is moved by the spectacle and the thought that reflects upon it. This consideration is so obvious that a Descartes and a Locke must have perceived it, but these great men had still a heavy burden to carry in the hereditary conception of a special, bodiless soul; this load clung to them as fast as the child that grew into a giant clung to the shoulders of St. Christopher, and it often caused their reasoning to stumble; they were, besides, so much occupied with analysis that they lost the power of comprehensive synthesis. Yet we find in them, under all kinds of systematic and systemless guises, very profound thoughts, which pointed the way to metaphysics. As I said before, both had become convinced that the existence of things cannot be deduced from our conceptions; our conceptions of the qualities of things are no more like things than pain is like the sharp dagger, or the feeling of tickling like the feather which causes it. * Descartes pursues this thought further and comes to the conclusion that human nature consists of two completely separated parts, only one of which belongs to the realm of otherwise all-prevailing mechanism, while the other — to which he gives the name of soul — does not. Thoughts and passions form the soul. † Now it is a proof not only of Descartes' profundity, but also of his genuinely scientific way of thinking, that he always strongly supported the absolute, unconditional separation of soul and body; we must not regard this conviction, which he so frequently and passionately asserted, as religious prejudice; no, more than

* Descartes: *Traité du monde ou de la lumière*, chap. i.

† See especially the 6th *Méditation*, and in *Les passions de l'âme*, §§ 4, 17, &c.

458 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

one hundred years later Kant clearly pointed out why we are compelled in practice “to conceive phenomena in space as quite different from the actions of thought,” and in so far “to accept the view that there is a double nature, the thinking and the corporeal.” * Descartes elected to put this view in the form available to him, and thereby clearly promulgated two fundamental facts of knowledge, the absolute mechanism of corporeal nature and the absolute non-mechanism of thinking nature.

But this view required a supplement. Locke, who was no mechanician or mathematician, had a better chance of hitting upon it. He, too, had thought that he was bound to presuppose the soul as a special, separate entity; but he found this constantly in his way, and as a mere psychologist — as a scientific dilettante, if I may use the word with no signification of reproach — he did not feel the impelling force of Descartes' strictly scientific and formal anxiety; altogether he was far from being so profound a mind as Descartes, and so with the most innocent air in the world he asked the question, Why should not body and soul be identical, and thinking nature be extended, corporeal? † For the reader who has not been schooled in philosophy, the following may serve as explanation: from a strictly scientific point of view thought is derived solely from personal, inner experience; every phenomenon, even such as I from analogy ascribe with the greatest certainty to the thought and feeling of others, must be able to be interpreted mechanically; to have established this is Descartes' eternal service. Now comes Locke and makes the very fine remark (which, in order to make the connection clear, I must translate from the somewhat loose psychological manner of Locke

* *Critique of Pure Reason* (Concerning the Final Aim of the Natural Dialectics of the Human Reason).

† *Essay*, Book II. chap. xxvii. § 27, but especially Book IV. chap. ii. § 6.

459 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

into the scientific manner of Descartes): Since we can explain all phenomena — even such as seem to spring from activity of reason — even without having to presuppose thought, but know from personal experience that in some cases the mechanical process is accompanied by thought, who can prove to us that every corporeal phenomenon does not contain thought, and that every mechanical process may not be accompanied by thoughts? * It is evident that Locke had no idea of what he was destroying by this notion, or, on the other hand, for what he had paved the way; he goes on to distinguish between two natures (how could he as a sensible man do otherwise?), not, however, between a thinking and a corporeal nature, but only between a thinking and a non-thinking nature. With this Locke leaves the empirical sphere, the sphere of genuine scientific thought. For if I say of a phenomenon it is “corporeal,” I express what experience teaches me, but if I say it is “non-thinking,” I predicate something which I cannot possibly prove. The very man who, a moment ago, made the fine remark that thought may be a quality of matter altogether, wishes here to distinguish between thinking and non-thinking bodies! Little wonder that the two delusions, an Idealism which is absolute (and consequently purely materialistic) and a Materialism which springs from a symbolical hypothesis (and is therefore purely

“ideal”), are linked on here where Locke stumbled so terribly.

* We must not identify this scientific philosophical thought (as accepted by Kant and others, see above, vol. i. p. 90) with the ravings of a Schelling concerning “spirit” and “matter;” for thought is a definite fact of experience, which is known to us only in association with equally definite, perceptible, organic mechanical processes; on the other hand, “spirit” is so vague a conception that any one can use it for all kinds of charlatanism. When Goethe (evidently under Schelling's influence) on March 24, 1828, writes to Chancellor von Müller, “Matter can never exist without spirit, nor spirit without matter,” it would be well to make the same comment as Uncle Toby, “That's more than I know, sir!”

460 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

But Locke recovered himself in a manner which very many of his followers up to the present day have not been able to imitate, and, with the simplicity of genius, proceeded to one of his most brilliant achievements, namely, the proof that from non-thinking matter, however richly endowed it may be with motion, thought never can arise; it is just as impossible, he says, as that something should come out of nothing. * Here we see Locke once more join hands with Descartes (*i.e.*, with the principles of strictly scientific thought). Now Locke's peculiar and individual line of thought, in spite of all its weaknesses, † exercised far-reaching influence, for it was just suited to destroy the last remnant of supernatural dogmatism, and it awakened to full consciousness the philosopher who addresses himself to nature. The latter must now either give up all hope of further progress, regard his undertaking as wrecked and surrender to the Absolutist, or he must grasp the problem in all its profundity, and that would mean that he must of necessity enter the field of metaphysics.

THE METAPHYSICAL PROBLEM

The term “metaphysics” has met with so much just disapproval that one does not care to use it; it has the effect of a scarecrow. We really do not need the word — or at any rate we should not need it, if it were agreed that the old metaphysics have no longer a right to existence, and the new — that of the naturalist — are simply “philosophy.” Aristotle called that part of his system, which was afterwards termed metaphysics, theology; that was the correct word, for it was the doctrine of *Theos* in contrast to that of *Physis*, God as contrast to nature. From

* Book IV. chap. x. § 10.

† “*C'est le privilège du vrai génie, et surtout du génie qui ouvre une carrière, de faire impunément de grandes fautes*” (Voltaire).

461 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

him to Hume the science of metaphysics was theology, that is, it was a collection of unproved, apodeictic theorems, derived either from direct, divine Revelation or from indirect Revelation, in that men proceeded from the supposition that the human reason was itself supernatural and could therefore, by virtue of its own reflection, discover every truth; metaphysics were therefore never directly based upon experience, nor did they refer to it; they were either inspiration or ratiocination, either suggestion or pure reasoned conclusion. Now Hume (1711-1776), powerfully stimulated by Locke's paradoxical results, expressly demanded that metaphysics should cease to be theology and should become science. * He himself did not quite succeed in carrying out this programme, for his talent lay rather in destroying false science than in building up the true; but the stimulus he gave was so great that he "wakened" Immanuel Kant "from dogmatic slumber." Henceforth the word metaphysics has quite a different interpretation. It does not mean a contrast to experience, but reflection on the facts given by experience, and their association to form a definite philosophy of life. Four words of Kant contain the essence of what metaphysics now mean; metaphysics are the answer to the question, How is experience possible? This problem was the direct result of the dilemma described above, to which honest, naturalist philosophy had led. If our zeal for an exact science of bodies forces us to separate thought completely from the corporeal phenomenon, how then does thought arrive at experience of corporeal things? Or, on the other hand, if I attack the problem

* *A Treatise of Human Nature*. Introduction. The dilemma of Descartes and Locke is adopted by Hume in his introduction as an evident result of exact thinking, and he says that every hypothesis which undertakes to reveal the last grounds of human nature is to be at once rejected as presumptuous and chimerical. Instead of attempting, as they did, a hypothetical solution, he remains systematically sceptical regarding these "grounds."

462 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

as a psychologist and assign thought as an attribute to the corporeal, which obeys mechanical laws, do I not at a blow destroy genuine (*i.e.*, mechanical) science, without contributing in the least to the solution of the problem? Reflection concerning this will lead us to reflection concerning ourselves, since these various judgments are rooted within ourselves, and it will be impossible to answer the question, How is experience possible? without at the same time sketching the main outlines of a philosophical system. Perhaps the question will admit, within certain limits, of various answers, but the cardinal difference will henceforth always be: whether the problem which has resulted from purely natural-scientific considerations will be scientifically answered, or, after the manner of the old theologians, simply hacked in two in favour of some dogma of reason. * The former method furthers both science and

religion, the latter destroys both; the former enriches culture and knowledge, no matter whether or not we accept as valid all the conclusions of a definite philosopher (*e.g.*, Kant) — the latter is anti-Teutonic and fetters science in all its branches, just as in its time the theology of Aristotle had done.

For the comprehension of our new world, and of the

* As Kant is the pre-eminent representative of the purely scientific mode of answering, and ignorant or malicious scribes still mislead the public by asserting that the philosophy of Fichte and Hegel is organically related to Kant's, whereby all true comprehension and all serious deepening of our philosophy becomes impossible, I call the attention of the unphilosophic reader to the fact that Kant in a solemn declaration in the year 1799 designated Fichte's doctrine as a "perfectly untenable system," and shortly afterwards also declared that between his "critical philosophy" (critical reflection upon the results acquired by scientific investigation of corporeal and of thinking nature) and such "scholasticism" (so he terms Fichte's philosophy) there is no affinity whatever. Long before Fichte began to write, Kant had provided the philosophical refutation of this neo-scholasticism, for it breathes from every page of his *Critique of Pure Reason*; see especially § 27 of the *Analytik der Begriffe*, and *cf.* the splendid little book, dated 1796, *Von einem neuerdings erhobenen vornehmen Ton in der Philosophie*.

463 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

whole nineteenth century, it was absolutely necessary to show clearly how from a new spirit and a new method new results were derived, and how these in turn were bound to lead to a perfectly new philosophical problem. Some diffusiveness has been unavoidable, for the delusion of "humanity" and "progress" causes historians to represent our philosophy as gradually growing out of the Hellenic and the Scholastic, and that is nothing but a chimera. Our philosophy has rather developed in direct antagonism to the Hellenic and the Christo-Hellenic; our theologians openly revolted against Church philosophy; our mystics shook off historical tradition, as far as they could, in order to concentrate their thoughts on the experience of their own selves; our humanists denied the Absolute, denied progress, returned wistfully to the disparaged past and taught us to distinguish and appreciate the Individual in its various manifestations; finally, our thinkers who investigated nature directed all their thought to the results of a science hitherto unanticipated and unattempted; a Descartes, a Locke are from the soles of their feet to the crowns of their heads new phenomena, they are not bound up with Aristotle and Plato, but energetically break away from them, and the scholasticism of their time which still clings to them is not the essential but the accidental part of their system. I hope I have convinced the reader of this; I feel it was worth my while to devote a few pages to the point. It was only thus that I could make the reader understand that the Dilemma in which Descartes and Locke suddenly found themselves was not an old warmed-up philosophical question, but a perfectly new one, resulting from the honest endeavour to be led by experience alone, by

nature alone. The problem which now came into the foreground may well have had some affinity with other problems which engaged the attention of other philosophers at other times, but there is no genuine connection; and the special way in

464 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

which it here appeared is new. Here historical clearness can be secured only by separating, not by uniting.

Now I must beg the reader's attention for a moment longer. I must attempt, as far as it is possible without plunging into the depths of metaphysics, to explain that metaphysical problem which is at the basis of our specifically Teutonic philosophy, so far at least that every reader may see what justification I had for my assertion that the investigation of nature teaches man to know himself — that it leads him into the inner world. It is only in this way that we can clearly show the connection with religion which was thoroughly and passionately studied by all the philosophers named. Even Hume, the sceptic, is at heart profoundly religious. The violent rage with which he attacks historical religions as “the phantastic structures of half-human apes,” * proves how serious he was in the matter; and such chapters as that of the *Immateriality of the Soul* † proves Hume to be the genuine predecessor of Kant in the field of religion, as in that of philosophy.

No man, without having recourse to the supernatural, can answer the question, “How is experience possible?” in any other way than by a critical examination of the whole capacity of his consciousness. Critique comes from *κρίνειν*, which originally means to separate, to distinguish. But if I distinguish rightly, I shall also bring together what is connected, *i.e.*, I shall also correctly unite. The true critical process consists, therefore, as much in uniting as in distinguishing; it is just as much synthesis as analysis. Reflection concerning the double dilemma characterised above soon proved that Descartes had not correctly separated, while Locke had not correctly united. For Descartes had for formal reasons separated body and soul and then he came to a deadlock, as he found

* *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*.

† *A Treatise of Human Nature*, I. 4. 5.

465 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

them inseparably united in himself; Locke, on the other hand, had sprung like a second Curtius with his whole intellect into the yawning gulf; but science is no fairy-tale, and the gulf still yawned as wide as ever. A first great error is easily discovered. These early naturalist-philosophers were not yet daring enough; they were afraid of calmly

drawing all nature into the circle of their investigations; something always remained outside, something which they called God and soul and religion and metaphysics. This is especially true of religion; the philosophers leave it out of account, that is, they speak of it, but look upon it as something by itself, which has to stand outside all science, as something which is certainly essential for man, but of altogether subordinate importance for the knowledge of nature. It would be superficial to put this down to the influence of ecclesiastical ideas; on the contrary, the mistake arises rather from insufficient importance being attached to the religious element. For this “something,” which they almost treated as of no account, embraces the most important part of their own human personality, namely, the most direct of their experiences, and consequently, we may be sure, a weighty portion of nature. They simply put aside the profoundest observations, as soon as they do not know where they are to insert them in their empirical and logical system. Thus Locke, for example, has such a keen appreciation of the value of intuitive or visual perception that he might in this connection be actually called a forerunner of Schopenhauer; he calls intuition “the bright sunshine” of the human mind; he says that knowledge is only in so far valuable as it can be traced back directly or indirectly to intuitive perception (and that means, as Locke expressly states, a perception acquired without the intervention of judgment). And how does he in his investigations employ this “fountain of truth, in which there is more binding power of conviction than

466 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

in all the conclusions of reason,” as he himself says? He makes no use of it whatever. Not even the obvious fact that mathematics depend on intuition stimulates him to deeper thoughts, and finally the whole subject is, with many good wishes for its further investigation, recommended “to the angels and the spirits of just men in a future state” (*sic*)! We helpless mortals are taught that “general and certain truths are only founded in the relations of abstract ideas”; and this is said by a philosopher who studies nature! * It is the same with facts of morality. Here for a brief moment Locke even flashes forth as a forerunner of Kant and his ethical autonomy of man. He says: “Moral ideas are not less true and not less real, because they are of our own making”; here we fancy we shall see open for us the great chapter of inner experience, but no, the author says shortly afterwards, when speaking *Of Truth in General*: “For our present subject this consideration is without great importance; to have named it is sufficient.” † There, too, where metaphysical considerations would have been very much to the point, Locke comes very near a critical treatment, but does not enter upon it. Thus he says concerning the idea of space, “I will tell you what space is when you tell me what extension is,” and in more than one passage he then asserts

that extension is something “simply incomprehensible.” ‡ But he does not venture to go any deeper; on the contrary, this simply unthinkable thing — the Extended — is made by him at a late point to be the bearer of thought! I think this one example clearly shows what these epoch-making thinkers still lacked — complete philosophical impartiality. After all they still stood, like the theologians, outside of nature, and thought they could observe and

* *Essay*, Book IV. chap. ii. §§ 1 and 7; chap. xvii. § 14; chap. xii. § 7.

† *Essay*, Book IV. chap. iv. § 9 f.

‡ *Essay*, Book II. chap. xiii. § 15; chap. xxiii. §§ 22 and 29.

467 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

comprehend it from that standpoint. They did not yet understand,

Natur in sich, sich in Natur zu hegen.

Hume took the decisive step towards it; he put aside this artificial division of self into two parts, the one of which we pretend to desire to explain fully, while the other is completely neglected and reserved for angels and the dead. Hume took the standpoint of a man consistently questioning nature — in Self and outside of Self; he was the first to approach in real earnest the metaphysical problem, How is experience possible? He adduced the critical objections one after another and arrived at the paradoxical conclusion, which can be summarised in the following words: Experience is impossible. In a certain sense he was perfectly right, and his brilliant paradox must only be taken as irony. If we persistently maintained the standpoint of a Descartes and a Locke and yet put aside their *deus ex machina*, the whole structure would immediately collapse. And it did collapse all the more completely, as their one-sidedness consisted not only in leaving out of account a large and most important part of the material of our experience, but also — and I beg the reader to note this specially — in unhesitatingly assuming as possible a faultless, logical explanation of the other part. That was an inheritance from the schoolmen. Who told them forsooth that nature would be able to be understood, explained? Thomas Aquinas might indeed do that, for this dogma is his starting-point. But how does the mathematician Descartes come to that? The man who had expressed a desire to banish every traditional doctrine from his mind! How did *John Locke, Gentleman*, come to it, after declaring at the beginning of his investigation that he merely desired to fix the boundaries of the human understanding? Descartes answers: God is no betrayer, hence my understanding must penetrate

468 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

to the root of things; Locke answers: Reason is divine Revelation, hence it is infallible, as far as it goes. That is not genuine investigation of nature, but only an attempt at it, hence the defectiveness of the result.

In the interests of the unphilosophical reader I have sketched from the negative side the condition of our young, developing philosophy at that time. In this way he will be better able to understand what had now to be done to save and improve it. To begin with, it had to be purified, purged of the last traces of alien ingredients; in the second place, the scientific philosopher had to have the full courage of his convictions; he had, like Columbus, to trust himself unhesitatingly to the ocean of nature, and not fancy, as the crew did, that he was lost as soon as the spire of the last church-tower disappeared below the horizon. But this required not merely courage, such as the foolhardy Hume possessed, but also the solemn consciousness of great responsibility. Who had the right to lead men away from the sacred ancestral home? Only he who possesses the power to lead them to a new one. That is why it was only by a man like Kant that the work could be executed, for he not only possessed phenomenal intellectual gifts, but a moral character which was equally great. Kant is the true *rocher de bronze* of our new philosophy. Whether we agree with all his philosophical conclusions is a matter of indifference; he alone possessed the power to tear us away, he alone possessed the moral justification for doing so, he, whose long life was a model of spotless honour, strict self-control and complete devotion to an aim which he regarded as sacred. When just over twenty years of age he wrote: "I believe it is sometimes advisable to have a certain noble confidence in one's own powers. On this I take my stand. I have already mapped out the course which I wish to follow. I shall make a start and nothing shall prevent me from

469 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

continuing as I have begun." * This promise he kept. This confidence in his own powers was at the same time a realisation that we were on the right path, and he immediately began — a second Luther, a second Copernicus — to clear away all that is alien to us:

Was euch das Innere stört,
Dürft ihr nicht leiden! †

Nothing can be more foolish than to attempt, as is so common, to know Kant from one or two metaphysical works; everybody quotes them, and scarcely one among ten thousand understands them, not because they are incomprehensible but because such a personality as Kant's can only be understood in connection with its whole activity. Whoever attempts to understand him thus will soon see that his philosophy is to be found in all his writings, and that his metaphysics can be understood only by those who have a familiar acquaintance with his natural science. ‡ For Kant is at all times and in all places an investigator of nature. And

thus we behold him, at the very beginning of his career, in his *Allgemeine Naturgeschichte des Himmels*, busily engaged in ruling out of our natural philosophy the God of Genesis and the tenacious Aristotelian theology. He there clearly proves that the ecclesiastical conception of God involves “the converting of all nature into miracles”; in that case nothing would remain for natural science, which had worked so laboriously for centuries, but to repent and “solemnly recant at the judgment stool of religion.”

* *Gedanken von der wahren Schätzung der lebendigen Kräfte*, Preface, § 7.

† That which disturbs your soul / You must not suffer!

‡ See on this subject Kant's remarks against Schlosser in the 2nd Division of the *Traktat zum ewigen Frieden in der Philosophie*: “He objected to critical philosophy, which he fancies he knows, although he has only looked at its final conclusions, which he was bound to misunderstand, because he had not diligently studied the steps that led up to them.”

470 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

“Nature will then no longer exist; all the changes in the world will be brought about by a mere *Deus ex machina*.” Kant evidently gives us the choice: God or Nature. In the same passage he attacks “that rotten world-wisdom, which under a pious exterior seeks to conceal the ignorance due to laziness.” * So much for the work of purging, by means of which our thought at last became free, free to be true to itself. But that was not enough; it was not sufficient merely to remove the Alien, the whole sphere of what is our own had to be taken possession of, and this implied two things in particular: a great extension of the conception “nature” and profound study of our own “Ego.” To these two things Kant's positive life-work was devoted. He did not work alone, but, like every great man, he laboured to bring into the fullest light of truth the unconscious and contradictory tendencies of his contemporaries.

NATURE AND THE EGO

The extension of the conception “Nature” necessarily led to the deepening of the idea of the “Ego”; the one implied the other.

We cannot make the extension of the conception “Nature” too comprehensive. At the very moment when Kant finished his *Critique of Pure Reason*, Goethe wrote: “Nature! We are surrounded and embraced by her; men are all in her and she in all; even the most unnatural thing is nature, even the coarsest philistinism has something of her genius. He who does not see her

* In the above-mentioned work, Part II. § 8. I scarcely need say that Kant neither attacks faith in God nor religion, the book in question and all his later work prove the contrary; from the historical Jahve of the Jews, however, he here once for all dissociates himself. As far as anhistorical creation is concerned, Kant has expressed himself clearly

enough: "A creation as one event among other phenomena cannot be admitted, as its possibility would at once destroy the unity of experience" (*Critique of Pure Reason*, second analogy of experience).

471 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

everywhere sees her rightly nowhere." * From this consideration we may conclude how powerfully at this very point our intellectual powers, developed as they were in various directions, could contribute to the elucidation and deepening of our new philosophy. Here in fact unification was effected. The Humanists (in the wide sense, which I gave to this word above) here joined hands with the philosophers. What I have already pointed out, in a former part of this section, regarding the purely philosophical influence of this group, was a very considerable contribution. † To this were added great achievements in the spheres of history, philology, archaeology, description of nature. For nature, which immediately surrounds us from our very youth — human nature, and the nature which is outside of man — we do not, to begin with, perceive as "nature." It was the mass of new material, the great extension of our conceptions, which thus awakened reflection concerning ourselves and the relation of man to nature. A Herder might, in the last years of his life, in the impotent rage of misconception, rise up against a Kant; yet he himself had contributed very much to the extension of the conception "nature"; the whole first part of his *Ideas for the History of Humanity* perhaps did more than anything else to spread this anti-theological view; the whole efforts of this noble and brilliant man are directed towards placing man in the midst of nature, as an organic part of her, as one of her creatures still in the process of development; and though in his preface he makes a side-thrust at "metaphysical speculations," which, "separated from experiences and analogies of nature, are like a pleasure-trip, which seldom leads to a definite goal," he has no idea how much he himself is influenced by the new philosophy, and how much his own views would have gained

* *Die Natur* (from the series *Zur Naturwissenschaft im Allgemeinen*).

† P. 433 f.

472 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

in depth and accuracy (perhaps at the cost of popularity), if he had more thoroughly studied that science of metaphysics which had been opened up by faithful observation of nature. This man, worthy of all honour, may stand as the most brilliant representative of a whole tendency. We meet another tendency in men like Buffon. Of this describer of nature Condorcet writes: "*Il était frappé d'une sorte de respect religieux pour les grands phénomènes de l'univers.*" So it is nature herself that inspires Buffon with the reverence of religion. The encyclopaedic naturalists like

him (in the nineteenth century their work was carried to great lengths by Humboldt) did a very great deal, if not to extend, yet to enrich the conception “nature,” and the fact that they felt, and knew how to communicate, religious reverence for it, was, from the point of view of philosophy, of importance. This movement to extend the idea “nature” might be traced in many spheres. Even a Leibniz, who still tries to save theological dogmatism, liberates nature in the most comprehensive sense, for by his pre-established harmony everything in truth becomes super-nature, but at the same time everything without exception is nature. But the most important and decisive step was the great extension of the term by the complete incorporation of the inner Ego. Why indeed should this remain excluded? How was it justifiable? How could we continue to do as Locke and Descartes did, namely, neglect the surest facts of experience under the pretext that they were not mechanical, could not be comprehended, and so should be excluded from consideration? Scientific method and honesty made the simple conclusion inevitable, that not everything in nature is mechanical, that not every experience can be forged into a logical chain of ideas. How could any one be satisfied with Herder's half-measure: first of all to identify man completely with nature, and finally to conjure

473 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

him out of it again, not in truth the whole man, but his “spirit,” thanks to the supposition of extra-natural powers and supernatural Providence? * Here, too, it was really a question simply of the goal which the intellect aimed at; this aim, however, determined the whole philosophy. For as long as man was not fully included in nature, they stood opposed and alien to each other, and, if man and nature are in reality alien, our whole Teutonic aim and method is an error. But it is not an error, and for that reason the decisive incorporation of the Ego in nature was immediately followed by a great deepening of metaphysics.

Here the mystics rendered good service. When Francis of Assisi addresses the sun as *messor lo frate sole*, he says: All nature is related to me, I sprang from her lap, and if once my eyes no longer see that brightly shining “brother” then it is my “sister” — death — that lulls me to sleep. Little wonder that this man preached to the birds in the wood the best that he knew — the gospel of the dear Saviour. The philosophers required half a millennium to reach the standpoint upon which that wonderful man in all his simplicity had stood. However, let us not exaggerate: mysticism has opened up many profound metaphysical questions in reference to the innermost life of the Ego; it contributed splendidly not only to the advancement of scientific thought, but also to the necessary extension of the conception “nature;” † but it did not accomplish the real deepening, the philosophical deepening; for that needed a scientific mind, a kind of mind seldom found in conjunction

with mysticism. In general, mysticism deepens the character, not the thought, and even a Paracelsus is deluded by his “inner light“ into proclaiming as wisdom a vast amount of

* See Kant's three masterly *Recensionen von Herder's Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*.

† See pp. 419, 424.

474 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

nonsense. Upon vaguely divining mystical ecstasy a more exact method of thinking had to be grafted. And that was done within the circle influenced by Francis of Assisi. The theology of the Franciscans in its best days had in fact done much preliminary work towards amalgamating the otherwise so carefully separated ideas “Nature“ and “Ego“; indeed, they had done almost more than was desirable, for thereby many a purely abstract system had become crystallised to the prejudice of inquiry into nature, so that even a Kant found himself in many ways hampered by it. Yet it deserves mention that Duns Scotus himself had energetically protested, in reference to our perception of surrounding objects, against the dogma that this process was a mere passive receiving, that is to say, a mere reception of impressions of sense, leading to the immediate conclusion that these sense-impressions, with the conceptions resulting therefrom, corresponded exactly to things — that they were, as we might say in vulgar parlance, a photograph of actual reality. No, he said, the human mind in receiving impressions (which then, united according to reason, &c., form perception) is not merely passive, but also active, that is, it contributes its own quota, it colours and shapes what it receives from the outer world, it remodels it in its own way and transforms it into something new; in short, the human mind is, from the very outset, creative, and what it perceives as existing outside of itself is partly, and in the special form in which it is perceived, created by itself. Every layman must immediately grasp the one fact: if the human mind in the reception and elaboration of its perceptions is itself creatively active, it follows of necessity that it must find itself again everywhere in nature; this nature, as the mind sees it, is in a certain sense, and without its reality being called in question, its work. Hence Kant too comes to the conclusion: “It sounds at first singular,

475 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

but is none the less certain, that the understanding does not derive its laws from nature, but prescribes them to nature ... the supreme legislation of nature lies in ourselves, that is, in our understanding.“ * The realisation of this fact made the relation between man and nature (in its most primary and simple sense) clear and comprehensible. It now

became manifest why every investigation of nature, even the strictly mechanical, finally leads back in all cases to metaphysical questions, that is, questions directed to man's being; this was what had so hopelessly perplexed Descartes and Locke. Experience is not something simple, and can never be purely objective, because it is our own active organisation which first makes experience possible, in that our senses take up only definite impressions, definitely shaped, moreover, by themselves, † while our understanding also sifts, arranges and unites the impressions according to definite systems. And this is so evident to every one who is at the same time an observer of nature and a thinker, that even a Goethe — whom no one will charge with particular liking for such speculations — is driven to confess: “There are many problems in the natural sciences on which we cannot with propriety speak, if we do not call in the aid of metaphysics.” ‡ On the other hand, it now becomes clear how justified the Mystics were in claiming to see everywhere in outer nature the inner essence of man: this nature is, in fact, the opened, brightly illuminated book of our understanding; I do not mean that it is an unreal phantom of that understanding, but it shows us our understanding at work and teaches us its peculiar individuality. As the mathematician and astronomer Lichtenberg says: “We must never lose sight of the fact that we are always merely

* *Prolegomena zu einer jeden künftigen Metaphysik*, § 36.

† We may stimulate the optical nerve as we will, the impression is always “light,” and so in the case of the other senses.

‡ *Sprüche in Prosa, über Naturwissenschaft*, 4.

476 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

observing ourselves when we observe nature and especially our views of nature.” * Schopenhauer has given expression to the great importance of this fact: “The most complete perception of nature is the proper basis for metaphysical speculation, hence no one should presume to attempt this, without having first acquired a thorough (though only general) and clear, connected knowledge of all branches of natural science.” †

THE SECOND DILEMMA

As the reader sees, as soon as this new phase of thought was traversed, the philosopher found himself face to face with a new dilemma analogous to the former; it was, indeed, the same dilemma, but this time it was grasped more profoundly and viewed in a more correct perspective. The study of nature necessarily leads man back to himself; he himself finds his understanding displayed in no other place than in nature perceived and thought. The whole revelation of nature is specifically human, shaped therefore by active human understanding, as we perceive

it; on the other hand, this understanding is nourished solely from outside, that is, by impressions received: it is as a reaction that our understanding awakes, that is, as a reaction against something which is not man. A moment ago I called the understanding creative, but it is only so in a conditional sense; it is not able, like Jahve, to create something out of nothing, but only to transform what is given; our intellectual life consists of action and reaction: in order to be able to give, we must first have received. Hence the important fact to which I have frequently called attention, ‡ quoting on the last occasion Goethe's words: "Only creative nature possesses unambiguous genius." But how am I

* *Schriften*, ed. 1844, vol. ix. p. 34.

† *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, vol. ii, chap. xvii.

‡ See especially vol. i. [p. 267](#), vol. ii. pp. [273](#), [326](#).

477 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

to escape from this dilemma? What is the answer to the question: "How is experience possible?" The object points me back to the subject, the subject knows itself only in the object. There is no escape, no answer. As I said before: our knowledge of nature is the ever more and more detailed exposition of something unknowable; to this unknowable nature belongs in the first place our own understanding. But this result is by no means to be regarded as purely negative; not only have the steps leading up to it made clear the mutual relation of subject and object, but the final result means the rejection, once for all, of every materialistic dogma. Now Kant was in a position to utter the all-important truth: "A dogmatic solution of the cosmological problem is not merely uncertain but impossible." What thinking men at all times had vaguely felt — among the Indians, the Greeks, here and there even among the Church Fathers ([p. 78](#)) and schoolmen — what the Mystics had regarded as self-evident ([p. 421](#)) and the first scientific thinkers, Descartes and Locke, had stumbled upon without being able to interpret ([p. 454](#)), viz., that time and space are intuitive forms of our animal sense-life, was now proved by natural scientific criticism. Time and space "are forms of sentient perception, whereby we perceive objects only as they appear to us (our senses), not as they may be in themselves." * Further, criticism revealed that the unifying work of the understanding whereby the conception and the thought "nature" arise and exist (or to quote Böhme, "are mirrored"), that is to say, the systematic uniting of phenomena to cause and effect, are to be traced back to what Duns Scotus vaguely conceived, namely, the active elaboration of the material of experience by the human mind. Hereby the cosmogonic conceptions of the Semites which hung, and still hang, heavily on our science of religion,

* *Prolegomena*, § 10.

fell to the ground. What is the use to me of an historical religion if time is merely an intuitive form of my sense-mechanism? What is the use of a Creator as explanation of the world, as first cause, if science has shown me that “causality has no meaning at all, and no sign of its use, except in the world of sense,” * while this idea of cause and effect, “when used only speculatively (as when we conceive a God-creator), loses every significance the objective reality of which could be made comprehensible *in concreto*”? † The realisation of this fact shatters an idol. In a former chapter I called the Israelites “abstract worshippers of idols”; ‡ I think the reader will now understand why. And he will comprehend what Kant means when he says that the system of criticism is “indispensable to the highest purposes of humanity”; § and when he writes to Mendelssohn: “The true and lasting well-being of the human race depends upon metaphysics.” Our Teutonic metaphysics free us from idolatry and in so doing reveal to us the living Divinity in our own breast.

Here, it is plain, we do not merely touch upon the chief theme in this division — the relation between philosophy and religion — but we are in the very heart of it; at the same time what has just been said connects itself with the conclusion of the section on “Discovery,” where I already hinted that the victory of a scientific, mechanical view of nature necessarily meant the complete downfall of all materialistic religion. At the same time I said: “Consistent mechanism, as we Teutons have created it, admits only of a purely ideal, that is, transcendent religion, such as Jesus Christ taught: ‘The Kingdom of

* *Critique of Pure Reason*. (Of the impossibility of a cosmological proof of the existence of God.) Twenty years before Kant had written: “How am I to understand that, because something is, something else should be? I am not going to be satisfied with the words Cause and Effect” (*Versuch, den Begriff der negativen Grössen in die Weltweisheit einzuführen*, Division 3, General Note).

† *Loc. cit.* (Critique of all speculative theology.)

‡ Vol. i. [p. 240.](#)

§ *Erklärung gegen Fichte* (conclusion).

God is within you.’ “ We must now proceed to the discussion of this last and profoundest point.

SCIENCE AND RELIGION

Goethe proclaims: “Within thee there is a universe as well!”

It was one of the inevitable results of scientific thinking that this inner universe was now for the first time brought into the foreground. For the

philosopher, by unreservedly including the whole human personality in nature, that is, by learning to regard it as an object of nature, gradually awoke to a realisation of two facts, first, that the mechanism of nature has its origin in his own human understanding, and secondly, that mechanism is not a satisfactory principle for the explanation of nature, since man discovers in his own mind a universe which remains altogether outside of all mechanical conceptions. Descartes and Locke, who imagined there was danger for strictly scientific knowledge in this perception, thought to overcome it by regarding this unmechanical universe as something outside of and above nature. With so lame and autocratic a compromise, there was no possibility of arriving at a living philosophy. Scientific schooling, the custom of drawing a strict separating-line between what we know and what we do not know, simply demanded the explanation: from the most direct experience of my own life I perceive — in addition to mechanical nature — the existence of an unmechanical nature. For clearness we may call it the ideal world, in contrast to the real; not that it is less real or less actual — on the contrary, it is the surest thing that we possess, the one directly given thing, and in so far the outer world ought really to be called the “ideal” one; but the other receives this name because it embodies itself in ideas, not in objects. Now

480 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

if man perceives such an ideal world — not as dogma but from experience, — if introspection leads to the conviction that he himself is not merely and not even predominantly a mechanism, if rather he discovers in himself what Kant calls “the spontaneity of freedom,” something utterly unmechanical and anti-mechanical, a whole, wide world, which we might in a certain sense call an “unnatural” world, so great a contrast does it present to that mechanical rule of law with which we have become acquainted by exact observation of nature; how could he help projecting this second nature, which is just as manifest and sure as the first, upon that first nature, since science has taught him that the latter is intimately connected with his own inner world? When he does that, there grows out of the experienced fact of freedom a new idea of the Divine, and a new conception of a moral order of the world, that is to say, a new religion. It was, indeed, no new thing to seek God within our own breast and not outside among the stars, to believe in God not as an objective necessity, but as a subjective command, to postulate God not as mechanical *primum mobile* but to experience him in the heart — I have already quoted Eckhart's admonition, “Man shall not seek God outside himself” (p. 401), and from that to Schiller's remark, “Man bears the Divine in himself,” the warning has frequently been uttered — but here, in the regular course of the development of Teutonic philosophy, this conviction had been gained in a special way as one of the results of

an all-embracing and absolutely objective investigation of nature. Man had not made God the starting-point, but had come to him as the final thing; religion and science had grown inseparably into each other, the one had not to be shaped, and interpreted to suit the other, they were, so to speak, two phases of the same phenomenon: science, that which the world gives me, religion, that which I give to the world.

481 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

Here, however, a far-reaching remark must be made, otherwise the advantage gained in the way of introspection is liable to evaporate, and it is the business of science to hinder that. No one can, of course, answer the question, what nature may be outside of human conception, or what man may be outside of nature, hence over-enthusiastic, unschooled minds are inclined uncritically to identify both. This identification is dangerous, as may be seen from the following consideration. While the investigation of nature enables us to perceive that all knowledge of bodies, though proceeding from the apparently Concrete, the Real, yet ends with the absolutely Incomprehensible, the process in the unmechanical world is the reverse: the Incomprehensible, when we reflect upon it philosophically, lies here, not at the end of the course but immediately at the beginning. The notion and the possibility of freedom, the conceivability of being outside of time, the origin of the feeling of moral responsibility and duty, &c., cannot of themselves force their way in at the door of understanding, yet we grasp them quite well the further we follow them out into the sphere of actual and hourly experience. Freedom is the surest of all facts of experience; the Ego stands altogether outside of time, and notices the progress of time only from outer phenomena; * conscience, regret, feeling of duty, are stricter masters than hunger. Hence the tendency of the man who is not gifted with the metaphysical faculty to overlook the difference between the two worlds — nature from without and nature from within, as Goethe calls them; his tendency to project freedom into the world of phenomena (as cosmic God, miracle, &c.), to suppose a beginning (which destroys the idea of time), to found morals upon definite,

* Growing older is noted only by seeing others grow old or by the coming on of feebleness, *i.e.*, by something outward; hours can pass as a moment, a few seconds may unfold the complete image of a lifetime.

482 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

historically issued and therefore at all times revocable commands (which make an end of ethical law), &c. Metaphysically inclined races, such as the Aryans, never fell into this error: * their mythologies reveal a wonderful divination of metaphysical perception, or, as we may say with

the same justice, scientific metaphysics signify the awakening into new life of far-seeing mythology; but, as history shows, this higher divination has not been able to prevail against the forcible assertions of less gifted human beings, who conclude from mere semblance, and are sunk in blind historical superstition, and there is but one antidote powerful enough to save us: our scientific philosophy. This uncritical identification leads to other shallow and therefore injurious systems, as soon as, for example, in place of projecting inner experience into the world of phenomena, the latter with all its mechanism is brought into the inner world. Thus so-called “scientific“ monism, materialism, &c., have arisen, doctrines which will certainly never acquire the universal importance of Judaism — since it is too much to expect of most men that they will deny what they know most surely — but which have nevertheless in the nineteenth century produced so much confusion of thought. †

* See vol. i. pp. [229](#), [437](#), vol. ii. [p. 23](#).

† It is remarkable how affinity between these two errors — uncritically projecting inner experience into the world of phenomena and bringing the outer world into inner experience — manifests itself in life: theists become in the twinkling of an eye atheists, a strikingly common thing in the case of Jews, since, if they are orthodox (and even when they have become Christians) they are convinced, genuine theists, whereas with us God is always in the background and even the orthodox mind is filled by the Redeemer or the Mother of God, the saints or the sacrament. I should never have dreamt that theistic conviction could be so firmly rooted in the brain had I not had occasion, in the case of a friend, a Jewish scholar, to observe the genesis and obstinacy of the apparently opposite “atheistical“ conception. It is absolutely impossible ever to bring home to such a man what we Teutons understand by Godhead, religion, morality. Here lies the hard insoluble kernel of the “Jewish problem.“ And this is the reason why an impartial man, without a trace of contempt for the

483 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

In view of all this — and in contrast to all mystical pantheism and pananthropism — it is our duty to adhere to and emphasise the division into two worlds, as it results from strictly scientifically treated experience. But the boundary-line must be drawn at the right place: to have accurately determined this place is one of the greatest achievements of our new philosophy. We must, of course, not draw that line between man and world; all that I have said proves the impossibility of this; man may turn whither he will, at every step he perceives nature in himself and himself in nature. To draw the line between the world of phenomena and the hypothetical “thing in itself“ (as one of Kant's famous successors undertook to do) would from the purely scientific standpoint also be very disputable, for in that case the boundary runs outside of all experience. In so far as the unmechanical world is derived purely from inner, individual experience, which only by analogy is transferred to other individuals, we may well, for simplicity of expression, distinguish between a world *in us* and a world *outside us*, but we must carefully note

that the world “outside us“ comprises every “phenomenon,“ hence also our own body, and not it alone but also the understanding which perceives the world of bodies and thinks. This expression “in us“ and “outside us“ is often met with in Kant and others. But even he is open to objection; for in the first place we are — as I said above — involuntarily impelled, if not to transform this inner world as the Jew does to an outer cause, yet to attribute

in many respects worthy and excellent Jews, can and must regard the presence of a large number of them in our midst as a danger not to be under-estimated. Not only the Jew, but also all that is derived from the Jewish mind, corrodes and disintegrates what is best in us. And so Kant rightly reproached the Christian Churches for making all men Jews, by representing the importance of Christ as lying in this, that He was the historically expected Jewish Messiah. Were Judaism not thus inoculated into us, the Jews in flesh and blood would be much less dangerous for our culture than they are.

484 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

it to all phenomena as their inner world, and then it is not quite easy to see how we shall be able to divide our thinking brain into two parts; for it is this very brain which also perceives the unmechanical world and reflects upon it. It is certain that the unmechanical world is not presented from outside to the organ of understanding by a perception of the senses, but solely by inner experience, and hence it is impossible for the understanding, in view of its total lack of inventive power, to raise perception to the level of conception, and all talk on this subject must necessarily remain symbolical, that is, talk by pictures and signs: however, have we not seen that even the world of phenomena indeed gave us conceptions, but equally only symbolical ones? The “in us“ and “outside us“ is therefore a metaphorical way of speaking. The boundary can only be drawn scientifically, when we do not move one iota from what experience gives us. Kant seeks to attain this by the differentiation which he makes in his *Critique of Practical Reason* (1, 1, 1, 2) between a nature “to which the will is subordinate“ and a nature “which is subordinate to a will.“ This definition is exactly in keeping with the above-named condition, but has the disadvantage of being somewhat obscure. We do better to hold to what is obvious, and then we should have to say: what experience presents to us is a world capable of mechanical interpretation and a world which is incapable of mechanical interpretation; between these two runs a boundaryline which separates them so completely that every crossing of it means a crime against experience: but crimes against facts of experience are philosophical lies.

RELIGION

Following up the differentiation Kant was enabled to make the epoch-making assertion: “Religion we

485 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

must seek in ourselves, not outside ourselves.“ * That means, when we change it to the terms of our definition: Religion we must seek only in the world which cannot be interpreted mechanically. It is not true that we find in the world of phenomena that can be interpreted mechanically anything that points to freedom, morality, Divinity. Whoever carries the idea of freedom over into mechanical nature destroys both nature and the true significance of freedom (p. 420); the same holds good with regard to God (p. 470); and as far as morality is concerned an unprejudiced glance suffices — in spite of all heroic efforts of the apologists from Aristotle to Bishop Butler's famous book on the *Analogy between Revealed Religion and the Laws of Nature* — to show that nature is neither moral nor sensible. The ideas of goodness, pity, duty, virtue, repentance, are just as strange to her as sensible, symmetrical, appropriate arrangement. Nature capable of mechanical interpretation is evil, stupid, feelingless; virtue, genius and goodness belong only to nature which cannot be mechanically interpreted. Meister Eckhart knew that well and therefore uttered the memorable words: “If I say, God is good, it is not true; rather I am good, God is not good. If I say also God is wise, it is not true: I am wiser than he.“ † Genuine natural science could leave no doubt concerning the correctness of this judgment. We must seek religion in that nature which cannot be mechanically interpreted.

I shall not attempt to give an account of Kant's theory of morals and religion; that would take me too far and has, besides, been done by others; I think I have performed my special task if I have succeeded in clearly representing on the most general lines the genesis of our new philosophy; that prepares the ground for a clear-sighted, sure judgment of the philosophy of the

* *Religion*, 4. Stück, 1. Teil, 2. Abschnitt.

† *Predigt*, 99.

486 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

eighteenth century. Only towards the end of the nineteenth century has Kant been made really comprehensible to us, and that, in characteristic fashion, especially by the stimulus of brilliant natural investigators; and the view of religion, which was not yet perfectly, indeed in many ways invalidly, but at any rate for the first time clearly expressed by him, was so much beyond the comprehensive powers of his or our contemporaries, and anticipated to such a degree the development of Teutonic intellectual gifts, that an appreciation of it belongs rather to the division dealing with the future than to that dealing with the past. Let me add a few words only by way of general guidance. *

Science is the method, discovered and carried out by the Teutons, of mechanically looking at the world of phenomena; religion is their attitude towards that part of experience which does not appear in the shape of phenomena and therefore is incapable of mechanical interpretation. What these two ideas — science and religion — may mean to other men does not here matter. Together they form our philosophy. In this philosophy which rejects as senseless all seeking after final causes, the basis of the attitude of man towards himself and others must be found in something else than in obedience to a world-ruling monarch and the hope of a future reward. As I have already hinted ([p. 290](#)) and now have proved, side by side with a strictly mechanical theory of nature there can only be a strictly ideal religion, a religion, that is, which confines itself absolutely to the ideal world of the Unmechanical. However limitless this world of the unmechanical may be — a world the stroke of whose pinions frees us from the impotence of appearance and soars higher than the stars, whose

* I refer for supplementary facts to my book: *Immanuel Kant, die Persönlichkeit als Einführung in das Werk*, 1905, Bruckmann.

487 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

powers enable us with a smile to face the most painful death, which imparts to a kiss the charm of eternity, and in a flash of thought bestows redemption — it is nevertheless confined to a definite sphere, namely, our inner self, the boundaries of which it may never cross. Here, therefore, in our own heart, and nowhere else, must the foundations of a religion be sought. “To have religion is the duty of man to himself,” says Kant. * From considerations which I cannot here repeat, Kant warmly cherishes, as every one knows, the thought of a Godhead, but he lays great stress on this, that man has to regard his duties not as duties towards God, which would be but a broken reed on which to lean, but as duties towards himself. What in our case unites science and religion to a uniform philosophy of life is the principle that it is always experience that commands; now God is not an experience, but a thought, and in fact an undefinable thought which can never be made comprehensible, whereas man is to himself experience. Here therefore the source has to be sought, and so the autonomy of will (*i.e.*, its free independence) is the highest principle of all morality. † An action is moral only in so far as it springs solely from the innermost will of the subject and obeys a self-given law; whereas hope of reward can produce no morality nor can it ever restrain from the worst vice and crime, for all outward religion has mediations and forgivenesses. The “born judge,” that is to say man himself, knows quite well whether the feeling of his heart is good or bad, whether his conduct is pure or not, hence “that self-judgment which seeks to penetrate to the deeper recesses or to the very bottom of the

heart, and the knowledge of self thus to be gained are the beginning of all human wisdom

* *Tugendlehre*, § 18.

† Kant defines: "Autonomy of will is that quality of will by which a will (independently of any object willed) is a law to itself." See *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten* II. 2.

488 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

It is only the descent into the hell of self-knowledge that paves the way for the ascent into heaven." *

In regard to this autonomy of will and this ascension into heaven, I beg the reader to refer to the passage in the chapter on the Entrance of the Teutons into the History of the World (see vol. i. [p. 549 f.](#)), where I briefly alluded to Kant's gloriously daring idea. But there is still a link wanting in the chain, to enable us to grasp the religious thought completely. What is it that has given me so high an opinion of that which I discovered on my descent into the abyss of the heart? It is the perception of the high dignity of man. For the first step necessary to bring us to the truly moral standpoint is to root out all the contempt of Self and of the human race which the Christian Church — in contrast to Christ — (see vol. i. [p. 7](#)) has nurtured. The inborn evil in the heart of man is not destroyed by penance, for that again clings to the outer world of appearance, but by fixing our attention on the lofty qualities in our own hearts. The dignity of man grows with his consciousness of it. It is of great importance that Kant is here in exact agreement with Goethe. Well known is Goethe's theory of the three reverences — for what is above us, for what is equal to us, and for what is below us — from which arise three kinds of genuine religion; but true religion arises from a fourth "highest reverence," that is, reverence for Self; it is only when he has reached this stage that man, according to Goethe, attains the highest pinnacle that he is capable of attaining. † I have

* Kant writes not "*zur Himmelfahrt*" but "*zur Vergötterung*," but owing to the common usage of this word in ordinary speech misunderstanding might easily arise. Schiller says, "The moral will makes man divine" (*Anmut und Würde*; and Voltaire, "*Si Dieu n'est pas dans nous, il n'exista jamais*" (*Poème sur la Loi Naturelle*). Profound is also Goethe's thought: "Since God became man, in order that we poor creatures of sense might grasp and comprehend Him, we must see to it especially that we do not again make Him God." (*Brief des Pastors zu *** an den neuen Pastor zu ****.)

† *Wanderjahre*, Bk II, chap. i.

489 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

referred to this theme in the passage mentioned above, at the same time also quoting Kant; I must now supplement what was there said by one of the greatest and most glorious passages of all Kant's writings; it forms the only worthy commentary to Goethe's religion of reverence for Self.

“Now I set forth man as asking himself: What is that in me which enables me to sacrifice the inmost lures of my impulses and all wishes that proceed from my nature, to a law which promises me no advantage in return and no penalty if I transgress it; which indeed, the more sternly it commands and the less it offers in return, the more I reverence it? This question stirs our whole soul in amazed wonder at the greatness and sublimity of the inner faculty in man and the insolubility of the mystery which it conceals (for the answer: 'it is freedom,' would be tautological, because it is freedom itself that creates the mystery). We can never tire of directing our attention to it and admiring in ourselves a power which yields to no power of nature ... Here is what Archimedes wanted, but did not find: a firm point on which reason could place its lever, and that without applying it to the present or to a future world, but merely to its inner idea of freedom (which immovable moral law provides as a sure foundation) in order by its principles to set in motion the human will, even in opposition to all nature.“ * It is manifest that this religion presents a direct contrast to the mechanical view. † Teutonic science teaches the most painfully exact fixing of that which is present and bids us be satisfied with that, since it is not by hypothesis or tricks of magic that we can learn to master the world of phenomena but only by accurately, indeed slavishly, adapting ourselves to it; Teutonic religion, on the other hand, opens up a wide realm, which slumbers as a sub-

* From the book: *Von einem neuerdings erhobenen vornehmen Ton in der Philosophie* (1796).

† Naturally also to Ethics as “science“; on this see p. [64](#) note.

490 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

lime ideal in our inmost soul, and teaches us: here you are free, here you are yourselves nature — creative, legislative; the realm of ideals of itself has no existence, but by your efforts it can truly come into life; as “phenomenon“ you are indeed bound to the universal law of faultless mechanical necessity, but experience teaches you that you possess autonomy and freedom in the inner realm; — use them! The connection between the two worlds — the seen and the unseen, the temporal and the eternal — otherwise undiscoverable, lies in the hearts of you men yourselves, and by the moral conception of the inner world the significance of the outer world is determined; conscience teaches you that every day; it is the lesson taught by art, love, pity, and the whole history of mankind; here you are free, as soon as you but know and will it; you can transfigure the visible world, become regenerate yourselves, transform time to eternity, plough the Kingdom of God in the field — Be this then your task! Religion shall no longer signify for you faith in the past and hope for something future, nor (as with the Indians) mere metaphysical perception — but the deed of the present! If you but believe

in yourselves, you have the power to realise the new “possible Kingdom“; wake up then, for the dawn is at hand!

CHRIST AND KANT

Who could fail to be at once struck with the affinity between the religious philosophy of Kant — won by faithful, critical study of nature — and the living heart of the teaching of Christ? Did not the latter say, the Kingdom of God is not outside you, but within you? But the resemblance is not limited to this central point. Whoever studies Kant's many writings on religion and moral law will find the resemblance in many places; for example, take their attitude to the officially recognised

491 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

form of religion. We find in both the same reverential clinging to the forms regarded as sacred, united to complete independence of intellect, which, breathing upon a thing that is old, transforms it into a thing that is new. * For example, Kant does not reject the Bible, but he values it not on account of what we “take out“ of it, but because of what we “put into it with moral thought.“ † And though he has no objections to Churches “of which there are several equally good forms,“ yet he has the courage frankly to say: “To look upon this statutory service (the historical methods of praise and Church dogmas) as essential to the service of God and to make it the first condition of divine pleasure in man is a religious delusion, the adherence to which is a false service, *i.e.*, a worship of God directly contrary to that true service demanded of Him.“ ‡ Kant, therefore, demands a religion “in spirit and in truth,“ and faith in a God “whose kingdom is not of this world“ (that is, not of the world of phenomena). He was, moreover, well aware of this agreement. In his book on religion, which appeared in his seventieth year, he gives in about four pages a concise and beautiful exposition of the teaching of Christ, exclusively according to the *Gospel of St. Matthew*, and concludes: “Here now is a complete religion ... illustrated moreover by an example, although neither the truth of the doctrines nor the dignity and nobility of the teacher needed any further attestation.“ § These few words are very significant. For however sublime and elevating everything which Kant has achieved,

* See vol. i. [p. 221](#).

† *Der Streit der Fakultäten*, I. Division, supplement.

‡ *Die Religion*, *u.s.w.* Section 4, Part 2, Introduction. The title of the 3rd section of this part is amusing: “Concerning Priesthood as a Regiment in the False Service of the Good Principle.“

§ Section 4, Part 1, Division 1. In this exposition there is an interpretation which will not be very acceptable to the “regiment of false service“; the words, “wide is the gate and broad is the path that leadeth to destruction, and they are many that walk thereon,“ he

interprets as referring to the Churches.

492 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

in this direction, may be, it resembles more, I think, the energetic, undaunted preparation for a true religion than the religion itself; it is a weeding out of superstition to give light and air to faith, a sweeping aside of false service to make true service possible. There is an absence of any visible picture, of any parable. Such a title even as *Religion within the Limits of mere Reason* makes us fear that Kant is on the wrong track. As Lichtenberg warns us: "Seek to make your account with a God whom reason alone has set upon the throne! You will find it is impossible. The heart and the eye demand their share in Him." * And yet Kant himself had said: "To have religion is the duty of man to himself." But as soon as he points to Christ and says: "See, here you have a complete religion! Here you behold the eternal example!" — the objection no longer holds good; for then Kant is, as it were, a second John, "who goes before the Lord and prepares the way for Him." It was to this — to a purified Christianity — that the new Teutonic philosophy at the end of the eighteenth century impelled all great minds. For Diderot I refer to vol. i [p. 336](#); Rousseau's views are well known; Voltaire, the so-called sceptic, writes:

Et pour nous élever, descendons dans nous-mêmes!
I have already referred to Wilhelm Meister's *Wanderjahre*; Schiller wrote in the year 1795 to Goethe: "I find in the Christian religion *virtualiter* the framework of all that is Highest and Noblest, and the various manifestations of it which we see in life appear to me to be so repellent and absurd, because they are unsuccessful representations of this Highest." Let us honestly admit the fact; between Christianity, as forced upon us by the Chaos of Peoples, and the innermost soul-faith of the Teutons there has

* *Politische Bemerkungen.*

493 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

never been any real agreement, never. Goethe could sing boldly:

Den deutschen Mannen gereicht's zum Ruhm,
Dass sie gehasst das Christentum. *

And now comes forward an experienced pastor and assures us — as we had long suspected — that the German peasant has really never been converted to Christianity. † A Christianity such as we cannot accept has only now become possible; not because it needed a philosophy, but because false doctrines had to be swept aside, and a great all-embracing, true philosophy of life founded — a philosophy from which each will take as much as he can, and in which the example and the words of Christ

will be within the reach of the meanest as well as of the cleverest.

With this I look upon my makeshift bridge, as far as philosophy of life including religion is concerned, as finished. My exposition has been comparatively minute, because upon such points the utmost clearness could alone help the reader and keep his attention on the alert. In spite of its length the whole is only a hasty sketch in which, as has been seen, science on the one hand and religion on the other have claimed all our interest; these two together make up a living philosophy of life, and without that we possess no culture; pure philosophy, on the contrary, as a discipline and training of the reason, is merely a tool, and so there is no place for it here.

As regards the prominence given at the end to Immanuel Kant, I have been influenced by my desire to be as simple and clear as possible. I think I shall have convinced the

* It redounds to the honour of the Germans to have hated Christianity!

† Paul Gerarde: *Meine Beobachtungen und Erlebnisse als Dorfpastor*, 1895. In an essay in the *Nineteenth Century*, January 1898, entitled *The Prisoners of the Gods*, by W. B. Yeats, it is clearly proved that in all Catholic Ireland the belief in the (so-called heathen) gods is still alive; the peasants, however, mostly fear to utter the word "Gods"; they say "*the others*" or simply "*they*," or "*the royal gentry*," seldom does one hear the expression "*the spirits*."

494 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

reader that our Teutonic philosophy is not an individual caprice, but the necessary result of the powerful development of our racial qualities; never will a single individual, however great, really "complete" such a universal work, never will the anonymous power of a single personality, working with the inevitableness of nature, show such all-round perfection that every one must recognise such an individual as a paragon and prophet. Such an idea is Semitic, not Teutonic; to us it seems self-contradictory, for it presupposes that personality in its highest potentiality — genius — becomes impersonal. The man who really reverences pre-eminent intellectual greatness will never be a slave to party, for he lives in the high school of independence. Such a gigantic life-work as that of Kant, "the Herculean work of self-knowledge," as he calls it himself, demanded special gifts and made specialisation necessary. But what does that signify? The man who thinks Kant's talent one-sided, * must really be in possession of an exceptionally many-sided intellect. Goethe once said that he felt, when reading Kant, as if he were entering a bright room; truly very great praise from such lips. This rare luminous power is a consequence of his remarkable intensity of thought. When we intellectual pigmies walk in the brilliant light created

* I should here like to defend Kant against the reproach of repellent one-sidedness which has been spread by Schopenhauer's writings. Schopenhauer asserts in his *Grundlage der Moral*, § 6, that Kant will have nothing to do with pity, and quotes

passages which Kant certainly meant to express something different, since they are directed solely against pernicious sentimentality. Kant may have underestimated the principle of pity upon which J. J. Rousseau, and, following him, Schopenhauer, laid such stress, but he has by no means failed to recognise it. The touchstone in this case is his attitude to animals. In the *Tugendlehre*, § 17, we read that violence and cruelty to animals “is quite contrary to the duty of man towards himself, for thereby sympathy with the sufferings of animals is blunted in man.” This standpoint of kindness to animals as a duty to self and the principle inculcated, that of “gratitude” towards domestic companions, seems to me very lofty. Concerning vivisection, this so-called “loveless, indifferent” and certainly strictly scientific man says, “Painful physical experiments merely for the sake of speculation are abhorrent.”

495 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

by Kant, it is easy enough to note the boundary of the shadow that is not yet illuminated; however, but for this one incomparable man we should even to-day look upon the shadow as daylight. I had another reason for specially emphasising Kant. The unfolding of our Teutonic culture, that is, the sum of our work from 1200 to 1800, has found in this man a specially pure, comprehensive and venerable expression. Equally important as natural philosopher, thinker, and teacher of morals — whereby he unites in his own person several great branches of our development — he is the first perfect pattern of the absolutely independent Teuton who has put aside every trace of Roman absolutism, dogmatism, and anti-individualism. And just as he has emancipated us from Rome, so he can — whenever we please — emancipate us from Judaism; not by bitterness and persecution, but by once for all destroying every historical superstition, every cabalisticism of Spinoza, every materialistic dogmatism (dogmatic materialism is only the converse of the same thing). Kant is a true follower of Luther; the work which the latter began Kant has continued.

495

7. ART (From Giotto to Goethe).

THE IDEA “ART”

It is no easy matter in these days to speak about art; for, despite the example of all the best German authors, an absolutely senseless limitation of the notion “art” has become naturalised among us, and, on the other hand, the systematising philosophy of history has cruelly paralysed our faculty of looking at historical facts with open, truth-seeking eyes, and of passing a sound judgment upon them. I sincerely

regret the necessity of mixing up polemical controversy with this final section, where I would fain be soaring in the highest regions, but there is

496 ART

no way out of it; for in art the most senseless errors are as firmly rooted as in religion, and we cannot rightly estimate either the development of art of the year 1800 or its importance in the nineteenth century till we have cleared away all misconceptions and corrected the distorted misrepresentations of history. At any rate, if I must pull down, I shall try at once to build up again, and so shall employ the exposition of traditional errors as a means of revealing the true position.

In these days a *General History of Art* embraces only plastic technique, from architecture to casting in pewter; in a work of this description Michael Angelo's *Last Judgment*, or a portrait of Rembrandt by himself, will be found side by side with the lid of a beer-mug or the back of an arm-chair. Two arts, however, are absolutely unrepresented, not a word is said about them, they are, it would seem, not "art"; I refer to those two which, as Kant said, occupy the "highest place" among all arts, and about which Lessing made the extremely happy remark: "Nature meant them not so much to be united as to be one and the same art." * These arts are Poetry and Music. The view which our art-historians hold of "art" might well provoke our indignation; it annihilates the life-work of Lessing, Herder, Schiller, Goethe, who took such pains to prove the organic unity of the whole creative work of man, and the primacy of the poet among his fellows. From the *Laocoon* to the *Aesthetic Education* and to Goethe's thoughts on the part played by art "as nature's worthiest interpreter," † through all the thought of the German Classics we can trace this red thread — the great endeavour clearly and definitely to determine the essence of art, as a peculiar, human capacity; when once this is settled, the dignity of art, as one of the highest and holiest instruments for the trans-

* *Zum Loakoon* ix.

† Goethe: *Maximen und Reflexionen*, Div. 3.

497 ART

figuration of all human life and thought, is also established. And now come our experts who go back to Lucian's view; * art is for them a technique, a trade, and since the work of the hands in poetry and music signifies nothing, these are not included in art. "Art" is exclusively plastic

art, but, to make up for this, it includes every possible plastic activity, every *manuum factura*, every handicraft! The term is, therefore, not only inconsistently limited by them, but also senselessly widened to be a synonym for technique. That means the loss of one essential thing in art — the idea of the creative element. † Let us look with a critical eye first at the preposterous extension, and then at the senseless limitation.

The shortest and at the same time the most exhaustive definition of art is that of Kant: “Beautiful art is the art of genius.” ‡ A history of art would, therefore, be a history of creative genius, and everything else, such as the development of technique, the influence exercised by the workers in the industrial arts, the changes of fashion, &c., would come in merely as an explanatory supplement. To make technique the chief thing is ridiculous. It is no excuse to urge that the greatest masters were at the same time the greatest inventors and exponents of the technical art; that all depends upon the reason why they were inventors in technique, and the answer is: because originality is the first quality of the creative mind, in virtue of which the original genius must invent new means of expressing what he has to say, new instruments for his own peculiar and personal creations.

Heaven forbid that I should enter the stony, thorny and sterile sphere of aesthetics! I have nothing to do with aesthetics, but only with art itself. § I cling firmly to what

* See vol. i. [p. 302](#). Cf. Schiller's Letter to Meyer of 5. 2. 1795.

† Cf. the remarks on Technique in contrast to Art and Science, vol i. [p. 138](#).

‡ *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, § 46.

§ “By every theory of art we close the path to true enjoyment: for no more baneful nullity has ever been invented.” — GOETHE.

498 ART

the Hellenes thoroughly realised and the German classics always emphasised: that poetry is the root of every art. Now if I take the view of art just given, and add to it that of the “historians of art,” I get so wide and indefinite a term that it embraces my beer-jug and Homer's *Iliad*, and every journeyman with his graver is put on the same level as Leonardo da Vinci. And so Kant's “art of genius” vanishes into thin air. But the importance of creative art, as I, following Schiller, have sketched it in the introduction to the first chapter of this book, and in the course of the same chapter have exemplified it in the Hellenes (vol. i. [p. 14](#)), is too significant a fact in our history of culture to be sacrificed in this way. In the triad philosophy, religion, art — which three make up culture — we could least of all dispense with art. For Teutonic philosophy is transcendent, and Teutonic religion ideal; both, therefore, remain

unexpressed, incommunicable, invisible to most eyes, unconvincing to most hearts, unless art with her freely creative moulding power — *i.e.*, the art of genius — should intervene as mediator. For this reason the Christian Church — as formerly the Hellenic faith in Gods — has always sought the help of art, and for that reason Immanuel Kant expresses the opinion that it is only with the help of a “divine art“ that man is able to overcome mechanical constraint by conscious inner freedom. Since we realise that mechanical constraint exists, our philosophy of life (purely as philosophy) must be negative; our art, on the contrary, arises from our inward experience of freedom, and is, therefore, wholly and essentially positive.

This great and clear idea of art we must preserve as a sacred, living possession; and if any one speaks of “art“ — not of artistic handiwork, artistic technique, artistic cabinet-making, &c. — he must use that sacred term solely of the art of genius.

Genuine art alone forms the sphere in which those two worlds, which we have just learned to distinguish ([p. 483](#))

499 ART

— the mechanical and the unmechanical — meet in such a way that a new, third world arises. Art is this third world. Here freedom, which otherwise remains only an idea, an eternally invisible inner experience, reveals direct activity in the world of phenomena. The law here prevailing is not the mechanical law; rather is it in every respect analogous to that “Autonomy“ which stirred Kant to such admiration in the moral sphere ([p. 489](#)). And what religious instinct only vaguely divines and figures forth in all kinds of mythological dreams (vol. i. [p. 416](#)), enters by art, so to speak, “into the daylight of life“; for when art, of free inner necessity (genius), transforms the given, unfree, mechanical necessity (the world of phenomena), it reveals a connection between the two worlds which purely scientific observation would never have brought to light. The artist enters into an alliance with the investigator of nature; for while he freely shapes, he also “interprets“ nature, that is, he looks deeper into the heart of things than the measuring and weighing observer. With the philosopher too he joins hands; the logical skeleton receives from him a blooming body and learns the reason of its being in the world; as proof I need only refer to Goethe and Schiller, who both attain the loftiest heights of their powers and their significance for the Teutonic race after they have been associated with Kant, but thereby show the world in quite a different manner from Schelling and his fellows what incalculable importance is to be attached to the thought of the great Königsberg Professor. *

* Since Goethe has undoubtedly here and there been influenced by Schelling and this has often led to absolutely false judgments, the fact must be emphasised that he placed Kant far above any of his successors. At the time when Fichte and Schelling were at the zenith of their influence, and Hegel was beginning to write, Goethe expressed the opinion: "Speculation on the Superhuman, in spite of all Kant's warnings, is a vain toil." When Schelling's life-work was already known to the world (in 1817), Goethe said to Victor Cousin that he had begun to read Kant again and was delighted with the unexampled

500 ART

ART AND RELIGION

The relation between art and religion has still to be mentioned. This relation is so manifold and intimate that it is a hard matter to analyse it critically. In the present connection the following should be noted. As I have shown in many passages in this book, among all the Indo-Teutonic peoples religion is always "creative" in the artistic sense of the word, and therefore related to art. Our religion never was history, never exposition of chronicles, but always inner experience and the interpretation, by free, reproductive activity, of this experience as well as of surrounding nature, which means the nature of experience; our whole art, on the other hand, owes its origin to religious myths. But as we are no longer able to follow the simple impulse of creative myth-production, our myths must be the outcome of the highest and deepest reflection. The material is at hand. The true source of all religion to-day is not an indefinite feeling, not interpretation of nature, but the actual experience of definite human beings; * with Buddha and with Christ religion has become realistic — a fact which is consistently overlooked by the philosophers of religion, and of which mankind as a whole has not yet become conscious. But what these men experienced and what we experience through them is not something mechanically "real," but something much more real than that, an experience of our inmost being. And it is only now, in the light of our new

clearness of his thought; he added also: "*Le système de Kant n'est pas détruit.*" Six years later Goethe complained to Chancellor von Müller that Schelling's "ambiguous expressions" had put back rational theology fifty years. The personality of Schelling, certain qualities of his style, and certain tendencies of his thought, often fascinated Goethe; but so great a mind could never commit the error of regarding Kant and Schelling as commensurable magnitudes. (For the above quotations see the *Gespräche*, ed. by Biedermann, i. 209, iii 290, iv. 227).

* See the whole of chap. iii., especially [p. 182 f.](#)

501 ART

philosophy, that this inner meaning has become quite clear; it is only now — when the faultless mechanism of all phenomena is irrefutably proved — that we are able to purge religion of the last trace of materialism. But hereby art becomes more and more indispensable. For we cannot express in words what a figure like Jesus Christ signifies, what it reveals; it is something in the inmost recesses of our souls, something apart from time and space — something which cannot be exhaustively or even adequately expressed by any logical chain of thought; with Christ it is a question solely of that “nature which is subordinate to a will“ (as Kant said, [p. 484](#)), not of that which makes the will subordinate to itself; that is, it is a question of that nature in which the artist is at home, and from which he alone is able to build a bridge over into the world of phenomena. The art of genius forces the Visible to serve the Invisible. * Now in Jesus Christ it is the corporeal revelation, to which His whole earthly life belongs, that is the Visible, and, in so far, to a certain extent, only an allegorical representation of the invisible being; but this allegory is indispensable, for it was the revealed personality — not a dogma, not a system, certainly not the thought that here the Word invested with a distinct personality went about in flesh and blood — that made the unparalleled impression and completely transformed the inner being of men; with death the personality — that is, the only effectual thing — disappeared. What remains is fragment and outline. In order that the example may retain its miraculous power, that the Christian religion may not lose its character as actual, real experience, the figure of Jesus Christ must ever be born anew; otherwise there remains only a vain tissue of dogmas, and the personality — whose extra-

* This is not aesthetic theory, but the experience of creative artists. Thus Eugène Fromentin says in his exquisite and thoroughly scientific book *Les Maîtres d'autrefois* (éd. 7, p. 2): „*L'art de peindre est l'art d'exprimer l'invisible par le visible.*“

502 ART

ordinary influence was the sole source of this religion — becomes crystallised to an abstraction. As soon as the eye ceases to see, and the ear to hear, the personality of Christ fades further and further away, and in place of living and — as I said before — realistic religion, there remains either stupid idolatry, or an Aristotelian structure of reason made up of pure abstractions. We saw this in the case of Dante, in whose creed the one sure foundation of religion possible to us Teutons — experience — is altogether absent and the name of Christ consequently not once mentioned (*cf.* pp. [106](#), [425](#)). Only one human power is capable

of rescuing religion from the double danger of idolatry and philosophic Deism; * that power is art. For it is art alone that can give new birth to the original form, *i.e.*, the original experience. In Leonardo da Vinci, who is perhaps the greatest creative genius that ever lived, we have a striking example of the way in which art steers safely between these two cliffs; his hatred of all dogma, his contempt of all idolatry, his power to give shape to the true subject-matter of Christianity, namely, the figure of Christ Himself, have been emphasised by me in the first chapter (vol. i. [p. 82](#)); they signify the dawn of a new day. And we might prove the same of every artistic genius from him to Beethoven.

This point I may require to explain more fully, to make the relation between art and religion perfectly clear.

I said on [p. 291](#) that a mechanical interpretation of the world is consistent only with an ideal religion; I think I have proved this irrefutably in the previous

* These two tendencies become more concrete to us when we think of them as Jesuitism and Pietism (the correlative of Deism). For each of these finds in an apparent contrast a complementary form, into which it is liable to merge. The correlative of Jesuitism is Materialism; as [Paul de Lagarde](#) has rightly remarked: "The water in these communicating pipes is always at the same height" ([Deutsche Schriften](#), ed. 1891, p. 49); all Jesuitical natural science is just as strictly dogmatic and materialistic as that of any Holbach or De Lamettrie; the correlative of abstract Deism is Pietism with its faith in the letter.

503 ART

section. Now what is the distinguishing-mark of an ideal religion? Its absolute existence in the present. We recognised this clearly in the case of the Mystics; they put time aside like a cast-off garment; they wish to dwell neither upon creation — in which the materialistic religions find the guarantee of God's power — nor upon future reward and punishment; rather is the present time to them "like eternity" ([p. 421](#)). The scientific philosophy which has been built up by the intellectual work of the last centuries has given clear and comprehensible expression to this feeling. Teutonic philosophy has from the first "turned on two hinges": (1) The ideality of space and time; (2) the reality of the idea of freedom. * That is at the same time — if I may so express myself — the formula of art. For in the creations of art the freedom of the will proves itself real, and time — as compared with the inner, unmechanical world — a mere, inconstant idea. Art is the everlasting Present. And it is that in two respects. In the first place it holds time in its spell: what Homer creates is as young to-day as it was three thousand years ago; he who stands before the tomb of Lorenzo de' Medici feels himself in the presence of Michael Angelo; the art of genius does not grow old. Moreover, art is

the Present in the sense that only that which is absolutely without duration is present. Time is divisible, infinitely so, a flash of lightning is only relatively shorter than a life of a hundred years, the latter only relatively longer than the former; whereas the Present in the sense of something which has no duration is shorter than the shortest thinkable time and longer than all conceivable eternity; this applies to art; the works of art have an absolutely

* Cf. Kant: *Fortschritte der Metaphysik*, Supplement. As we see, the Real which is derived from the testimony of sense is interpreted as an idea, whereas the Idea which is given by inner experience is interpreted as real. It is exactly like the Copernican theory of motion: what was supposed to be moving, rests, and what was supposed to rest, moves.

504 ART

momentary effect, and at the same time awaken the feeling of everlastingness. Goethe somewhere distinguishes true art from dream and shadow by saying that art is “a living, momentary revelation of the inscrutable.” Even this much-abused word “revelation” receives in the light of Teutonic philosophy a perfectly clear sense devoid of all extravagance; it means the opening of the gate which separates us (as mechanical phenomena) from the timeless world of freedom. Art keeps watch over the gate. A work of art — let us say Michael Angelo's *Night* — shows the gate wide open; we step from the surroundings of the temporal into the presence of the Timeless. As this artist himself says triumphantly, “*Dall' arte è vinta la natura!*” (Nature is conquered by art); that is to say, the Visible is forced to give shape to the Invisible — the Inevitable is forced to serve freedom; the stone now presents a living revelation of the Inscrutable.

What powerful support a religion resting on direct experience derives from such a power must be plain to all. Art is capable of always bringing to new life the former experience; it can reveal in the personality the super-personal element, in the ephemeral phenomenon the unephemeral; a Leonardo gives us the figure and a Bach the voice of Jesus Christ, now for ever present. Moreover, art elsewhere reveals that religion which had found in the One its inimitable, convincing existence, and we are deeply moved when, in a portrait of Dürer or Rembrandt by their own hand, we look into eyes which introduce us to that same world in which Jesus Christ “lived and moved and had his being,” the threshold of which can be crossed neither by words nor thoughts. Something of this is in all sublime art, for it is this that makes it sublime. Not only the countenance of man, but everything that the eye of man sees, that the thought of man grasps and has moulded anew

according to the law of inner, unmechanical freedom, opens that gate of “momentary revelation“;

505 ART

for every work of art brings us face to face with the creative artist, that is, with the rule of that at once transcendent and real world from which Christ speaks when he says that the Kingdom of God lies in this life like a treasure buried in the soil. Look at one of the numerous representations of Christ by Rembrandt, *e.g.*, [The Hundred Gulden etching](#), and hold beside it his [Landscape with Three Trees](#); my meaning will become clear. And the reader will agree with me when I say, Art is not indeed Religion — for ideal Religion is an actual process in the inmost heart of every individual, the process of conversion and regeneration, of which Christ spoke — but Art transports us into the atmosphere of religion, explains all nature to us, and by its sublime revelations stirs our inmost being so deeply and directly that many men only get to know what religion is by Art. That the converse is also true is manifest without further words, and we can understand how Goethe — who cannot be reproached with piety in the ecclesiastical sense — could assert that only religious men possessed creative power. *

So much to define what we are to understand by, and reverence in, the term “art“ and to prevent a weakening of the idea by uncritical extension. The theoretical definition of art I have thought fit to supplement by reference to the importance of the art of genius in the work of culture generally, by which the significance of art is concretely presented to the mind. We see how far polemics may lead us in a short time! I therefore turn now to the second point: the senseless limitation which our art-historians affect in the use of the term “art.“

* Cf. The Conversation with Riemer on March 26, 1814.

506 ART

POETRY WEDDED TO MUSIC

No history of art of the present day makes any mention of poetry or music; the former now belongs to literature — the art of writing letters — the latter stands in a category by itself, neither fish nor flesh, its technique being too abstruse and difficult to awaken interest or be understood outside the narrow circle of professional musicians, and its influence too physical and general not to be regarded somewhat

contemptuously by the learned as the art of the *misera plebs* and the superficial *dilettanti*. And yet we have but to open our eyes and look around us to see that poetry not only occupies in itself, as the philosophers assert, the “highest place” among all arts, but is the direct source of almost all creative activity and the creative focus even of those works of art which do not directly depend upon it. Moreover, every historical and every critical investigation will convince us, as they did Lessing, that poetry and music are not two arts, but rather “one and the same art.” It is the poet wedded to music that ever awakens us to art; it is he who opens our eyes and ears; in him, more than in any other creator, reigns that commanding freedom which subordinates nature to its will, and, as the freest of all artists he is unquestionably the foremost. All plastic art might be destroyed and yet poetry — the poet wedded to music — would remain untouched; the empire of music would not be an inch narrower, only here and there devoid of form. It is indeed an inexact expression when we say that poetry is the “first” among the arts: rather is it the only art. Poetry is the all-embracing art which gives all other arts life, so that where the latter emancipate themselves, they needs must carry on an *ars poetica* on their own account — with as much success as may be. Only think: is the plastic art of the Hellenes conceivable without their poetical

507 ART

art? Did not Homer guide the chisel of Phidias? Had not the Hellenic poet to create the forms before the Hellenic artist could re-create them? Are we to believe that the Greek architect would have erected inimitably perfect temples had not the poet conjured up before his mind such glorious divine forms that he felt compelled to devote to the work of invention every fibre of his being, so as not to fall too far short of that which hovered before his own imagination and that of his contemporaries as divine and worthy of the Gods? It is the same with ourselves. Our plastic art depends partly on Hellenic, partly and to a large extent upon Christian religious poetry. Before the sculptor can grasp them, the forms must exist in the imagination; the God must be believed in, before temples are built to him. Here we see religion — as Goethe bade us to see — the source of all productiveness. But historical religion must have attained poetical shape before we can represent and understand it in plastic form: the Gospel, the legend, the poem is the forerunner and forms the indispensable commentary to every *Last Supper*, every *Crucifixion*, every *Inferno*. The Teutonic artist, however, in accordance with his true, analytic nature, as soon as he had mastered the technique of his craft, went much deeper; he shared with the Indian the leaning towards nature; hence the two-fold inclination which strikes us so much

in Albrecht Dürer: outwards, to painfully exact observation and lovingly conscientious reproduction of every blade of grass, every beetle — inwards, into the inscrutable inner nature, by means of the human image and profound allegories. Here the most genuine religion is at work and for that reason — as I have already proved — the most genuine art. Here we see exactly reflected the mental tendency towards Nature of the Mystics, the tendency towards the dignity of man of the Humanists, the tendency towards the inadequacy of the world of phenomena of the naturalist-philosopher.

508 ART

Every one of them in fact contributes his stone to the building of the new world, and since the uniform spirit of a definite human race predominates, all the different parts fit exactly into each other. I am therefore far from denying that our plastic art has emancipated itself much more from poetry (*i.e.*, word-poetry) than it did among the Hellenes; I believe indeed that we can trace a gradual development in this direction from the thirteenth century to the present day. Yet we must admit that this art cannot be understood unless we take into account the general development of culture, and if we do this we shall at once see that all-powerful, free poetry everywhere preceded, took the lead and smoothed the way for her manifoldly restricted sisters. A Francis of Assisi had to press nature to his burning heart and a Gottfried von Strassburg inspiredly to describe it, before men's eyes were opened and the brush could attempt to delineate it; a great poetical work had been completed in every district of Europe — from Florence to London — before the painter recognised the dignity of the human countenance, and personality began to take the place of pattern in his works. Before a Rembrandt could reveal his greatness, a Shakespeare had to live. In the case of allegory the relation of the plastic arts to poetry is so striking that no one can be blind to it. Here the artist himself wishes to invent poetically. In the Introduction ([p. lx](#)) I quoted words of Michael Angelo, in which he puts the stone and unwritten page on the same footing, and says that into neither of them does anything come but what he wills. He therefore creates poetically as with the pen, so with the chisel and the brush.

The kindled marble's bust may wear
More poesy upon its speaking brow
Than aught less than the Homeric page may bear!
BYRON ("Prophecy of Dante").

Michael Angelo's *Creation of Light* is his own

509 ART

invention, but we should not understand it did it not rest upon a well-known myth. And his figures Day and Night, with Lorenzo de' Medici above them, what are they if not poetical creations? Surely they are not merely two naked figures and a draped one. What then has been added? Something which, by the power which it has of stirring the feelings, is just as closely related to music as it is to poetry by its awakening of thoughts. It is an heroic attempt to create poetically, by means of the mere world of phenomena, without the help of an existing poetical fable, and that necessarily means by way of allegory. The great work of Michael Angelo can, in fact, only be understood and judged as poetic creation, and the same holds of Rembrandt and Beethoven; all aesthetic wrangling on this point, and on the limits of expression in the various arts, is settled when we grasp the simple fact that clear ideas can only be communicated by language; from this it follows that every plastic creation must lack definiteness of idea and in so far exercise a "musical" effect, if it is to have any at all; but on the other hand, this plastic creation must, inasmuch as it is devoid of music, be interpreted by ideas and in so far is to be regarded "poetically." "Night" is, of course, but one word, but in spite of that, thanks to the magic power of language, it unrolls a whole poetical programme. And thus we see that plastic art, event where it follows, as much as possible, its own independent course, yet stretches out both hands to the poet, "who is wedded to music": if it has not borrowed the matter from him, it must receive from him the soul that will give life to its work.

I do not think I need say anything more to prove that a history of art which leaves out poetry is just as senseless as the famous representation of *Hamlet* without the Prince. And yet I shall immediately show that the most daring historico-philosophical assertions of

510 ART

well-known scholars rest on this view. When in one scene Rosencrantz and Guildenstern do not appear on the stage, it seems empty to our historians of art. But, as I was speaking of the poet whose words are wedded to music, and as the twin-sister of the poet, Polyhymnia, is included in the anathema and not regarded as presentable, I must still say a word about her art, before going on to discuss the historical delusions.

It is now a universally acknowledged fact that in all the branches of the Indo-European group in ancient times poetry was at the same time music: evidence regarding the Indians, Hellenes and Teutonic peoples is to be found in all the more recent histories. Among the books which

contributed most in the nineteenth century to the formation of a sound judgment on this point, those of Fortlage, Westphal, Helmholtz and Ambros on the music of the Greeks deserve special mention: they clearly show that music was valued as highly by the Greeks as poetry and plastic art, and that at the time of the greatest splendour of Greek culture music and poetry were so closely allied and intertwined “that the history of Hellenic music cannot be separated from the history of Hellenic poetry and *vice versa*.” * What we to-day admire as Hellenic poetry is only a torso; for it was the music which organically belonged to them that first “raised the Pindaric ode, the Sophoclean scene, into the full brilliancy of the Hellenic day.” If modern ideas should hold good, which have established the threefold division, Literature, Music, Art, and have banished all that is sung from literature and still more from art, then all Greek poetry must belong to the history of music — not to literature or to art! That gives something to think about. In the meantime, music has passed through a great development (to which I shall return in another connection), whereby it has not

* Ambros: *Geschichte der Musik*, 2nd ed. i. 219.

511 ART

lost in dignity or independence, but on the contrary has become more and more powerful in expression, and therefore more capable of artistic form. Here we have not merely development, as our historians of music would fain represent it, but the passing over of this art from Hellenic into Teutonic hands. The Teuton — in all the branches of this group of peoples — is the most musical being on earth; music is his special art, that in which he is among all mankind the incomparable master. We have seen how in ancient times the Teutons did not lay aside the harp even when on horseback, and how their most capable kings were personally the leaders of instruction in singing (vol. i. [p. 327](#)); the ancient Goths could invent no other term for reading (*lesen*) than singing (*singen*), “as they knew no kind of communication in elevated speech but what was sung.” * And so the Teuton, as soon as in the thirteenth century he had awakened to independence and to some extent shaken off the deadening spell of Rome, at once devoted himself to that harmony and polyphony which is natural to him alone: the development starts in the thoroughly Teutonic Netherlands (the home of Beethoven) and for at least three centuries its one firm support and cradle, so to speak, is there and in the north generally. † It was only at a later time that the Italians, who were really pupils of the Germans, attained to importance in music; even Palestrina follows closely in the footsteps of the men of the north. ‡ And that which was so

* Lamprecht: *Deutsche Geschichte*, 2nd ed. i. 174.

† The usual exclusive emphasising of the Netherlands is, as Ambros shows, an historical error; Frenchmen, Germans, English, have to a great extent assisted; see *loc. cit.* iii. 336, as well as the following section and the whole of Bk. II. It is interesting to learn that Milton's father was a composer. For further facts see Riemann's *Geschichte der Musiktheorie* and *Illustration zur Musikgeschichte*.

‡ It is very noteworthy that Palestrina's teacher, the Frenchman Goudimel, was a Calvinist, who was killed on the night of Saint Bartholomew; for as Palestrina in style and manner of writing followed his teacher most closely (see Ambros, II, p. 11 of V.) We see that the

512 ART

enthusiastically begun went on without a break. In Josquin de Près, a contemporary of Raphael, Teutonic music had already produced a genius. From Josquin to Beethoven, on the threshold of the nineteenth century, the development of this divine art, which, as Shakespeare says, alone can transform the inmost nature of man — has progressed smoothly and uninterruptedly. Music, zealously cultivated and furthered by thousands and tens of thousands, put at the disposal of every succeeding genius ever more and more perfect instruments, a ripe technique, a finer receptive capacity. * And this specifically Teutonic art has been for centuries also recognised as a specifically Christian art and frequently called simply the “divine art,” *la divina musica*, and rightly too, since it is the peculiarity of this art not to build with forms presented by the senses, but, absolutely neglecting these, to influence the feelings directly. That is why it stirs the heart of man so powerfully. The profound affinity between mechanism and ideality, to which I have often referred (see especially pp. [291](#) and [486 f.](#)), here presents itself, as it were, in the embodiment of an image: the mathematical art which is above all others and in so far also the most “mechanical” one is at the same time the most “ideal,” the most free of all that is corporeal.

purification of Roman church-music “from lascivious and obscene songs” (as the Council of Trent in its twenty-second sitting expressed it) and its elevation and refinement were fundamentally the work of Protestantism and the Teutonic north.

* I intentionally refrain from saying “ear” or “hearing,” for, to judge from many facts known to every musician, we may conclude that there has within the last three centuries been a retrogression instead of an advance in power of ear. Our forefathers, for example, had a preference for compositions for four, eight or even more voices, and the dilettante, who sang to the lute, did not take the treble (as that was considered vulgar!) but a middle part. But it has long been established that acuteness of ear stands in no necessary, direct relation to susceptibility to musical expression; to a great extent this acuteness is a matter of practice, and we find peoples (*e.g.*, the Turks) who can without exception accurately distinguish quarter-notes and who yet are absolutely lacking in musical imagination and creative power.

This explains the directness of the effect of music, *i.e.*, its absolute presentness, which implies a further affinity to genuine religion; and, in fact, if we wished by means of an example to make clear what we meant by calling religion an experience, musical experiences, that is, the direct, all powerful and indelible impression which sublime music makes upon the mind, would certainly be the most appropriate and perhaps the only permissible illustration. There are chorales by Johann Sebastian Bach — and not only chorales, but I name these to keep to what is best known — which in the simple, literal sense of the word are the most Christ-like sounds ever heard since the divine voice died into silence upon the Cross.

I shall say nothing more in this connection; it is enough to have alluded to the great importance of music for our culture, and to have called to mind the incomparable achievements which the “art of genius“ has accomplished during the last five centuries in this sphere. Every one will be ready to admit that generalisations on the connection between art and culture are of no value, if poetry and music, which — as Lessing taught us — in reality form one single, comprehensive art, are shut out from consideration.

ART AND SCIENCE

We are by this time armed to do battle with those dogmas of the history of art which are so universally accepted at the present day. An indispensable undertaking, for this philosophy of history renders an understanding of the growth of Teutonic culture absolutely impossible, and at the same time laughably distorts all judgment of the art of the nineteenth century.

A concrete example must be given, and as we everywhere find the same luxuriant aftermath of Hegelian delusion, it does not much matter where we seek one.

I take up an excellent book which is very widely read, the *Einführung in das Studium der neueren Kunstgeschichte* by Professor Alwin Schultz, the famous Prague professor; I quote from p. 5 of the edition of 1878: “Have art and science ever at the same moment (*sic!*) produced their finest fruits? Did not Aristotle appear, when the heroic age of Greek art was

already past? And what scholar (*sic!*) lived at the time of Leonardo, Michael Angelo, Raphael, whose works could even approximately be placed side by side with those of these masters? No! art and science have never at the same time been successfully cultivated by the nations; art rather precedes science; science does not really gain strength till the brilliant epoch of art is a thing of the past, and the more science grows and gains in importance, the more is art pressed into the background. No nation has ever simultaneously achieved great things in both spheres. We can therefore take consolation from the fact that in our century, the scientific work of which has been so brilliant and so momentous for our cultures, art has succeeded in achieving something which is only less important.“ There are a couple more pages in the same strain. The reader must peruse the quotation several times carefully, and every time he does so he will be more and more amazed at this mass of absurd judgments, and especially at the fact that a conscientious scholar can simply ignore self-evident facts known to every educated person, in favour of a traditional, artificial, absolutely false construction of history. Little wonder that we laymen no longer understand the history of the past, and consequently our own time! But we will understand them. Let us therefore look more closely and with critical eyes at the official philosophy of history which I have just quoted.

In the first place I ask: Even supposing that what Professor Schultz says were true of the Hellenes, what

515 ART

would that prove for us Teutons? Behind his error there lurks once more the cursed abstract conception of “humanity.“ For he speaks not only of Greeks; universal laws are laid down with his “ever“ and “never,“ as if we could all — Egyptians, Chinese, Congo negroes, Teutons — be cast into one pot; whereas in every sphere of life we see that even our nearest relations — Greeks, Romans, Indians, Iranians — pass through a perfectly individual and peculiar course of development. Moreover, the example he takes to prove his point rings a false note. Of course, if our historians of art had set themselves to prove the thesis, which I have attempted to sketch in the first chapter of this book, viz., that creative art — the art of Homer — has formed the basis of all Hellenic culture, that by it we first “entered into the daylight of life,“ and that this is the special distinguishing-mark of the one unique, Hellenic history, their position would have been unassailable, and we should have been indebted to them; but there is no question of that. Poetry and music form no part of art in Schultz's estimation any more than they do in that of his colleagues; not a word is said about them; “the whole wide sphere of manual production“ (p. 14) is looked upon as belonging to the subject —

that is, the plastic arts alone. And in that case the assertion made is not only risky but demonstrably false. For, in the first place, the limitation of the heroic age of plastic art to Phidias is little more than a convenient phrase. What do we possess from his hand to serve as good grounds for such a judgment? Is not investigation from year to year recognising ever more and more the many-sided importance of Praxiteles, * and has not Apelles the reputation of having been an incomparable painter? Both are contemporaries of Aristotle. And are we really justified, for the sake of

* Read the reports on the recent discoveries in Mantinea with Praxiteles' reliefs of the Muses.

516 ART

a favourite system, to despise the splendid sculptures from Pergamon as “second-rate goods”? But Pergamon was not founded till fifty years after Aristotle's death. I have always been compelled in this book to mention only a few pre-eminent, well-known names; I have also laid the greatest emphasis on art as “the art of genius”; but it seems to me ridiculous when such simplification is admitted into standard books; genius is not like an order of merit hung on the breast of a single, definite individual, it slumbers, and not only does it slumber but it is at work in hundreds and thousands of men, before the individual can rise to pre-eminence. As I have said on [p. 34](#) (vol. i.), it is only in a surrounding of personalities that personalities can as such make themselves seen and heard; art of genius implies a basis of widespread artistic genius; in works of creative imagination, as Richard Wagner has remarked, there shows itself “a common power distributed among infinitely various and manifold individualities.” * Such widespread genius as the Greeks manifested even down to later times, a genius which long after Aristotle produced the Giant's frieze and the Laocoon group, does not need to fear comparison with science — above all with the absolutely unheroic science of that late period! I shall, however, not insist more on this, but, to begin with, make the standpoint of the art-historians my own, and regard the age of Pericles as the zenith of art. But in that case how could I close my eyes to the fact that the “heroic age” of science corresponds exactly to that of art? For how is it possible to regard Aristotle as the chief Greek scientist? This great man has summarised, sifted, arranged, schematised the science of his time, like everything else; but his own personal science is anything but heroic, indeed it is rather the opposite, that is to

* [Eine Mitteilung an meine Freunde](#), Collected Works, 1st ed. iv. 309.

517 ART

say, decidedly official, not to say parsonic. On the other hand, more than a century before the birth of Phidias all Hellenic thinkers proved themselves scientifically trained mathematicians and astronomers, and science became really “heroic“ when Pythagoras, born at latest eighty years before Phidias, appeared. I refer to what I merely sketched on [p. 52](#) (vol. i). To-day it is a recognised fact how brilliant the Pythagorean astronomy was; with what zeal and success the Greeks down to the Alexandrian age, without a break, cultivated mathematics and astronomy, and how Aristotle stands apart from this movement, which is the only one dealing with genuine natural science: how can any one overlook these facts in favour of a dogmatic theory? From Thales, who a hundred years before Phidias fixes in advance the date of the eclipse of the sun, to Aristarchus, the forerunner of Copernicus, who was born a hundred years after Aristotle — that is, as long as the Greek intellectual life was at all in a flourishing condition, from the beginning to the end — we see the active influence of the peculiar Hellenic capacity for the science of space. Apart from this the Greeks have on the whole accomplished little of lasting importance in science, for they were too hasty, too bad observers; but two names are so pre-eminent that even to this day they are known to every child: Hippocrates, the founder of scientific medicine, and Democritus, far the greatest of all Hellenic investigators of nature, the only one of them whose influence is not yet spent; * and both of these are contemporaries of Phidias!

* Democritus can only be compared with Kant: the history of the world knows of no more remarkable intellectual power than his. Whoever does not yet know this fact should read the section in Zeller's *Philosophy of the Greeks* (Div. 2, vol. i.) and supplement this by Lange's *Geschichte des Materialismus*. Democritus is the only Greek whom we can regard as a forerunner of Teutonic philosophy; for in him — and in him alone — we find the absolutely mathematical-mechanical interpretation of the world of phenomena, united to the idealism of

518 ART

But the assertion that art and science have never at the same time been cultivated with success has still less justification when we apply it to Teutonic culture. “What scholar lived in the time of Leonardo, Michael Angelo, Raphael, whose works could be even approximately compared with those of these great masters?“ Truly, one can't help pitying such a poor art-historian! At the very first name — Leonardo — we exclaim: “Why, my good sir, Leonardo himself!“ Scientific authorities say regarding him: “Leonardo da Vinci must be regarded as the greatest forerunner of the Galilean epoch of the development of inductive science.“ *

I have often had occasion in this book to refer to Leonardo, and so I may here merely remind the reader that he was mathematician, mechanician, engineer, astronomer, geologist, anatomist, physiologist. Though the short span of a human life made it impossible for him to win in every sphere the immortal fame which he won in that of art, his numerous correct divinations of things which were discovered later are all the more

inner experience and the resolute rejection of all dogmatism. In contrast to the silly “middle path“ of Aristotle he teaches that truth lies in depth! Knowledge of things according to their real nature is, he says, impossible. His Ethics are just as important: morality depends, in his estimation, solely upon will, not upon works; he already gives us a glimpse of Goethe's idea of reverence for self, and rejects fear and hope as moral impulses.

* Hermann Grothe: *Leonardo da Vinci als Ingenieur und Philosoph*, p. 93. In this book the author has attempted to prove that scientific knowledge in Leonardo's time was altogether more extensive and precise than two centuries later, yet he too humours the Hegelian art-history so far as to write: “We have always been able to observe the fact that the greatest splendour of science is preceded by a sublime epoch of art“; surely that is the *non plus ultra*. Nothing is more difficult to root out than such phrases: the very man who in a pre-eminent case has just proved the opposite, still babbles the same phrases and excuses the departure from the supposed rule with an “always“ — to which we are inclined to retort with the question: Where is there except among the Teutonic peoples a “highest splendour of science?“ He would be at a loss for an answer. And with us — that he could not deny — art from Giotto to Goethe runs parallel to science from Roger Bacon to Cuvier.

519 ART

valuable, as they are not airy intuitions but the result of observation and a strictly scientific method of thinking. He was the first to establish clearly the great central principle of all natural science, mathematics and experiment. “All knowledge is vain,“ he says, “which is not based upon facts of experience and which cannot be traced step by step to the scientifically arranged experiment.“ * I certainly do not know whether Professor Schultz would call Leonardo a “scholar“; but history proves that there is something greater than scholarship even in the sciences, namely, genius; and Leonardo is, beyond doubt, one of the greatest scientific geniuses of all time. But let us look further to see if there is not another scientific contemporary of Michael Angelo and Raphael worthy of being “approximately“ placed alongside of them. Nothing is more difficult than to awaken men to the appreciation of past scientific greatness, and if I were to quote, as examples of natural investigators whose lives fall within that of Michael Angelo, Vesalius, the immortal founder of human anatomy, Servet, the forerunner of the discovery of the circulation of the blood, Konrad Gessner, that remarkable many-sided marvel of all later “naturalists,“ and others as well, I should have to add a commentary to

each name, and even after all a whole life of successful work would still not be equivalent, in the vague conception of the layman, to one great work of art which he knows by having actually seen it. But fortunately in this case we have not to seek far to find a name, the splendour of which has impressed even the most unscientific brain. For with all our admiration of these immortal artists we must yet admit that a Nicolaus Copernicus has exercised a greater, more thorough and more lasting influence upon all human culture than Michael Angelo and Raphael. Georg Christoph Lichtenberg exclaims,

* *Libro di pittura*, § 33 (ed. Ludwig).

520 ART

after pointing out the scientific and moral greatness of Copernicus: "If this was not a great man, who in this world can lay claim to the title?" * And Copernicus is so exactly the contemporary of Raphael and Michael Angelo that his life embraces that of Raphael. Raphael was born in 1483 and died in 1520: Copernicus' dates are 1473-1543. Copernicus was famous in Rome at a time when Raphael's name was unknown there; and when the genius of Urbino was summoned by Julius II., in 1508, the astronomer already carried in his brain his theory of the cosmic system, although like a genuine investigator of nature he worked at it for thirty years longer before publishing it. Copernicus is twenty-one years younger than Leonardo, two years younger than Albrecht Dürer, two years older than Michael Angelo, four years older than Titian; all these men were at the zenith of their powers between 1500 and 1520. But not they alone, the epoch-making natural investigator Paracelsus † is only ten years younger than Raphael and closed his eventful and scientifically important life more than twenty years before Michael Angelo. We must, however, not overlook the fact that men like Copernicus and Paracelsus do not fall from heaven; if the art of genius is a collective phenomenon, science is so in a still higher degree. The very first biographer of Copernicus, namely, Gassendi, proved that he would not have been possible but for his predecessor Regiomontanus, and that the latter owed just as much to his teacher, Purbach; and on the other hand, the astronomer Bailly, a recognised authority, asserts that, if his instruments had been a little more perfect, Regiomontanus would have anticipated most of the discoveries of Galilei. ‡

* See his *Leben des Kopernikus* in his *Physikalische und mathematische Schriften*, ed. 1884, Part I. p. 51.

† Cf. pp. 392, 425 f.

‡ Both facts are taken from the above-mentioned biography by Lichtenberg.

It is impossible to compare art and science with one another in the way in which our art-historians compare them; for art — the art of genius — “is always at its goal,” as Schopenhauer has finely remarked; there is no progress beyond Homer, beyond Michael Angelo or Bach; science, on the other hand, is essentially “cumulative” and every investigator stands on the shoulders of his predecessor. The modest Purbach paves the way for that marvel Regiomontanus, and the latter makes Copernicus possible, upon his work Kepler and Galilei (who was born in the year in which Michael Angelo died) build, and upon theirs Newton. According to what criterion are we to determine the “best fruit” here? A single consideration will show how invalid artificial determination from *a priori* constructions is. The great discoveries of Columbus, Vasco da Gama, Magalhães, &c., are the fruits of exact scientific work. Toscanelli (born 1397), the adviser of Columbus and probable instigator of the voyage to the west, was an excellent, learned astronomer and cosmographer, who undertook to prove the spherical shape of the earth, and whose map of the Atlantic Ocean, which Columbus used on his first voyage, is a marvel of knowledge and intuition. The Florentine Amerigo Vespucci was taught by him, and thus enabled to map the first exact topographical details of the American coast. Yet that would not have sufficed. But for the wonderfully exact astronomical almanacs of Regiomontanus which, on the basis of his observations of the stars and of new methods, he had calculated and printed for the period 1475-1506, no transatlantic voyage would have been possible; from Columbus onwards every geographical discoverer had them on board. * I should have thought that the discovery of the earth, which coincides exactly with the greatest splendour of plastic art in Italy, was in itself a

* For all these facts see Fiske: *The Discovery of America*.

“fruit,” just as worthy of our appreciation as a Madonna of Raphael; science, in preparing the way for and making art possible, can hardly be said to have limped on behind, but rather to have preceded art.

If we continued step by step to criticise our art-historian, we should still have much to say concerning him; but now we have shown the total invalidity of the basis of his further assertions, we may throw open door and window and let the sunshine of glorious reality and the fresh air of

impetuous development clear the stuffy atmosphere of a philosophy of history, in which the past remains obscure and the present insignificant. I may therefore briefly summarise the further facts that go to refute his theory.

About a hundred and fifty years after Raphael's death — Kepler and Galilei had been long dead, Harvey recently; Swammerdam was engaged in discovering undreamt-of secrets of anatomy, Newton had already worked out his theory of gravitation, and John Locke in his fortieth year was just undertaking the scientific analysis of the human mind — a poem was written, of which Goethe has said: "If poetry were altogether lost to the world, it could be restored by means of this work"; that must be, I should think, art of genius in the most superlative sense! The artist was Calderon, the work his *Steadfast Prince*. * Such extravagant praise from so capable and level-headed a critic as Goethe makes us feel that the creative power of Art in the seventeenth century had not declined. We shall doubt it the less when we consider that Newton, the contemporary of Calderon, might have seen Rembrandt at work, and perhaps — I do not know — did see him; if he had travelled in Germany, he might equally have seen the great musician of the Thomaskirche produce one of his Passions, and doubtless he

* Letter to Schiller, June 28, 1804.

523 ART

saw or knew Handel, who had settled in England long before Newton's death. This brings us past the middle of the eighteenth century. In the year of Handel's death, Gluck was at the zenith of his power, Mozart was born and Goethe had written a great deal, not for the world, but for his brother Jakob, who died young, and he had just become, in consequence of the presence of the French in Frankfurt, acquainted with the theatre before and behind the scenes; before the close of the same year Schiller saw the light of the world. These few hasty indications — and I have not mentioned the rich artistic life of England, from Chaucer to Shakespeare, and from the latter to Hogarth and Byron, nor the fine creations of France, from the invention of Gothic architecture in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries to the great Racine — prove quite clearly that in no century, since our new world began to arise, have there been lacking a deep-felt need of art, widespread artistic genius and its revelation in glorious masterpieces. Calderon does not stand alone, as we have just seen: what Goethe said of his *Steadfast Prince* he might just as well have said of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*; and in the meantime the purest of all the arts — that art which was to give the Teutonic poets the instrument they required for the full expression of their thought — music — gradually

attained a perfection undreamt of before, and produced one genius after the other. This reveals the invalidity of the assertion that art and science exclude each other: an assertion which rests partly upon an altogether capricious and wrong definition of the term “art,” partly upon ignorance of historical facts and traditional perversity of judgment.

If there is a century which deserves to be called the “scientific” century, it is the sixteenth; we find this view of Goethe's confirmed by the authority of Justus Liebig ([p. 320](#)); but the sixteenth is the century of

524 ART

Raphael, Michael Angelo and Titian, its beginning saw Leonardo and its end Rubens; the century of natural science above all others was therefore also a century incomparably rich in plastic art. But all these divisions should be rejected as artificial and senseless. * There are no such things as centuries except in our imagination, and there is no relation between art and science except one of indirect mutual advancement. There is only one great unfettered power, busily active in all spheres simultaneously, the power of a definite race. This power is, of course, hindered or furthered now here, now there, frequently by purely external chance events, often by great ideas and the influence of pre-eminent personalities. Thus Italian painting developed importance and independence under the direct influence of Francis of Assisi, and of the great churches of which his order encouraged the building with frescoes for the instruction of the ignorant; then in Germany in consequence of almost three hundred years of war, devastation and inner strife, the interest in and capacity for plastic art gradually waned, because that, more than any other art, requires wealth and peace, in order that it may live; or to give another example, the circumnavigation of the world supplied a great impetus to astronomical studies ([p. 284](#)), while the rise of the Jesuits put a complete stop to the growth of science in Italy ([p. 193](#)). All this the historian — and the art-historian as well — can and should show us, by means of concrete

* Those who like such frivolous divisions may note the following: in the year of Michael Angelo's death (1564) Shakespeare was born; the death of Calderon (1681) coincides almost exactly with the birth of Bach, and the lives of Gluck, Mozart, and Haydn bring us exactly to the end of the eighteenth century; we might therefore say that a century of plastic art was followed by one of poetry and that by one of music. There have been people who have spoken of mathematical, astronomical-physical, anatomical-systematic and chemical centuries — simply nonsense, which mathematicians, natural scientists and anatomists of to-day will know how to estimate at its proper value.

525 ART

facts, instead of dimming our judgment by impotent generalisations.

ART AS A WHOLE

And yet we require generalisations; without them there is no knowledge, and hence, until the arrival of the eagerly expected Bichat of the history of culture, we sway backwards and forwards between false general views, which reveal every individual fact in a wrong perspective, and correct individual judgments, which we are unable so to unite that knowledge, *i.e.*, an understanding embracing all phenomena, may be thereby derived. But I hope the whole preceding exposition, from the first chapter of this book onwards, will have provided us with sufficient material to complete our makeshift bridge here. The fundamental facts of knowledge now lie so clearly before us and have been regarded from so many sides that I do not require to offer excuses for an almost aphoristic brevity.

In order to understand the history and the importance of art in succession of time and amid other phenomena of life, the first and absolute condition is that we consider it as a whole, and do not fix our attention solely on this or that fragment — as, for example, “the sphere of manual production” — and philosophise over that. *

Wherever and in whatever way there is free, creative reshaping of the inner and outer material presented by nature, there we have art. As art implies freedom and creative power, it demands personality; a work which does not bear the stamp of a peculiar distinct individuality is not a work of art. Now personalities are distinct not only in physiognomy, but also in degree; here (as elsewhere in nature) the difference in degree merges at a certain point into specific difference, so that we are

* I recall to the reader's memory Goethe's remark: “Technique finally becomes fatal to art“ (*Sprüche in Prosa*); that means, of course, to true, creative art.

526 ART

justified in asserting with Kant that the genius is specifically different from the ordinary man. * This is nowhere so apparent as in art, which in the works of authentic geniuses becomes a kind of second nature, and is consequently, like it, imperishable, incalculable, inexplicable and inimitable. Yet in every personality which is free, that is, capable of originality, there is affinity to genius; this is seen in the fine appreciation of the art of genius, in the enthusiasm which it arouses, in the stimulus

which it gives to creative activity, in its influence upon the work of men who are not in the true sense of the word artists. Not only does the art of the inspired man live in an atmosphere of artistic creation in which genius has preceded him, is his contemporary, and will live after him, but genius stretches out its roots to the most remote spheres, drawing in nourishment from all sides and conveying vitality wherever it goes. I point to Leonardo and to Goethe. Here we can see with our eyes how the artistic gift, overflowing all boundaries, expands its fructifying power over every field that the intellect of man can till. If we look more closely, we shall be no less astonished at the way in which these men draw fresh inspiration from the most varied and widely differing sources; the fostering soil of Goethe's inspiration extends from comparative osteology to the philologically exact

* Cf. vol. i. [p. 24](#). How many aesthetic delusions and useless discussions the nineteenth century might have spared itself had it weighed more carefully Kant's profound remark: "Genius is the inborn quality of mind, by which nature prescribes the rule to art — for this reason genius cannot describe or scientifically reveal how it produces; for the same reason, the producer of a work of genius does not know the source of the ideas which conduced to it, nor can he, according to a plan or at will, think out these ideas and communicate them with instructions to others, so as to enable the latter to produce similar works" (*Kritik der Urteilkraft*, § 46). Cf. also chapter § 57, close of the first note. The *Italian Journey* had not then appeared in print, otherwise Kant might have referred to Goethe's letter of September 6, 1789: "The greatest works of art have at the same time been the greatest works of nature, produced by men according to true and natural laws."

527 ART

criticism of the Hebrew Torah; that of Leonardo from the inner anatomy of the human body to the actual execution of those magnificent canals of which Goethe dreamt in his old days. Are we just to such men, if we measure and codify their artistic capacity according to what they have achieved within the four corners of "fixed patterns"? Are we to allow intellectual pigmies to clamber down from their Darwinian monkey-tree and reproach these men for going beyond their own particular "speciality in art"? Certainly not. "Only as creator can man be really worthy of our reverence," said Schiller. * Leonardo's and Goethe's views on nature and their philosophic thoughts are by their creative character most certainly "worthy of reverence"; they are Art.

What is here visibly manifest, because in these exceptional men we can directly observe in the same individual the capacity for giving and receiving, goes on everywhere by manifold mediation, though for that very reason it remains unnoticed. Everything can be a source of artistic inspiration, and on the other hand, often where, in the hurry of life, we least expect it, successes are achieved which must be attributed in the

last instance to artistic inspiration. Nothing is more receptive than human creative power. It takes impressions from everywhere, and for it a new impression means a new addition not only to its material, but also to its creative capacity, because, as I said on [p. 78](#) (vol. i.) and pp. [273](#) and [326](#) (vol. ii.), nature alone, and not the human mind, is inventive and gifted with genius. There is therefore a close connection between knowledge and art, and the great artist (we see it from Homer to Goethe) is always specially eager to learn. But art gives back with interest what it receives; by a thousand often hidden channels it influences philosophy, science, religion, industry, life, but especially the possibility of knowledge. As Goethe says: “Men as a whole are better adapted to

* *Über Anmut und Würde.*

528 ART

art than to science. The former belongs in the largest measure to themselves, the latter in the largest measure to the world; — so we must necessarily conceive science as art, if we expect from it any kind of completeness.“ * Thus, for instance, Kant's *Theory of the Heavens* is just as artistic a work as Goethe's *Metamorphosis of Plants*, and that not only on the positive side, as a creative benefit to mankind, but also negatively, in so far as all such summaries are, in spite of the instruments of mathematics, human creations, that is to say, myths.

I therefore postulate as our first principle that art must be considered as a whole, and in saying this I maintain that I have laid down an important rule. Artistic handicraft belongs altogether to Industry, *i.e.*, to the department of civilisation; it can flourish (as among the Chinese) without a trace of creative power being present; Art, on the other hand, as element of culture (in the various branches of the Indo-European family) is like the life-blood throbbing through the whole higher intellectual life. In order to form a correct historical estimate of our art, we must first of all comprehend the unity of the impulse — which proceeds from the innermost emotions of the personality — then we must trace the manifold exchange of giving and taking in all its most minute ramifications. I said on [p. 233](#) it is only the man who surveys the whole that can establish distinctions within that whole; and a true history of art cannot be built up by piecing together the various so-called “forms of art“; we must rather first of all obtain a view of art as a uniform whole and trace it to where it merges with other phenomena of life into a still greater whole; only then are we in a position to judge correctly the importance of its individual manifestations.

This then is the first general principle.

529 ART

THE PRIMACY OF POETRY

The second fundamental principle draws the indispensable narrower circle; all genuinely artistic creation is subject to the absolute primacy of poetry. For the most part I can rest content with referring to what has been said on p. 506 f. The reader will find further confirmation everywhere. Thus Springer shows that the first movements of plastic creative power among the Teutons (about the tenth century) did not occur where men copied former patterns of plastic art, but where their imagination had been awakened to free creation by poetical works — chiefly by the Psalms and legends; immediately “there reveals itself a remarkable poetic power of perception, it penetrates the object and envelops even abstract conceptions with a tangible body.” * The plastic artist, then, becomes productive when he can give form to figures which the poet has conjured up before his imagination. Of course the plastic artist receives many a creative inspiration which has not first been conveyed to him by the pen of the poet; a brilliant example is presented by the almost incalculable influence of Francis of Assisi; but we must not overlook the fact that it is not only what is written that is poetry. Poetical creative power slumbers in many breasts and in many forms; “the real inventor was in all times the people alone; the individual cannot invent, he only makes himself master of what has been already invented.” † Scarcely had this wonderful personality of Francis vanished, when the people transformed and transfigured it to an ideal figure; and it is this ideal poetical figure that stimulated Cimabue, Giotto and those who followed after them. But the lesson to be drawn from this example is not yet

* *Handbuch der Kunstgeschichte* (1895), ii. 76.

† Richard Wagner: *Entwürfe, Gedanken, Fragmente* (1885), p. 19.

530 ART

exhausted. An art-historian, who has made the influence of Francis upon plastic art the subject of the most minute studies, and who must be inclined rather to over-estimate than under-estimate that influence, namely, Professor Henry Thode, calls attention to the fact that only to a certain degree did this influence have a creative effect; such a religious

movement rouses the slumbering depths of the personality, but in itself offers the eye little material and still less form; in order that the plastic art of Italy should grow to full strength, a new impulse had to be given, and that was the work of the poets. * It was Dante who taught the Italians to create; and not he only, but also the poetry of antiquity which had been unearthed in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Naturally we must not take a narrow view of this fact; while the illuminator of the tenth century may get his inspiration for free creation by following a psalm verse by verse, at a later time such an illustrator is little valued, freer invention is demanded; in every sphere the artist rises to ever increasing independence; but his independence is determined by the development and the power of all-embracing Poetry.

This is an appropriate place for introducing Lessing's important theory, that poetry and music are one single art, that the two together form true poetry. That is the starting-point for an understanding of Teutonic art, including plastic art; whoever carelessly overlooks this fact will never reach the purity of truth. To what has been already said above (p. 510 f.) I require only to add a few words by way of an indispensable supplement.

* *Franz von Assisi und die Anfänge der Kunst der Renaissance in Italien*, 1885, p. 524 f.

531 ART

TEUTONIC MUSIC

Wherever we find highly developed, creative poetry among Teutonic peoples, there too we find a developed tone-art, which is intimately bound up with it. I shall mention only three characteristic features of the Aryan Indians. Bharata, the legendary inventor of their most popular art, namely, the Drama, is looked upon also as the author of the Foundations of Musical Instruction, for in India music was an integral part of dramatic works; lyric poets were wont to give the melody along with the verses, and when they did not do so they at least indicated in what key each poem was to be rendered. These two features bear eloquent witness; — a third clearly illustrates the development of technique. The old method, which was universal in all Europe, of designating the musical scale *do, re, mi, &c.*, is derived from India, transmitted through Erania. Thus we see how intimately associated music and poetry were, and what a part the knowledge of music played in life. * I need not add anything concerning the music of the Hellenes. Herder says: “Among the Greeks poetry and music were but one work, one splendour of the human mind.” † In another passage he says: “The Greek theatre was Song; everything

was arranged with a view to that; and whoever does not understand this has heard nothing of the Greek theatre.“ ‡ On the other hand, where there was no poetry, as among the ancient Romans, there too music was absent. At a late hour they obtained a substitute for both, and Ambros mentions, as especially characteristic, the circumstance that the chief instrument of the Romans was the pipe, whereas among the Indians, harps, lutes, and other

* Cf. Schröder: *Indiens Litteratur und Kultur*, Lectures iii and I.; and Ambros: *Geschichte der Musik*, Bk. I, i.

† *Ideen zur Geschichte der Menschheit*, Bk. XIII. Div. 2.

‡ *Nachlese zur Adrastea* I.

532 ART

stringed instruments formed the chief stock; this fact tells the whole tale. Ambros points out that the Romans never demanded more of music than that “it should be pleasant and should delight the ear“ (practically the same standpoint as that of most of our men of letters and aesthetic critics); on the other hand, they were never able to comprehend the lofty intellectual significance which all Greeks, artists and philosophers alike, attributed to this very art. And so they were the first to have the melancholy courage to write Odes (*i.e.*, songs) which were not meant to be sung. In the later Imperial age, in music as in other things, there was aroused an interest in virtuosity and aimless diletantism; this was the work of the Chaos of Peoples which was beginning to assert itself. * These facts need no commentary. But one thing that does require comment is the fact already alluded to, that the prominence of musical talent is an intellectual characteristic of the Teutons — which of necessity implies a new and special development of Poetry, and with it of Art in general. The contrast presented by other Indo-European races will be instructive on this subject. Certainly the Indians too seem to have been highly gifted musically, but with them everything merged and lost itself in something Prodigious, Over-complex, and, therefore, Shapeless. Thus they distinguished nine hundred and sixty different keys and so made a complete technical development impossible. †

* Ambros, as above, conclusion of vol. i.

† It is well known that authorities are inclined to see in the Hungarian gypsies of today an early severed branch of the Indian Aryans, and musical writers have thought fit to see in the incomparable and peculiar musical gifts of these people an analogy to genuine Indian music: a scale which includes quarter-notes and sometimes even minuter differences, hence harmonic structures and progressions unknown to Teutonic music; moreover the passionate fervour of the melody and the infinitely rich and florid accompaniment, which defies fixation by our scale of notation, corresponds exactly to what is told us of Indian music, and so renders intelligible much that is to us

inexplicable in Indian musical books. Any one who has for a whole evening listened to a genuine Hungarian gypsy orchestra will agree with me when I assert that here and here alone we see absolute musical

533 ART

The Hellenes erred by going to the other extreme; they possessed a scientifically complete but narrowly limiting musical theory, and their music developed in such a direct and inseparable alliance with their poetry — music being, as it were, the living body of the words — that it never attained to any independence, and for that reason never to a higher life of expression. The linguistic expression always formed the basis of Hellenic music; on that, and not on purely musical considerations, the Greeks built up even the melody; and instead of constructing, as we do, the harmonic structure from the bottom upwards (this is not of course caprice, but is based on the facts of acoustics, namely, the presence of harmonising overtones), the Greeks constructed from the top downwards. With them the melody of speech was supreme, and it was independent, unfettered by considerations of the musical structure; it was, so to speak, “speech sung”; and the instrumental accompaniment, which was devoid of all independence, was linked on as something subordinate. Even those who are not musicians will understand that on such a basis the ear could not be trained and music could not grow into an independent art; music remained under these circumstances an indispensable artistic element rather than a creative art. * What therefore

genius at work; for this music, though built upon well-known melodies, is always improvised, always suggested by the moment; now pure music is not monumental, but direct feeling, and it is clear that music which is at the time of playing improvised as the expression of momentary feeling must influence the heart quite differently, that is, must exercise a more purely musical effect than music which has been learned and practised. But such a production contains unfortunately no elements out of which lasting works of art can be forged (we only require to refer to those stupid parodies of Hungarian music which under the name of “Hungarian dances“ enjoy a regrettably wide popularity); this is in fact not a question of real art but of something lying deeper, namely, the elements from which art first arises, it is not the sea-born Aphrodite, but the sea itself.

* In so far there is an analogy between Indian and Hellenic music, however different they otherwise were; in the one case it is over-luxuriance, in the other subordination of the musical expression, by which the feeling is created of something unshaped and elementary in

534 ART

in the case of the Indians was frustrated by excessive refinement of the ear, was from the first impossible to the Hellenes in consequence of the subordination of the musical sense in favour of the linguistic expression. Schiller has laid down the decisive law: "Music must become form"; the possibility of this was first realised among the Teutons.

By what means the Teuton succeeded in making music an art — his art — and in developing it to ever growing independence and capacity of expression, may be studied by the reader in histories of music. But, as we are here considering art as a whole, I must call his attention to one great drawback in such histories. Since music is essentially the revelation of something inexpressible, we can "say" little or nothing about it; histories of music shrink, therefore, in the main, into a discussion of things technical. In histories of the plastic arts this is not so much the case; plans, photographs, facsimiles give us a direct view of the objects; moreover, the handbooks of the plastic arts contain only so much of the technical as every intelligent person can at once understand, whereas musical technique requires special study. The comparison with histories of poetry is just as unfavourable to music. For in these we are hardly told that there is such a thing as technique, its discussion is limited to the narrowest circles of the learned; knowledge of the history of poetry is acquired directly from the poetical works themselves. Thus the various branches of art are presented to us in totally different historical perspectives, and this makes it very difficult to acquire a view of art as a whole. It is our business, therefore, mentally to rearrange our historical knowledge of art; and in this respect it is useful to know that there is no art in which —

contrast to genuine, formed art. To gain deeper insight into Hellenic music, I recommend the reader to consult the little book of Hausegger: *Die Anfänge der Harmonie*, 1895; from these seventy-six pages he can learn more facts, and more important ones than from whole volumes.

535 ART

in the living work — technique is so absolutely a matter of indifference as in music. The theory of music is altogether abstract, the technique of musical instruments quite mechanical; both run, as it were, parallel to art, but stand in no other relation to it than the theory of perspective or the handling of the brush to the picture. So far as instrumental technique is concerned, it consists solely of the training of certain muscles of the hands, arms, or, it may be, of the face, or of the appropriate drilling of the vocal chords; all else that is necessary — intuitive understanding of what has been felt by another, and expression

— cannot be taught, and it is just this that is music. It is the same with theory; the greatest musical genius — the Hungarian gypsy — does not know what a note, an interval, or a key is, and the most profound musical theorists among the Greeks possessed as little musical talent as the physicist Helmholtz; they were not artists, but mathematicians. * For music is the only art which is non-allegorical, it is, therefore, the purest, the most perfectly “artistic,” that in which the human being comes nearest to an absolute creator; for the same reason its influence is direct; it transforms the listener into a “fellow-creator”; when taking in musical impressions, every one is a genius; hence the Technical disappears completely in this case, indeed we may almost say that at the moment of execution it does not exist. The consequence is that in music, where we hear most about it, technique possesses the least significance. †

Still more important for the historical estimate of art

* That is the reason why they (as Ambros points out, i. 380 and elsewhere) dabble in purely imaginary musical subtleties, which would have been impossible in practice and would not have contributed in the least to pave the way for a development of Greek music. On the contrary, the highly developed theory of music actually hindered the development of Greek music.

† To avoid stupid misinterpretations, I may remark that I do not fail to appreciate the interest or the value of musical theory and instrumental technique; but neither is art, they are merely the instruments of art.

536 ART

as a whole is the following point, which is again based upon Lessing and Herder and their theory of the one Art, namely, that music has never been able to develop itself apart from poetry. Even in the case of the Hellenes, it is a striking fact that, in spite of their great gifts and their brilliance as theorists, they were never able to emancipate and develop music where it was cultivated apart from poetry (*e.g.*, in the dance). On the other hand, we shall see that all Indian music, so rich and varied instrumentally, develops around song as a kind of frame, and as a manifold deepening of the expression. The gypsy of our day never plays anything but what is based upon some definite song; if you say to him that you do not like the melody, that it does not suit the mood of the moment, he will invent a new one, or transform the already known one (as the modern musician his “motives”) into something psychically different; but, if you ask him freely to extemporise, he does not know what that means; and he is right, for a music not based upon a definite poetical mood is a mere juggling with vibrations. Now if we carefully follow the development of Teutonic music, we shall discover a fact which is certainly unknown and will be surprising to most of our contemporaries, namely, that from the first it has developed in the most

direct dependence upon, and intimately bound up with, poetry. Not only was all old Teutonic poetry at the same time music, not only were all Troubadours and Minnesingers just as much musicians as poets, but when, from the beginning of the eleventh century onwards, with Guido of Arezzo our music began its triumphant progress towards technical perfection and undreamt-of richness of expressive power it remained throughout the whole development Song. The training of the ear, the gradual discovery of harmonic possibilities, the wonderful artistic structure of counterpoint, by which music, so to speak, builds itself a home in which it can rule as mistress; all this we have not

537 ART

thought out independently, like the Grecian theorists, nor invented in an instrumental ecstasy, as those enthusiastic visionaries who dream of an “absolute“ music imagine; — we have attained it by song. Guido himself expressed the opinion that the path of the philosophers was not for him, he was interested solely in the improvement of church-singing and the training of the singers. For centuries there was no music but what was song or the accompaniment of song. And though this singing sometimes seems to treat the words rather arbitrarily and violently; though the expression often disappears in favour of polyphonic effects in counterpoint — only one really great master needs to come and then we learn the purpose of it all: namely, technical mastery of material in the interest of expressive power. Thus our music develops from master to master; the technique of composition more and more perfect, the singers and instrumentalists more and more accomplished, the musical genius consequently more and more free. Even of Josquin de Près his contemporaries said: “Others had to submit their will to the notes, but Josquin is a master of notes, they must do as he wills.“ * And what was his aim? Whoever has not the privilege of hearing works of this glorious master should read Ambros (iii. 211 f.) to learn how he not only maintained the whole mood of every poetical work, a *Miserere*, a *Te Deum*, a *Motette*, a joyful (sometimes very frivolous) many part song, &c., but also gave the full significance to the purport of the words, and kept bringing them forward again and again, wherever necessary, not for mere fun's sake, but in order to convey to the feelings the poetical meaning of the words in all their aspects. Every one knows Herder's fine remark: “Germany was reformed by songs“; † we may say, music itself was reformed by songs. If this were the

* The quotation is said to be from Luther.

† *Kalligone*, 2nd Part, iv. The quotation seems to have been taken from Leibniz.

proper place, I should make it my business to prove that even at a later time, when pure instrumental technique had arisen, genuine Teutonic music never moved further away from poetry “than the rose can be carried in bloom,” for as soon as music desires complete independence, it loses the vital spark; it can indeed continue to move in forms already attained, but it contains no creative, moulding principles. That is why Herder — that truly great aesthetic critic — sounds a note of warning: “May the Muse save us from a mere poetry of ear!” For such poetry, in his opinion, leads to shapelessness and makes the soul “useless and dull.” * Still more clearly has the great tone-poet of the nineteenth century explained the connection: “Music, even at the highest climax, when raised to its highest point, is only feeling; it comes in as the companion of the moral act, but not as act itself; it can represent feelings and moods side by side, but it cannot, as the need arises, develop one mood from another; it lacks the moral will.” † And hence, even during that century which stretches from Haydn's birth to Beethoven's death, and produced the greatest splendour of instrumental music, there has never been a musical genius who did not devote a great, if not the greatest, part of his artistic activity to the calling to life of poetical works. That is true of all composers before Bach, it is true in the highest degree of Bach himself, likewise of Handel, of Haydn in a scarcely less degree, of Gluck in every respect, of Mozart both in his artistic achievements and in his words, also of Beethoven, though in his case seemingly less so, because with him pure instrumental music has reached such a pitch of precision that, with the courage of desperation, it dared to create a poetry of its own; but Beethoven came ever nearer and nearer to poetry, either by descriptive music or by the

* *Über schöne Litteratur und Kunst* ii. 33.

† Richard Wagner: *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft*, Collected Writings, 1st ed. iii. 112.

preference given to vocal compositions. I do not dispute the justification of pure instrumental music — Lessing expressly guards against any such mistake — I am an enthusiastic admirer of it, and I regard chamber music (when played in a room, not in a concert hall) as one of the greatest blessings that enrich our intellectual life; but I insist that all such music draws its breath from the achievements of the song, and that every single extension and increase of musical expression always

proceeds from that music, which is subject to the “moral will“ of the creative poet. We have become aware of this once more in the nineteenth century. A fact that should not be overlooked, as it often is, when we are estimating art as a whole, is that, even in the works of so-called absolute music, the poet always stands, frequently indeed unperceived, beside the musician. Had this music not grown up under the wing of the poet, we should be unable to understand it, and even now it cannot dispense with the poet, it only turns to the listener and begs him to take the place of the poet, which he can only do so long as music does not leave the sphere of what is known to him by analogy. Goethe describes it as a general characteristic of Teutonic poetry in contrast to Hellenic:

Hier fordert man Euch auf zu eigenem Dichten,
Von Euch verlangt man eine Welt zur Welt. *

In no sphere is that more true than in that of our instrumental music. A really, literally “absolute“ music would be a monster without an equal; for it would be an expression which expresses nothing.

It is impossible ever to gain a clear conception of our whole artistic development if we do not first arm ourselves with a critical knowledge of Teutonic music, in order to turn back to the consideration of poetry in its widest compass. It is only in this way that Lessing's

* Here you are called to be yourself a poet, / To add a world to the existing world.

540 ART

remark, “Poetry and music are one and the same art,“ becomes really intelligible, and that light is thrown on our whole history of art. In the first place, it is manifest that we must regard our great musicians as poets if we are to be just to them and thereby help our own understanding; in the sphere of Teutonic poetry they occupy a place of honour; no poet in the world is greater than Johann Sebastian Bach. No art but music could have given artistic shape to the Christian religion, for it alone could catch up and reflect the glance into the soul (see p. 512); how poor in this respect is a Dante in comparison with a Bach! And this specifically Christian character passes from the works, in which the Gospel finds expression, to other, purely instrumental ones (an example of the previously mentioned analogous procedure); the *Wohltemperierte Klavier*, for example, is in this respect one of the most sublime works of humanity, and I could name a Prelude from it, in which the words, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do“ — or rather, not the words but the divine frame of mind which gave birth to them — have found so clear, so touching an expression that every other art must despair of ever attaining this pure effect. But what we here call Christian is at the same time specifically Teutonic, so we are in a certain sense

justified in asserting that our truest and greatest poets are our great musicians. This is especially true of Germany, where, as Beethoven has strikingly said, "Music is a national need." * At the same time, we notice in our poetry, even apart from music, a leaning or rather an irresistible impulse towards development in the musical direction, an impulse whose deeper meaning becomes clear to us. The introduction of rhyme, for example, which was unknown to the ancients, is no accident; it springs from the musical need. Still

* Letter to Privy Councillor von Mosel (cf. Nohl: *Briefe Beethoven's*, 1865, p. 159).

541 ART

more significant is the magnificent musical sense which we find in our poets. Read those two wonderful pages in Carlyle where he shows that Dante's *Divina Commedia* is music everywhere; music in the architectonic structure of the three parts, music not only in the rhythm of the words, but as he says, "in the rhythm of the thoughts," music in the fervour and passion of the feelings; "go deep enough, there is music everywhere!" * Our poets are all musicians; the greater they are, the more manifest does this become. Hence Shakespeare is a musical artist of inexhaustible wealth, and Calderon in his way no less so. Just as the learned musical philologist, Westphal, has pointed out in Bach and Beethoven the most complicated rhythm of the Hellenic stanza, so in the Spanish drama we find a preference for musically interlaced lines, we might almost say for tricks of counterpoint. From Petrarch to Byron, moreover, we notice an inclination on the part of the lyric poet to develop more and more the purely musical element, and this is due to the felt lack of music. Regarding Goethe's lyric poems, more than one musician of fine feeling has said that they could not be composed, they were already in all respects music. In reality, for a long time we have been in a peculiar position. Poetry and music are by nature destined to be one and the same art, and now in the most musical race in the world they have been separated! The musician, it is true, has developed more and more strength in the strictest dependence upon poetry, but the song of the word-poet has gradually grown silent, until his words have come to be mere printed letters, to be read silently; and so the word-poet has had to save himself either by didactic subjects or by those circumstantial, impossible descriptions of things, to which music alone can do justice, or has devoted all his energy to the task

* *Hero-Worship*, 3rd Lecture.

542 ART

of creating music without music. This misrelation has been particularly noticeable in dramatic art, the living centre of all poetry. “*Les poètes dramatiques sont les poètes par excellence*,” says Montesquieu; * but they were deprived of the mightiest dramatic instrument of expression just at the moment when it had attained a power undreamt of before. Herder has given voice to this in words of touching eloquence: “If a Greek, accustomed to the musical atmosphere of Greek tragedy, were to go to see ours, he would find it a melancholy spectacle. How dumb with all the wealth of words, he would say, how depressing, how toneless! Have I entered an adorned tomb? You shout and sigh and bluster! You move the arms, make faces, wrangle, declaim! Does your voice and feeling never burst forth in song? Do you never feel the want of this all-powerful expression? Does your rhythm, your iambus, never invite you to utter the accents of the true divine speech?” † This state of affairs was, and still is, really tragical. Not that an “absolute poetry,” which only “supposes” the musician, as Lessing says, is not as justifiable as an absolute music — indeed it is much more so; that is, however, not the point; the important thing is to note that our natural musical craving, our need of an expression which only music can give, has forcibly influenced even those poetical works and those poets who stood apart from music. This has of course been felt most profoundly in Germany, where music has reached an incomparable development. From the passages quoted, it is clear how disapprovingly Lessing regarded the void in Teutonic poetry and how keenly it was felt by Herder. But many a reader will attach still more value to the sentiments of their great creative contemporaries. Schiller tells us of himself: “With

* *Lettres Persanes*, 137.

† *Früchte aus den sogenannt goldenen Zeiten des 18. Jahrhunderts*, II. *Das Drama*.

543 ART

me a certain musical mood precedes, and after this comes the poetical idea“; * several of his works are directly inspired by definite musical impressions, the *Jungfrau von Orleans* by the production of a work of Gluck. The feeling that “the drama leans to music“ constantly occupies his mind. In a letter to Goethe on December 29, 1797, he sifts the matter thoroughly: “In order to exclude from a work of art all that is alien to its class, we must necessarily be able to include everything which belongs to the class. And it is just this that is at present impossible (to the tragic poets) The capacity of feeling which the audience possesses must be fully occupied and affected at all points; the measure of this capacity is

the standard for the poets“; and at the close of his letter he rests his hope upon music and expects it to fill up the gap so painfully felt in the modern drama. Music on the stage he knew only in the shape of opera, and he expected and hoped “that from it, as from the choruses of the ancient Bacchic festival, tragedy would develop in a nobler form.“ As for Goethe, the musical element in his work — I mean what is related to, and saturated with music — reveals itself forcibly at every step, and without calling attention to the frequent use of music in his drama, pointed with the stage direction “*ahnend seltene Gefühle*“ (expressing intense feeling) and the like, we could easily prove that even the conception of his plays indicates motives, principles, and aims which belong to the innermost sphere of music. *Faust* is altogether music; not only because, as Beethoven says, music flows from the words, for this is only true of individual fragments, but because every situation, from the *study* to the *chorus mysticus*, has, in the fullest sense of the word, been “musically“ conceived. The older he grew the more highly did Goethe value music. He was of the same opinion as Herder and Lessing

* Letter to Goethe, March 18, 1796.

544 ART

regarding the relations of word-poetry to tone-poetry, and he expressed this in his own inimitable way: “Poetry and music alternately compel and free each other.“ Regarding the ethical value of music he says: “The dignity of art appears perhaps most pre-eminently in music, because it contains nothing which has to be subtracted; it is all form and quality, elevating and ennobling everything that it expresses.“ For this reason he would have made music the centre of all education: “For from it there emanate smoothly paved paths in all directions.“ *

THE TENDENCY OF MUSIC

Goethe having taught us that from music, which means poetry wedded to music, smooth paths run in all directions, we have reached an eminence from which we can gain a wide view of the growth of our whole art. For we have already recognised that poetry is the *alma mater* of all creative art, no matter in what form it reveals itself; and now we see that our Teutonic poetry has passed through a peculiar, individual development, which stands by itself without any analogy in history. The extraordinary development of music, *i.e.*, of the art of poetical expression, cannot but have exercised influence upon our plastic arts. For just as it was the Homeric word that taught the Hellenes to raise defined claims to

artistic work, and to bring their rude statuary to the perfection of art, so music has taught our Teutonic races to make higher demands in regard to the power of expression in every art. In the sense which I hope is now quite clear, full of meaning, and free from all claptrap, we may call this tendency of taste and of productive activity the tendency of music. It is organically

* See the *Wanderjahre*, Bk. II, chap. i. 9. Further details on this point and especially on the organic relations between poetry and music are to be found in my book on *Richard Wagner*, 1896, pp. 20 f., 186 f., 200 (text ed. 1902, pp. 28 f., 271 f., 295 f.), as also in my lecture on the *Klassiker der Dicht- und Tonkunst* (*Bayreuther Blätter*, 1897); cf., too, my *Immanuel Kant*, p. 29.

545 ART

connected with that bent of our nature which makes us Idealists in philosophy, and in religion followers of Jesus Christ, and which, in the form of artistic creation, finds its purest expression in music. Our ways differ, therefore, from the ways of the Hellenes, a fact to which I shall return when I have exhausted this other important point; not that the Hellenes were unmusical — we know the contrary — but their music was extremely simple, meagre and subordinate to the text, while ours is polyphonous, powerful, and all too inclined, in the storm of passion, to sweep away every constant verbal form. I think it would be an apt comparison to say of an engraving of Dürer or of a Medician tomb by Michael Angelo, that they were polyphonous works in contrast to the strict “homophony” of the Greeks, which, be it noted, applies even to representations, where, as in friezes, numerous figures are represented in rapid motion. In order to give right expression to feelings, music must be polyphonous; for while thought is essentially simple, feeling on the contrary is so complex that at the same moment it can harbour essentially different, indeed directly contradictory emotions such as hope and despair. It is foolish to try to draw theoretical boundaries, but we may gain insight into the various nature of relative tendencies if we realise the following fact: where, as in the case of the Greeks, the word alone gives shape to poetry, there in the plastic arts transparent, homophonous clearness, with colder, more abstract, allegorical expression, will predominate; whereas, on the other hand, when the musical incentive to direct, inner expression exercises great influence upon creative work, there we shall find polyphonous designs and interlacing lines, bound up with a symbolical power of expression which defies analysis by means of logic. It is only when we keep this in mind that the trite phrase of an affinity between Gothic architecture and music receives a living, conceivable meaning; but at the same time we cannot

help seeing that the architecture of Michael Angelo, who has so thorough an affinity to music, and of the Florentines as a whole, is just as “musical” as the Gothic. The comparison, however, in spite of Goethe, fails to hit the mark; we must look somewhat deeper, to see the musical element at work in all our arts. One of the finest judges of plastic arts in recent years, Walter Pater, who was in addition a man of classical culture and tendencies, comes to the following conclusion regarding Teutonic art: “*All art constantly aspires towards the condition of music ... Music, then, and not poetry, as is so often supposed, is the true type or measure of perfected art. Therefore, although each art has its incommunicable element, its untranslatable order of impressions, its unique mode of reaching the 'imaginative reason,' yet the arts may be represented as continually struggling after the law or principle of music to a condition which music alone completely realises....*” *

NATURALISM

If, however, we have gained anything towards a more profound understanding of art and its history, we still should occupy a one-sided and therefore misleading position if we were to let the matter rest there; we must leave the one pinnacle which we have reached in order to cross over to another. When we say that our art aspires towards that expression which is the very vital essence of music, we characterise thereby the inner element of art; but art has also an outer side; indeed, even music becomes, as Carlyle has aptly remarked, “quite demented and seized with delirium whenever it departs completely from the reality of perceptible, actual things.” † The same principle applies to art

* See *The Renaissance, Studies in Art and Poetry*, revised and enlarged edition, 1888, pp. 140, 144-5.

† *The Opera*, in his *Miscellaneous Essays*.

and to the individual man; in thought we may separate an Inner principle and an Outer, in practice it is impossible; for we know no Inner principle but what is presented by means of an Outer. Indeed, we can confidently assert that a work of art, in the first instance, consists solely of an Exterior. I call to mind the words of Schiller discussed on [p. 16](#) (vol.

i.). The beautiful is indeed “life“ in so far as it awakens in us feelings, *i.e.*, actions, but to begin with it is merely “form,“ which we “look at.“ If then, when contemplating Michael Angelo's *Night and Twilight*, I experience so profound and intense an emotion that I can only compare it with the impression of intoxicating music, that is, as Schiller says, my “action“; not every soul would have thrilled in the same way; many a man might have admired the symmetry and composition, without feeling an emotion like the presentiment of eternity; he would, in fact, have merely “looked at“ the work. But if the artist really succeeds in moving the spectator by the sense of sight — in awakening life by form, how high we must estimate the importance of form! In a certain sense we may simply say, Art is form. And when Goethe calls art “an interpreter of the Inexpressible,“ we may add the commentary; only that which is Spoken can interpret the Unspeakable, only the Seen that which is not seen. It is precisely the Spoken and the Visible — not the Inexpressible and the Invisible — that constitute art. It is not the expression that is art, but that which interprets the expression. From this it is clear that no question in regard to art is more important than that which deals with the “Exterior,“ that is to say, with the principle of artistic shaping.

This question is much simpler than the previous one; for the “musical tendency“ discussed in the former section, deals with something Inexpressible, it aims at the condition of the artist, as Schiller would say, at the

548 ART

innermost essence of his personality, and shows what qualities we must possess in order not merely to contemplate, but also to feel his work, and in such matters it is difficult to express oneself clearly; in the present case, on the contrary, we have to deal with visible form. I think we may be very concise and simply lay down the law that genuine Teutonic art is naturalistic; where it is not so, it has been forced by exterior influences from its own straight path prescribed to it by the tendencies of our race. We have already seen ([p. 302](#)) that our science is “naturalistic“ and therefore essentially different from the Hellenic, anthropomorphic, abstract science. Here we may safely proceed by analogy, for we are drawing a conclusion from ourselves about ourselves, and we have discovered in ourselves the same tendency of mind in very widely differing spheres. I refer especially to the second half of the section on “Philosophy.“ The unanimous endeavours of our greatest thinkers were directed to the freeing of visible nature from all those limitations and interpretations which the superstition, fear, hope, blind logic or systematising mania of man had piled so high around it that it was no longer visible. On the other side were love of nature, faithful observation,

patient questioning; we realised too that it is nature alone that nurtures and develops our thoughts and dreams, our knowledge and imagination. How could so positive a tendency, which we find in no other human race either of the past or the present, remain without influence upon art? No, however much many appearances may tend to mislead us, our art has been from its birth naturalistic, and wherever we see it in the past or at the present resolutely turning to nature, there we may be sure that it is on the right path.

I know that this assertion will be much disputed; our very nurses instil into us a horror of naturalism in art, and inspire us with reverence for a so-called

549 ART

classicism; but I do not propose to defend my position, not only for lack of space, but also because the facts speak too convincingly to require any commentary of mine. Refraining, then, from polemical controversy, I shall, in conclusion, merely elucidate some of these facts from the special standpoint of this book, and show their importance in connection with the work as a whole.

That a gloriously healthy, strong naturalism asserted itself opportunely in Italian sculpture is brought home to us laymen by the fact that — though in Italy especially, and in this very branch of art, the Antique was bound to paralyse the unfolding of Teutonic individuality — still at the beginning of the fifteenth century Donatello gave such powerful and convincing expression to naturalism that no later, artificially nurtured fashion could destroy its influence. Whoever has seen the Prophets and Kings on the Campanile in Florence, whoever has contemplated that splendid bust of Niccolo da Uzzano, will understand what our art will achieve, and that it has of necessity to follow ways that are different from those of the Hellene. * Painting turns immediately

* Here, as elsewhere in this chapter, I have been forced to mention only a few well-known names, which will serve as guiding stars in the survey of our history, but more careful study of the history of art, as it is pursued with so much success to-day, shows that no genius grows up in a night like a mushroom. The power of Donatello, which seems to resemble an elemental force, is rooted in hundreds and thousands of honest, artistic efforts, which go back two or three centuries and have their home — as should be noted — not in the south, but in the north. Look at the reliefs of the Prophets in the choir of St. George in the Bamberg Cathedral; here is spirit of Donatello's spirit. An authority who has recently made a most careful study of these sculptures, says: "Note how the artist follows the spoor of nature with the instinct of the tracker." This historian then asks himself in what school the Bamberg sculptor learned and practised such astonishing individuality, and proves convincingly that these great works of German artists, dating from the beginning of the thirteenth century, were inspired by a long series of attempts in the same line by their Teutonic brethren in the west, who

were happier, more free, and richer in their political and social conditions. This artistic longing to follow the track of nature had long before found an artistic centre in the Frankish and Norman north (Paris, Rheims, &c.), another in that steadfast focus of

550 ART

to nature (as I remarked on p. 508), when the Teuton has shaken off the Oriental-Roman spirit of priestcraft. Nothing is so touching as to observe the gifted men of the north brought up in the midst of a false civilisation, surrounded and stimulated by the scanty remains of a great but alien art — following the natural bent of their heart in the track of nature; nothing is too great for them, nothing too small; from the human countenance to the shell of the snail, they faithfully sketch everything, and, in spite of all technical minuteness, they are able “to interpret the Inexpressible.” * Soon came that great man, whose eye penetrated so deeply into nature, and who should always have remained the model of all plastic artists, Leonardo. “No painter,” says a recent historian, “ever emancipated himself so completely from antique tradition ... in only one passage of his numerous writings does he mention the *Graeci e Romani*, and then only in reference to certain drapings.” † In his famous *Book of Painting* Leonardo constantly warns painters to paint everything from nature, and never to rely on their memory (76); even when not standing at the easel, but walking or travelling, it is the duty of the artist ever and unceasingly to study nature; he should pay careful attention to spots on walls, to the ashes of a dead fire, even to

free, heretical, Gothic art, Toulouse (cf. Arthur Weese: *Die Bamberger Domskulpturen*, 1897, pp. 33, 59 f.). The same is manifestly true of painting. The brothers Van Eyck, born a hundred years before Dürer, are masters of noble, genuine naturalism, and they were educated in this school by their father; but for the fatal influence of Italy, which ever and anon, like the periodical waves of the Pacific Ocean, swept away our whole stock of individuality, the development of genuine Teutonic painting would have been quite different.

* It has already been shown (see p. 307) that our whole natural science rests on the same basis of faithful, untiring observation of every detail, and the reader may conclude from that how closely our science and our art are related, both of them being creations of the same individual spirit.

† E. Muntz: *Raphaël*, 1881, p. 138.

551 ART

mud and dirt (66); his eye would thus become “a mirror,” a “second nature” (58a). Albrecht Dürer, Leonardo's equal and contemporary, told Melanchthon that in his youth he had admired paintings chiefly as

creations of the imagination, and valued his own according to the variety which they contained; “but when an older man he had begun to observe nature and copy her virgin countenance, and had recognised that simplicity was the highest ornament of art.” * It is well known how minutely Dürer studied nature; whoever does not know this should look at his water-colour study of a young hare (No. 3073 of the collection in the Albertina) and that masterpiece of miniature work, the *Wing of a Roller* (No. 4840). † His *Large Lawn* and his *Small Lawn* in the same collection show how lovingly he studied the plant-world. Need I also mention Rembrandt to prove that all the greatest artists have pointed in the same direction? Need I show how even in the composition of freely invented pictures representing motion he is so naturalistic, *i.e.*, true to nature, that even to the present day few have had the power and the courage to follow his example? Let me quote an expert; of the *Good Samaritan* Seidlitz says: “Here we find no strained pathos or forced heroism intended to move the spectator; the figures are completely wrapt up in their own actions, they are perfectly natural. In attitude, mien and gesture every one of them is fully taken up with what is inwardly moving him.” ‡ This, as is evident, signifies a high stage of naturalism; psychological truth in place of outwardly formal construction according to pretended laws; no Italian ever reached such a height.

* Quoted from Janitschek: *Geschichte der deutschen Malerei*, 1890, p. 349.

† Birds of the family *Coraciidae* are so called because of their habit of turning over suddenly or “tumbling” in their flight. The common European species is known as *Coracias garrula*.

‡ *Rembrandt's Radierungen*, 1894, p. 31. See also Goethe's short essay on the same picture, *Rembrandt der Denker*.

552 ART

For in truth there are “eternal laws” even outside of aesthetic handbooks; the first of them runs, “To thine own self be true!” (vol. i. [p. 549](#)). Herein lies the great significance of Rembrandt for us Teutons; for ages to come he will be our landmark, our guide to tell us whether our plastic art is moving along the right and true path or is straying into alien territory. On the other hand, every classical reaction, like the one which set in so violently at the end of the eighteenth century, is a deviation from the right path, the cause of desperate confusion.

THE STRUGGLE FOR INDIVIDUALITY

Who can doubt where the truth lies, when he contemplates on the one hand Goethe's theoretical doctrines concerning plastic art, and on the

other Goethe's own life-work? Never was so un-Hellenic a work written as *Faust*; if Hellenic art were necessarily our ideal, we should have but to confess that invention, execution, everything in this poem is a horror. And we must not overlook the progressive movement within this mighty work, for — to employ the famous but empty word “Olympic“ (with all the contempt it deserves) — the first part, in comparison with the second, would have to be called “Olympic.“ Faust, Helena, Euphorion — and, as counterpart, Greek classicism! The Homeric laughter, into which we must burst on hearing such a comparison, would be the only “Greek“ thing about it. Even the hero, drainer of marshes, might have pleased the Romans, but never the Greeks. If then our poetry — Dante, Shakespeare, Goethe, Josquin, Bach, Beethoven — is un-Hellenic to the very marrow, what is the meaning of holding up ideals to our plastic arts and prescribing to them laws which are borrowed from that alien poetry? Is not poetry the mother's lap of every art? Should our plastic art not remain our own, in-

553 ART

stead of limping along, an unloved and unrecognised bastard? At the root of all this lies a fatal mistake made by the Humanists, otherwise men of great merit; they wished to free us from Romish ecclesiastical fetters, and pointed to free, creative Hellenism; but archaeology soon grew predominant, and we fell from one dogma into another. We see what narrowness lies at the bottom of this fatal doctrine of classicism from the example of the great Winckelmann; of whom Goethe says that not only had he no appreciation of poetry, but he actually hated it, Greek poetry included; even Homeros and Aeschylus he valued only as indispensable commentaries to his beloved statues. * On the other hand, every one of us has frequently had occasion to notice how classical philology mostly produces a peculiar insusceptibility to plastic art, as also to nature. For example, concerning Winckelmann's famous contemporary F. A. Wolf, we learn that his stupidity as regards nature and his absolute inability to appreciate works of art made him almost unbearable to Goethe. † We stand therefore — with our dogma of Classical art — before a pathological phenomenon, and we must needs rejoice when Goethe with his healthy, magnificent nature, while on the one hand lending his help to the sickly Classical reaction, on the other gives expression to absolutely naturalistic precepts. Thus on September 18, 1823, he warns Eckermann against phantastic poetising, and teaches him that “reality must provide the occasion and the subject-matter of all poems; a special case becomes common property and poetical by the very fact that the poet treats it ... the real world does not lack poetical interest.“ The very

doctrine of Donatello and Rembrandt! And if we study Goethe's conception more closely — to which the *Einleitung in die*

* *Winckelmann* (section on Poetry).

† F. W. Riemer: *Mitteilungen über Goethe*, 1841, i, 266.

554 ART

Propyläen, written in 1798 at the close of our period, will greatly help us — we shall find that the Classical element is, in his case, little more than a graceful draping. Ever and anon he reminds us that the study of nature is the “highest demand,” and not satisfied with purely artistic study he requires exact scientific knowledge (mineralogy, botany, anatomy, &c.); that is the important point, for this is absolutely un-Hellenic and totally and specifically Teutonic. And when we find the fine remark that the artist should “in emulation of nature” try to produce a work “at once natural and supernatural,” we shall, without hesitation, discover in this creed a direct contrast to the Hellenic principle of art; for the latter neither penetrates down to the roots of nature nor soars upward into the Supernatural. *

This comparison deserves a special paragraph.

The man who is not satisfied with the “sounding brass” of aesthetic phrases, but desires, by means of a clear insight into the peculiar and unique individuality of the Hellenic race, to grasp the distinct nature of their art, will do well not arbitrarily to separate the Greek artist from his intellectual surroundings, but from time to time for purposes of comparison to bring in and critically examine Greek science and philosophy. Then he will recognise that that “proportion,” which we admire in the works of the Greek creative power, is the result of inborn restraint — not narrowness, but restraint, — not as a special, purely artistic law, but as an inevitable consequence of the whole nature of Greek individuality. The clear eye of the Hellene fails him whenever his glance wanders beyond the circle of what is human, in the narrower sense of the word. His natural

* Goethe also writes in another passage (*Dichtung und Wahrheit*, Bk. XV.): “But no one reflected that we cannot see as the Greeks did, and that our poetry, sculpture and medicine can never be the same as theirs.”

555 ART

investigators are not faithful observers, and in spite of their great gifts

they discover absolutely nothing, a fact which startles us at first, but is easily explained, since discovery always depends on devotion to nature, not on mere human power (see p. [269 f.](#)). * Here, therefore, we find a clear, sharp dividing-line in the downward direction; only what lies in man himself — mathematics and logic — could reveal itself to the Greeks as genuine science; and in this they achieved remarkable results. In the upward direction the boundary is just as clear. Their philosophy is from the first closed to everything which a Goethe would call “supernatural,” such things as he himself has represented poetically in Faust's descent to the “Mothers” and in his Ascension to Heaven. On the one hand we find the strictly logical rationalism of Aristotle, on the other the poetical mathematics of a Pythagoras and a Plato. Plato's ideas, as I have already remarked (p. [313](#)), are absolutely real, indeed concrete. The profound introspective glance into that other “supernatural” nature — the glance into Ātman, which formed the subject of Indian reflection, the glance into that realm which was familiar to every one of our mystics as “the Realm of Grace,” and which Kant called the “Realm of Freedom” — was denied to the Hellene. This is the distinct dividing-line in the upward direction. What remains is man, man perceived by sense, and all that this human being from his exclusively and restrictedly human standpoint observes. Such was the nature of the people that created Hellenic art. Who would deny, when the facts speak so eloquently, that this tendency of mind was an excellent

* Thus Aristotle had noticed that in a thick wood the sunshine casts circular spots of light, but instead of convincing himself by childishly simple observation that these spots were sun-images and consequently round, he immediately constructed a frightfully complicated, faultlessly logical and absurdly false theory, which, till Kepler's time, was regarded as irrefutable.

556 ART

one for artistic life? Yet we see this Hellenic art develop out of the whole mental tendencies of this one peculiar human family; what can therefore be the meaning of holding up Hellenic principles of art as a law and ideal to us, whose intellectual gifts are manifestly so very different from theirs? Is our art then at any price to be an artificial and not an organic one? a made art, and not one that makes itself, that is to say, a living art? Are we not to be allowed to follow Goethe's admonition, to take our stand upon that nature which is external to man, and to strive upwards to that nature which is above us — both closed realms to the Hellene? Are we to disregard Goethe's other warning: “We cannot see as the Greeks did, and our poetry and sculpture can never be like theirs“?

The history of our art is now to a great extent a struggle, a struggle

between our inborn tendency and other foreign tendencies that are forced upon us. This struggle will be met with at every step — from the Bamberg sculptor to Goethe. Sometimes it is a case of one school opposing another; frequently the struggle rages in the breast of the individual artist. It lasted throughout the whole of the nineteenth century.

THE INNER STRUGGLE

Yet there is another struggle, one that is altogether productive of good, one that accompanies and moulds our art. In our characterisation of it, the words already quoted from Goethe, that our art should be “natural and at the same time supernatural“ will be of good service. To attain both — the Natural and the Supernatural — is not within the reach of every one. And the problem varies very much according to the department of art. To make matters perfectly clear, we may discard those two words “natural“ and “supernatural,“

557 ART

which are hardly appropriate in art, and replace them by naturalistic and musical. The opposite of natural is artificial, and there we come to a stop; on the other hand, the contrast to Naturalistic is Idealistic, and this at once makes everything clear. The Hellenic artist creates according to the human “idea“ of things; we, on the other hand, demand what is true to nature, *i.e.*, the creative principle which grasps the particular individuality of things. Regarding the “Supernatural,“ demanded by Goethe, we must observe that of all the arts music alone is directly — *i.e.*, of its very essence — supernatural; the Supernatural in the products of other arts may, therefore, from the artistic standpoint, be described as musical. These two tendencies, qualities, instincts, or whatever else you may please to call them — the Musical on the one hand and the Naturalistic on the other — are, as I have been endeavouring to show, the elementary powers of our whole artistic creation; they are not contradictory, as superficial minds are wont to suppose, they rather supplement each other, and it is just in the co-existence of two impulses so opposed and yet so closely correlated that individuality consists. * The man who paints the severed wing of the roller as minutely as if his salvation depended upon it, also creates the picture, *Knight, Death and Devil*. However, it is sufficiently apparent that from this peculiar nature of our intellect a rich inner life of powers either opposing each other or combining in the most various ways was bound to result. Our power of music has borne us aloft, as on angel's wings, to regions to which no

human aspirations had as yet soared. Naturalism has been a safety anchor, but for which our art would soon have lost itself in fantasies, allegories and thought-cryptography. One is almost inclined to point to the vigorous

* Cf. p. [226](#). Thus we see the plastic art of the Greek sway back and forwards between the Typical and the Realistic, while ours roves throughout the whole realm, from the Fantastic to the Naturalistic.

558 ART

antagonism and the consequently enhanced strength of the united Patricians and Plebeians in Rome (see vol. i. [p. 99](#)).

SHAKESPEARE AND BEETHOVEN

This view of art, which I cannot pursue further, I would fain recommend to the consideration of the reader. It contains, as I believe, the whole history of our genuine, living art. * I shall only give two examples to illustrate in its essence and consequences the above-mentioned struggle between the two creative principles. If the strong naturalistic impulse had not separated poetry from music, we should never have had a Shakespeare. On the Hellenic standpoint, therefore, one of the brightest stars in the imaginative world would have been impossible. Schiller writes to Goethe: "It has occurred to me that the characters of Greek tragedy are more or less idealistic masks and not real individuals, as I find them in Shakespeare and in your dramas." † This collocation of two poets, who stand so far apart, is interesting; what unites Goethe and Shakespeare is truth to nature. Shakespeare's art is altogether naturalistic, even to rudeness — yes, thank heaven, even to rudeness. As Leonardo tells us, the artist should lovingly study even "the dirt." This explains how Shakespeare could be so shamefully neglected in the century of false classicism, and how even so great a mind as Frederick could prefer the tragedies

* The "True" must "prove itself true" everywhere. That is why I gladly refer to the investigations of specialists as confirming testimony that my general philosophical view adequately expresses the concretely existing relations. Thus Kurt Moriz-Eichborn, in his excellent book on the *Skulpturen-cyclus in der Vorhalle des Freiburger Münsters*, 1899 (p. 164, with the sections preceding and following), comes to the conclusion that "Teutonic art is rooted, and reaches its highest growth, in Naturalism and the drama;" and for the drama he points to Wagner, that is, to music.

† April 4, 1797.

of a Voltaire to those of the great English poet. Recently several critics have cavilled at Shakespeare's art for not being true to nature in the sense of so-called "Realism"; but, as Goethe says, "Art is called art because it is not nature." * Art is creative shaping; this is the business of the artist and of the special branch of art; to demand absolute truth to nature from a work is in the first place superfluous, as nature herself gives us that; in the second place absurd, as man can only achieve what is human; and in the third preposterous, as man desires by means of art to force nature to represent something "Supernatural." In every work of art, therefore, there will be an arbitrary Fashioning; † art can be naturalistic only in its aims, not in its methods. "Realism" as it is called, denotes a low ebb of artistic power; even Montesquieu said of the realistic poets: "*Ils passent leur vie à chercher la nature, et la manquent toujours.*" To demand of Shakespeare that his characters should make no poetical speeches is just as reasonable as it was for Giovanni Strozzi to demand of Michael Angelo's *Night* that the stone should stand up and speak. Shakespeare himself has in the *Winter's Tale* with infinite grace destroyed the tissue of these aesthetic sophisms:

Yet nature is made better by no mean
But nature makes that mean; so, o'er that art
Which, you say, adds to nature, is an art
That nature makes ... this is an art
Which does mend nature, change it rather, but
The art itself is nature.

Since it is the aim of Shakespeare's drama to depict characters, the degree of his naturalism can be measured by nothing but his naturalistic representation of charac-

* *Wanderjahre*, ii. 9.

† Described by Tane with delightful scientific clearness: *Philosophie de l'Art*, i. 5. On the other hand, Seneca's *Omnis ars imitatio est Naturae* shows the thorough Roman shallowness in all questions of art and philosophy.

ters. He who thinks that the cinematographic reproduction of daily life on the stage is naturalistic art, looks at things too much from the silly standpoint of the panopticon to make it worth while to enter into a discussion with him. * My second example shall be taken from the other

extreme. Music had with us, as I have shown above, almost completely severed itself from poetry; it seemed to have freed itself from earth. It became so predominantly, indeed, one might almost say, so exclusively expression, that it seemed sometimes as if it had ceased to be art, for as we have seen, art is not expression but that which interprets expression. And, as a matter of fact, while Lessing, Herder, Goethe and Schiller had honoured music in the highest degree, and Beethoven had said of it that “it was the one incorporeal entrance into a higher world,” there soon came men who boldly asserted and taught the whole world that music expressed nothing, signified nothing, but was merely a kind of ornamentation, a kaleidoscopic playing with relative vibrations! Such is the retribution that falls upon an art which leaves the ground of actuality. Yet in reality something totally different had taken place from what these empty-nutshell-headed worthies had found sufficient for their modest intellectual needs. Our musicians had in the meantime, by efforts extending over exactly five hundred years, gradually attained a more

* At most we might do such a man the kindness to refer him to Schiller's illuminating remarks on this point in his essay *Über den Gebrauch des Chors in der Tragödie*; they culminate in the sentences: “Nature itself is an idea of the mind, which the senses do not encounter. It lies under the covering of appearance, but it never appears itself. Only the art of the Ideal is able, or rather it is its task, to grasp this spirit of the Whole and bind it in a corporeal form. Even it can never bring this spirit before the senses, but by its creative power it can bring it before the imagination and thereby be truer than all actuality and more real than all experience. From that it manifestly follows that the artist can use no single element from actuality, as he finds it; his work in all parts must be ideal if it is to have reality as a whole and be in agreement with nature.”

561 ART

and more complete mastery of their material, had made it more pliant and workable, that is, more capable of creating form (*cf.* p. 536) — which in Greece, where music was strictly subordinate to the text, would have been as impossible as the birth of a Shakespeare. And so music, the better it became able to interpret expression, had become more and more true Art. And as a result of this development music — which was formerly a more purely formal art, like a flowing robe wrapt round the living body of poetry — came more and more within the reach of the naturalistic creative tendencies peculiar to the Teutonic races. Nothing is so direct in its effect as music. Shakespeare could paint characters only by the mediation of the understanding, that is, by a double reflex process; for the character first mirrors itself in actions, which require a far-reaching definition, in order to be understood, and then we throw back upon it the reflection of our own judgment. Music, on the other

hand, appeals immediately to the understanding; it gives us all that is contradictory in the mood of the moment, it gives the quick succession of changing feelings, the remembrance of what is long past, hope, longing, foreboding, it gives expression to the Inexpressible; Music alone has made possible the natural religion of the soul, and that in the highest degree by the development which culminated at the beginning of the nineteenth century in Beethoven.

SUMMARY

In order to make myself quite clear let me once more summarise the factors upon which our whole artistic development is founded; on the one hand depth, power and directness of expression (musical genius) as our most individual gift, on the other, the great secret of our superiority in so many spheres, namely, our inborn tendency to follow nature honestly and faithfully (Natural-

562 ART

ism); and opposed to these two contrary but, in all the highest works of art, mutually supplementary impulses and capacities, the tradition of an alien, dead art, which in strict limitation attained to great perfection, an art which affords us lively stimulus and valuable instruction, but at the same time, by mirroring a foreign ideal, leads us astray again, and inclines us to despise that in which our greatest talent lies — the power of expression in music and naturalistic truth. If any one follows out these hints, he will, I am convinced, be rewarded by vivid conceptions and valuable insight in every branch of art. I should only like to add the warning that where we desire to arrive at a combined whole we must contemplate things with exactitude, but not too closely. If, for example, we regard this age as the end of the world, we are almost oppressed by the near splendour of the great Italian epoch; but if we take refuge in the arms of an extravagantly generous future, that wonderful splendour of plastic art will perhaps appear a mere episode in a much greater whole. Even the existence of a man like Michael Angelo, side by side with Raphael, points to future ages and future works. Art is always at its goal; I have already appropriated this remark of Schopenhauer, and so in this section have not traced the historical development of art from Giotto and Dante to Goethe and Beethoven, but have contented myself with pointing to the permanent features of our individual human race. It is only a knowledge of these impelling and constraining features that enable us really to understand the art of the past and of the present. We Teutons are yet destined to create much, and what will be created must not be

measured by the standard of an alien past; we must rather seek to judge it by a comprehensive knowledge of our whole individuality. In this way only shall we possess a criterion that will enable us to be just to the widely diverging movements of the nineteenth century, and to make an

563 ART

end of clap-trap, that poison-breathing dragon of all art — criticism.

CONCLUSION

I think that my imaginary “Bridge“ is now finished. We have seen that nothing is more characteristic of our Teutonic culture than the fact that the impulse to discover and the impulse to fashion go hand in hand. Contrary to the teaching of our historians we hold that our art and science have never rested; had they done so, we should have ceased to be Teutons. Indeed we see that the one is dependent upon the other; the source of all our inventive talent, of all our genius, even of the whole originality of our civilisation, is nature; yet our philosophers and natural scientists have agreed with Goethe when he said: “The worthiest interpreter of nature is art.“ *

How much might still be added! But I have now placed in position not only the key-stone of my “Bridge“ for this chapter, but also for my whole book, which I merely regard and wish others to regard — from beginning to end — as a makeshift structure. I said at the very beginning (see p. [lix](#) of the Introduction) that my object was not to instruct; even at the very few points where I might have more knowledge at my command than the average educated man who is not specially well read in any particular branch of learning, I have endeavoured to keep this in the background; for my object was not to bring forward new facts, but to give shape to those that are well known, and so to fashion them that they might form a living whole in our consciousness. Schiller says of beauty that it is at once our condition and our achievement; this may be applied to knowledge. To begin with, knowledge is something purely objective, it forms no portion of the person who knows; but if this

* *Maximen und Reflexionen.*

564 ART

knowledge is shaped, it becomes a living portion of our consciousness,

and is henceforth “a condition of our subject.” This knowledge I can now look at from all sides, can, so to speak, turn it over and over. That is already a very great gain. But it is not all. A knowledge which has become a condition of my Ego, something which I not only “regard,” but “feel”; — it is part of my life; “in a word, it is at once my condition and my achievement.” To transform knowledge into fact! to summarise the past in such a way that we no longer take pride in an empty, borrowed learning concerning things long dead and buried, but make of the knowledge of the past a living, determining power for the present! a knowledge which has so fully entered our consciousness that even unconsciously it determines our judgment! Surely a sublime and worthy aim! And the greater the difficulty there is, in view of the increase of new facts, in surveying the whole field of knowledge, the more worthy of attainment that aim becomes. “In order to rescue ourselves from endless complexity, and once more to attain simplicity, we must always ask ourselves the question: How would Plato have acted?” Such is the advice of our greatest Teuton, Goethe. But the aphorism might well plunge us into despair, for who would dare to say: thus and thus only would a Teutonic Plato of to-day have set about the task of reducing complexity to simplicity, which means, to possibility of life?

Far be it from me to pretend that in this book I have succeeded in picturing the Foundations of the Nineteenth Century upon these principles. Between the undertaking and the execution of such a task, so many intentions, so many hopes are wrecked on the narrow, sharp limitations of a man's own powers that he cannot write his last words without a sense of humility. Whatever success my book may have attained I owe to those giants of our race upon whom I have kept my eyes steadfastly fixed.

565

INDEX

566

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567

INDEX

ABELARD, Peter, i. 244, 460, 501 f., 512; ii. 96, 392, 398 f., 410, 421

Abert, Friedrich, ii. 178
Abraham, i. 363 f., 369, 377, 381, 382
Abrahams, Israel, i. 341
Abu Bekr, i. 398
Adam, Jean, ii. 62
Aeschylus, i. 168; ii. 553
Akiba, Rabbi, i. 241, 355, 401
Albertus Magnus, i. 559; ii. 265, 393, 453
Albrecht, Archbishop of Mayence, ii. 350
Alcibiades i. 65
Alcuin, ii. 141
Alembert, Jean d', i. 159
Alexander the Great, i. 97, 114, 205; ii. 16, 159, 259
Alexander, The Legate, ii. 370, 379
Alexander VI. (Pope), ii. 168
Alfred, King, i. 325 f., 502; ii. 151, 273
Alighieri, note on name, i. 538
Alityrus, i. 119
Allard, Paul, i. 120
Amalrich of Chartres, ii. 399, 417
Ambros, August Wilhelm, ii. 250, 510, 511, 531, 532, 535, 537
Ambrosius, i. 310, 313, 473, 477; ii. 18, 19, 56, 76, 116, 258, 275
Amos, i. 352, 447, 450, 465 f., 472, 479
Anaxagoras, i. 47, 59
Anaximander, i. 52, 81
Angelus Silesius, ii. 399
Anselm, ii. 394, 398, 406
Antoninus Pius, i. 123
Apelles, ii. 515
Apuleius, i. 78. 305, 312; ii. 124
Aratus, ii. 58
Archimedes, i. 41, 49, 58; ii. 287, 296, 489
Ariosto, ii. 189, 192
Aristarchus, i. 42, 55 f., 298; ii. 270, 517
Aristeides, i. 158
Aristophanes, i. 60, 155, 307
Aristotle, i. 32, 41, 49 f., 52, 53, 55, 56, 58, 59, 67, 69, 75 f., 82, 84, 85, 90, 155, 158, 159, 298, 542, 550, 575; ii. 22, 27, 70, 178 f., 212, 236, 270, 287, 288, 296, 303 f., 305 f., 311, 313, 438, 439, 449, 460 f., 485, 514, 515, 516, 517, 555
Arius, ii. 84
Arkwright, ii. 336
Arnold of Brescia, ii. 96, 193
Arnulf, Emperor, ii. 169
Artaxerxes, i. 463, 464
Artevelde, Jacob van, ii. 333, 348

Auerbach, Berthold, i. 334
Augustine, i. 102, 118, 174, 218 f., 241, 244, 253, 311 f., 313, 320, 557, 562, 570; ii. 7, 35, 38, 39, 50, 54 f., 62, 65, 71—79, 97, 99, 106, 119, 120, 125, 127 f., 138, 150, 163, 164, 165, 173, 212, 258, 276, 283, 379, 391, 421
Augustus, i. 122, 126, 544
Aurelian, ii. 46, 112
Avenel, Vicomte d', ii. 356
Avicenna, i. 53
Avigdor, Isaac Samuel, i. 351

BACH, Johann Sebastian, i. 38, 39, 299, 541; ii. 273, 513, 521, 524, 538, 540, 541, 552
Bacon, Francis, i. 13, 85, 150; ii. 201, 237, 304, 316, 368, 393, 427, 439

568 INDEX

Bacon, Roger, i. 399, 561; ii. 274, 276, 278, 281, 286, 287, 293, 302, 304, 364, 389, 393, 396, 399, 405, 437, 439, 440, 453, 518
Baelz, ii. 286
Bailly, Jean, ii. 382, 520
Balzac, Honoré de, i. 539, 540; ii. 105
Barth, Auguste, i. 417
Barth, Paul, i. 520
Bartolommeo, Fra, ii. 194
Bastian, Adolf, i. 18, 230, 274, 564
Bauer, Wilhelm, i. 55
Bauhin, Caspar, ii. 307
Baumgarten, Alex. G., ii. 427
Bayle, Pierre, ii. 61, 301
Becher, Johann Joachim, ii. 322
Beck, G., i. 499, 518
Beethoven, i. 14, 299, 551; ii. 6, 502, 509, 511, 512, 538, 541, 552, 558—62
Belt, i. 19
Benfey, i. 432
Berengarius of Tours, ii. 130, 258
Berger, Hugo, i. 52, 53
Bergk, Theodor, i. 28, 29, 32
Berkeley, George, ii. 299, 302, 442, 456
Bernard, Claude, i. 81
Bernhard of Clairvaux, ii. 96, 107, 136
Bernouilli, ii. 84
Bernstein, Eduard, ii. 363
Berthelot, M. P. E., ii. 265
Bessemer, Henry, i. 551

Bethe, Albrecht, i. 21
Bhagavadgîtâ, The, ii. 26
Bichat, i. 46, 47; ii. 233, 234, 235, 260, 294, 295, 315, 525
Biedermann, W. von, ii. 500
Bismarck, Prince, i. 305, 345, 353, 551; ii. 93, 163, 173
Bleichröder, Gerson, i. 344
Blücher, i. 62
Boccaccio, ii. 104, 433
Bodenstedt, Friedrich von, i. 508
Bodin, Jean, ii. 378
Boerhaave, Herman, ii. 428
Bogumil, i. 511
Böhm-Bawerk, Eugen von, ii. 344
Böhme, Jacob, i. 566; ii. 225, 413, 416, 417, 419, 420, 421, 425, 429, 477
Boileau, Nicolas, i. 169; ii. 433
Bonaventura, ii. 399, 413
Boniface VIII. (Pope), ii. 97, 131, 135, 146, 147, 151, 166, 407
Bopp, Franz, ii. 237
Börne, Ludwig, i. 330
Bossuet, i. 115
Botticelli, Sandro, ii. 192
Bourignon, Antoinette, ii. 417
Boyle, Robert, ii. 320, 322, 323
Brandt, M. von, ii. 249, 251
Brehm, A. E., i. 19, 23
Broca, Paul, ii. 447
Brockhaus, Heinrich, ii. 384, 437
Brück, Heinrich, ii. 110, 119, 130
Bruno, Giordano, i. 55, 56, 79, 158, 219, 336, 561, 562; ii. 192, 193, 287, 390, 422, 439
Bryce, James, i. 165; ii. 167
Buchner, M., i. 533
Buckle, Henry Thomas, i. 288; ii. 204, 205, 218, 224, 250
Buddha, i. 177, 178, 179, 182—87, 189, 191, 193, 194, 199, 200, 226; ii. 26, 41, 585
Budge, E. A. W., i. 362, 425; ii. 26, 48
Buffon, George, ii. 472
Bunsen, Christian von, ii. 103
Bunsen, Robert Wilhelm, ii. 237
Bunyan, John, ii. 419
Burckhardt, Jacob, ii. 230
Burckhardt, John Ludwig, i. 361, 398, 410, 424, 427
Bürger, G. A., i. 253
Burgh, Hubert de, ii. 153
Burke, Edmund, i. 348

Burns, Robert, i. 523
Burton, R. F., i. 260
Buss, ii. 157, 194
Bussell, F. W., i. 78
Butler, Bishop, ii. 455, 485
Byron, Lord, i. 80, 169; ii. 93, 223, 508, 523, 541

CAESAR, Julius, i. 99 f., 118, 122, 126, 128, 295, 300, 345, 500, 543, 544; ii. 141
Calderon, i. 241, 308, 520; ii. 522, 523, 524, 541
Caligula, i. 119
Calvin, i. 562; ii. 172, 369, 372, 432

569 INDEX

Campanella, Tommaso, i. 561, 562; ii. 192, 193, 393, 439
Candolle, Alphonse de, i. 291; ii. 446, 447, 449, 453
Candolle, Augustin Pyrane de, i. 533
Canisius, i. 515
Çankara, i. 48, 75, 82, 87, 416, 430, 437, 569; ii. 40
Cantor, Mor., i. 57
Capito, C. Ateius, i. 157
Caracalla, i. 124, 132, 300, 302
Cardanus, i. 298, 301, 396
Carey, Henry Charles, ii. 344
Carlyle, Thomas, i. 349, 393, 412, 430, 436; ii. 380, 541, 546
Carnot, Nicholas, ii. 299, 325
Cato, i. 99
Catullus, i. 164
Cavour, Camillo di, ii. 194
Celsius, i. 118; ii. 92
Cervantes, i. 245; ii. 175, 314
Chantepie de la Saussaye, P. D., i. 443
Charcot, Jean M., i. 568
Charlemagne, i. 326, 327, 343, 502, 504, 555, 556, 560; ii. 95, 100, 101, 105, 107, 141, 145, 150, 163, 170, 171, 181, 182, 273, 339
Charles Martel, i. 555
Charles the Bald, i. 325; ii. 129
Charles the Simple, ii. 169, 176
Charles II., ii. 408
Charles V., ii. 257, 281, 351
Charles XII., i. 114; ii. 331
Chaucer, ii. 523
Cheyne, T. K., i. 356, 447, 451, 468, 469, 478, 479; ii. 123
Chrestien de Troyes, i. 504
Chrysostom, i. 313; ii. 73

Cicero, i. 55, 80, 97, 103, 139, 140, 152, 153, 156, 163, 170, 344, 345;
ii. 19, 56, 72, 115, 125
Cimon, i. 59
Clarac, Comte de, i. 553
Claus, Carl, i. 43, 285
Cleisthenes, i. 103, 158
Clemens of Alexandria, ii. 113
Clemens of Rome, ii. 50
Clemens V. (Pope), ii. 160
Clement, Jacques, ii. 368
Clifford, Wm. K., i. 20
Coelestin (Pope), ii. 121
Colebrooke, Henry, i. 88; ii. 271, 315
Coleman, Edward, ii. 386
Coligny, Admiral, i. 516
Columbus, ii. 265, 280, 281, 289, 329, 353, 468, 521
Condillac, Etienne B. de, ii. 456
Condorcet, Marquis de, ii. 472
Confucius, ii. 250, 251
Constantine, i. 126, 165, 351, 554, 562; ii. 84, 105, 106, 117, 155, 167,
330
Constantine II., ii. 30
Constantini, M., i. 351
Constantius II., i. 313
Coornhert, Dirck, i. 432
Copernicus, i. 4, 54, 561; ii. 225, 286, 343, 444, 469, 503, 517
Cornelius, Peter, ii. 362
Correggio, ii. 189
Cousin, Victor, ii. 499
Crescenzi, Pietro, ii. 357
Crispi, Francesco, ii. 194
Crompton, Samuel, i. 551; ii. 336
Cromwell, Oliver, i. 502; ii. 363, 368, 386
Cunningham, W., i. 348; ii. 332
Curtius, Ernst, i. 65, 219 f., 280; ii. 465
Curtze, M., i. 55
Cusanus (v. Krebs)
Cuvier, i. 43, 91; ii. 233, 518
Cyrillus of Alexandria, ii. 86
Cyrillus, i. 510
Cyrus, i. 106, 457

DAHN, Felix, i. 75, 553, 554
Dalberg, Fürst, i. 349
Dante, i. 38, 538, 541, 560; ii. 79, 97, 98, 100, 144, 145, 146, 182, 189,
194, 212, 346, 405, 425, 430, 502, 508, 530, 540, 541, 552, 562

Darmesteter, James, i. 218, 346, 415, 421; ii. 37
Darwin, Charles, i. 18, 20, 43, 81, 180, 214, 260, 265, 277, 284, 518, 536; ii. 216, 217, 237, 244, 280, 325, 527
Darwin, George, i. 282
David, i. 380 f., 395, 424, 442, 443, 444, 446, 524; ii. 36
Decaisne, J., ii. 310
Delitzsch, Franz, i. 466
Delitzsch, Friedrich, i, 400, 421

570 INDEX

Democritus, i. 25, 41, 45, 47, 49, 55, 197; ii. 270, 319, 321, 391, 517
Demosthenes, ii. 30, 71
Deniker, J., i. 533
Descartes, René, i. 21, 45, 86, 216; ii 288, 300, 391, 440, 442, 444, 450 f., 454 f., 479
Deussen, Paul, i. 48, 75, 76, 402; ii. 391
De Wette, W., i. 333, 356
Diaspora, The, i. 119, 233, 341; ii. 57, 59
Diderot, i. 190, 241, 336, 430, 570; ii.415, 434, 435, 492
Dieterich, Alb., ii 30, 124
Dietrich of Berne, i. 311, 323, 558
Dillmann, C. F. A., i. 444
Diocles, i. 35
Diocletian, i. 96, 124, 126, 130, 313; ii. 140
Diogenes Laertius, i. 156; ii. 92
Dionysius of Halicarnassus, i. 109, 111
Disraeli, Benjamin, i. 271
Dollinger, Ignaz von, i. 89, 333, 492, 513, 515, 557, 560; ii 97, 119, 133, 173, 174, 380, 430
Domitian, i. 119
Donatello, ii. 189, 192, 549, 553
Draco, i. 67, 103, 158
Draper, J. W., ii. 231
Drumont, Edouard, i. 339
Driver, Professor, i. 460
Duhm, Bernhard, i. 356, 455, 468, 470
Duhr, Bernhard, i. 566, 572
Duncker, Max, i. 32, 61, 74, 367
Duns Scotus, i. 501; ii. 392, 398, 399, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 407, 408, 409, 412, 418, 434, 437, 474, 477
Dunstan, i. 327
Du Pratz, Le Page, ii. 267
Dürer, Albrecht, i. 543; ii. 343, 504, 507, 520, 545, 551
Duruy, Victor, i. 100
Dutrochet, Henri, ii. 326

ECK, Johann, ii. 379
Eckermann, Johann Peter, i. 62, 336, 523; ii. 553
Eckhart, Meister, ii. 392, 399, 401, 410, 411, 412, 415, 416, 418, 419,
421, 423, 480, 485
Edison, T. A., i. 551
Egibi, The Brothers, i. 459
Ehrenberg, Richard, ii. 349, 350, 351, 358
Ehrenreich, Paul, i. 265, 266
Ehrhard, Albert, i. 567; ii. 137
Ehrlich, Eugen, i. 145
Elijah, i. 441, 446 f., 466
Elisha, i. 447
Elizabeth, Queen, ii. 167, 367
Emerson, Oliver F., i. 326
Emerson, Ralph Waldo, i. 278; ii. 238
Emin Pasha, i. 23
Empedocles, i. 53, 58; ii. 321
Endlicher, Stephan L., ii. 233
Epicurus, i. 35, 38
Epimenides, ii. 58
Epiphanius, ii. 53
Erasmus, ii. 172, 351, 361, 376, 431
Eratosthenes, i. 52
Esau, i. 378
Esmarch, Karl, i. 99, 113, 131, 146, 163, 171; ii. 115
Eucken, R. C., i. 50; ii. 427
Euclid, i. 41, 57, 298; ii. 270, 301, 302
Eumolpos, i. 31
Euripides, ii. 58
Eusebius, i. 314; ii. 117
Evans, i. 29
Ewald, Georg H. A., i. 207, 356
Eyck, The Brothers van, ii. 550
Eyre, Edw. John, i. 108

FABER, Peter, i. 565
Fabre, i. 20
Faraday, Michael, i. 124; ii. 270, 272
Faustina, i. 124
Felsenthal, B., i. 335
Felton, ii. 168
Ferdinand II., ii. 331
Feuerbach, Ludwig, ii. 443
Fichte, J. G., ii. 462, 498
Finlay, George, i. 271

Fischart, Johann, i. 544
Fiske, John, ii. 168, 216, 217, 218, 280, 283, 521
Flach, Hans, i. 31
Flaubert, Gustave, ii. 177
Fleischmann, Alb., i. 43
Flinders Petrie, W. M., i. 383; ii. 28, 254

571 INDEX

Flint, Robert, i. 398
Florus, Julius, i. 500
Forel, August, i. 22, 290, 368
Fortlage, Arnold, ii. 510
Fraas, Karl N., ii. 357
Fracastorius, i. 53
Franke, Otto, i. 421
Francis of Assisi, i. 39; ii. 96, 244, 388, 392, 402, 407, 408, 409, 415, 424, 425, 473, 474, 508, 524, 529, 530
Frederick I. of Barbarossa, ii. 142, 152, 155
Frederick II., The Hohenstauffen, i. 345; ii. 160, 172
Frederick the Great, i. 299, 345, 494; ii. 224, 444, 558
Freud, Sigmund, i. 568
Fromentin, Eugène, ii. 501
Fugger, The Brothers, ii. 349, 350, 351, 354, 360

GABELENTZ, Georg von der, ii. 431
Gaius, i. 141
Galerius, i. 130
Galilei, i. 54, 55, 561; ii. 189, 192, 193, 286, 287, 292, 313, 315, 320, 444, 520, 521, 522
Galvani, Luigi, ii. 236, 237, 261
Garbe, Richard, i. 48, 320, 420, 431
Gardner, E. G., ii. 107, 511
Gassendi, Petrus, i. 86, 561; ii. 439, 440, 520
Gegenbaur, Carl, i. 21
Geiger, Aloys, ii. 349
Gentz, Friedrich von, i. 349
Gerade, Paul, ii. 493
Gerhardt, ii. 293, 343
Gessner, Konrad, ii. 519
Gibbins, H. de B., ii. 355, 364
Gibbon, Edward, i. 97, 260, 270, 286, 553; ii. 86, 111
Giddings, Franklin H., i. 18
Gilbert, William, ii. 269, 271, 321
Giotto, ii. 189, 495, 518, 529, 562
Glisson, ii. 427

Gluck, ii. 523, 524, 528, 543
Gobineau, Count, i. 62, 63, 254, 262, 263, 280, 315, 322, 368; ii. 197, 205, 246
Goethe, i. 1, 14, 25, 27, 28, 33, 42, 62, 66, 75, 91, 93, 125, 179, 215, 229, 241, 254, 267, 270, 276, 294, 304, 327, 330, 336, 345, 346, 354, 396, 412, 413, 416, 428, 429, 430, 432, 434, 436, 437, 445, 487, 497, 523, 548, 549, 573, 576; ii. 5, 6, 24, 57, 116, 154, 157, 163, 175, 179, 181, 185, 191, 197, 199, 201, 203, 215, 227, 233, 256, 257, 262, 270, 273, 274, 295, 303, 305, 311, 317, 319, 320, 324, 325, 326, 343, 346, 376, 388, 390, 397, 399, 402, 428, 436, 448, 459, 470, 475, 476, 479, 488, 489, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 500, 504, 507, 518, 522, 523, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 543, 546, 547, 551, 552, 553, 554 f.
Gomperz, Theodor, i. 68, 81
Gooch, G. P., ii. 362, 363
Gothein, Eberhard, i. 564
Gottfried von Strassburg, i. 504; ii. 508
Gottschalk, ii. 129
Goudimel, Claude, ii. 511
Graetz, Hirsch, i. 120, 203, 206, 207, 209, 217, 220, 221, 241, 274, 337, 341, 343, 349, 351, 391, 401, 415, 419, 434, 446, 447, 476; ii. 31, 35, 58
Gratian, Emperor, ii. 112
Gratian, ii. 174
Grau, Rud. Fr., i. 404
Green, John R., i. 326; ii. 168, 342, 386
Gregory of Nazianz, ii. 85
Gregory I. ii. 102, 120, 127, 130, 163, 166
Gregory II., 11, 95, 102
Gregory VII., ii. 129, 143, 150, 163, 176
Gregory IX., i. 165; ii. 166
Grimm, Jacob, i. 75, 149, 161, 164; ii. 24, 109, 199, 226, 237
Grosse, Ernst, i. 107
Grosse, W., ii. 271
Grossetête, Robert, ii. 357
Grote, George, i. 65
Grothe, Hermann, ii. 336, 518
Grotius, Hugo, i. 142
Grün, Karl, ii. 230
Grünwald, Seligmann, i. 476, 485, 487

572 INDEX

Guido von Arezzo, ii. 536
Guise, Cardinal de, i. 416
Gunkel, Hermann, i. 363, 420
Gustavus Adolphus, ii. 377

Gutenberg, Joh., ii. 340
Guttman, D. J., ii. 395
Gutzkow, Karl, i. 145

HABSBURG, The House of, ii. 351, 384
Habsburg, Rudolf von, i. 342
Haddon, Alfred C., ii. 249
Hadrian, i. 123, 128
Haeckel, Ernst, i. 56, 95, 282, 294; ii. 244, 325
Hales, Stephen, ii. 271, 326
Halévy, Joseph, i. 400
Haller, Albr. von, ii. 427
Hamann, Johann, ii. 20, 434
Händel, ii. 523, 538
Hannibal, i. 114
Hardenburg, Karl August von, i. 339
Hargreaves, James, ii. 335
Harnack, Adolf, i. 433; ii. 18, 21, 38, 49, 58, 77, 78, 92, 116, 121, 171, 258, 372, 373
Hartmann, Eduard von, ii. 209, 391
Hartmann R., i. 266
Harun-al-Raschid, i. 398; ii. 339
Harvey, Wm., ii. 292, 439, 522
Hatch, Edwin, ii. 18, 20, 43, 89, 113, 127
Hausegger, Friedr. von, ii. 534
Hausrath, A., i. 244
Haydn, ii. 524, 538
Hearn, Lafcadio, i. 272
Hefele, Karl J. von, ii. 18, 77, 85, 94, 95, 102, 111, 119, 121, 130, 132, 133, 135, 143, 147, 167
Hegel, Georg W. F., i. 90, 143, 179; ii. 25, 179, 295, 403, 455, 462, 513, 518
Hehn, Viktor, i. 329
Heine, Heinrich, i. 78, 303, 304, 308
Heintze, Albert, i. 169
Helfferich, ii. 136
Heliogabalus, i. 302
Helmholtz, Hermann von, ii. 535
Helmolt, Hans F., ii. 510
Helmont, J. B. von, ii. 286, 427
Helvetius, i. 62
Heman, C. F., i. 343
Henke, Wilhelm, i. 503, 519, 520, 522, 524
Henley, Walter, ii. 357
Henry III., ii. 368
Henry IV., ii. 142, 143, 368, 382

Henry VIII., ii. 385
Heraclitus, i. 45 47, 79, 81, 89
Herder, i. 3, 50, 92, 102, 215, 329, 330, 336, 345, 346, 428, 461, 491, 494, 576; ii. 17, 120, 157, 211, 431, 433, 435, 443, 471, 472, 496, 531, 536, 537, 542, 543, 561
Hergentröther, i. 509; ii. 18, 36, 133, 167
Hermann, i. 321, 496
Hermodorus, i. 156
Hero of Alexandria, ii. 335, 435
Herod Antipas, i. 206
Herodotus, i. 30, 31, 35, 53, 59, 61, 62, 63, 65, 68, 74, 231, 239, 373
Herschel, William, ii. 295, 322, 426
Hertwig, Richard, i. 43
Hesiod, i. 30, 59, 60, 72, 89; ii. 33, 219, 244
Heyne, Moriz, ii. 415
Hieronymus, i. 313, 552, 560; ii. 30, 44, 120
Hieronymus of Prague, i. 514
Hinde, Sidney L., i. 116, 362
Hippocrates, ii. 517
Hirsch, Baron, i. 355, 401
Hirschel, Bernhard, ii. 322, 426
Hobbes, Thomas, i. 142; ii. 440
Hodgkin, Thomas, i. 556
Hofer, Ferdinand, ii. 301
Höfding, Harold, ii. 57
Hofmann, Alfons, ii. 444
Hoffmann, Friedrich, ii. 428
Hofmeister, Wilhelm, ii. 326
Hogarth, David, i. 410; ii. 523
Holbach, Paul, ii. 502
Hölderlin, J. C. F., i. 14, 39
Holland, Thomas E., i. 139
Hollweck, Joseph, i. 560
Holtzmann, Heinrich J., ii. 18
Homer, i. 24, 27, 36, 37, 42, 45, 46, 47, 59, 70, 71, 72, 78, 79, 80, 81, 89, 155, 160, 178, 197, 198, 201, 231, 249, 298, 313; ii. 22, 25, 27, 32, 43, 103, 217, 294, 302, 319, 498, 503, 507, 515, 521, 527, 535
Hommel, Fritz, i. 362, 369, 370, 373, 400, 528

573 INDEX

Honorius I. (Pope), ii. 119
Honorius II. (Pope), ii. 274
Hooke, ii. 322
Hooker, John, ii. 310
Horace, i. 122, 168

Hosen, Cardinal, i. 516
Huber, François, i. 20, 21
Hueppe, Ferdinand, i. 168, 290, 400, 410; ii. 204, 222, 253
Humboldt, Alexander von, ii. 98, 472
Humboldt, Wilhelm von, i. 528
Hume, Thomas, i. 86, 413; ii. 303, 434, 442, 443, 461, 464, 466, 468
Hus, Joh., i. 513, 514, 562; ii. 142, 173
Hutten, Ulrich von, i. 575; ii. 370
Huxley, Thomas, i. 265

IDELER, Ludwig, i. 55
Ignatius of Antioch, ii. 89
Indicopleustes, Cosmas, ii. 291
Inguiomer, i. 496
Innocent II., ii. 142
Innocent III., i. 341; ii. 52, 107, 132, 135, 153
Innocent IV., ii. 166
Irenaeus, ii. 53
Isaac, i. 365, 378

JACOBY, P., i. 282
Jacopone da Todi, ii. 407
Jacquard, Charles Marie, ii. 336
Jacob, i. 355, 365, 378, 420
Janitschek, Hubert, ii. 551
Jansenius, Cornelius, ii. 97
Janssen, Joh., i. 561; ii. 132, 162, 163, 337, 341, 379
Jebb, Sir Richard, i. 28
Jerons, Frank Byron, ii. 30
Jerons, Stanley, ii. 344
Jhering, Rudolph von, i. 26, 94, 95, 101, 106, 107, 112, 142, 148, 153, 155, 161, 162, 213, 277, 399, 559; ii. 125
Joachim, Abbot, ii. 96
Jones, Sir William, i. 47; ii. 271
Josephus, i. 206, 470, 491
Josquin de Près, ii. 512, 537, 552
Jouvancy, Joseph de, i. 567; ii. 157
Jubainville, H. d'Arbois de, i. 499
Julianus of Eclanum, ii. 38
Julius II. (Pope), ii. 520
Jussieu, Antoine de, ii. 310
Jussieu, Antoine L. de, i. 533; ii. 233, 308
Jussieu, Bernhard de, ii. 308
Justinian, Emperor, i. 132, 150; ii. 121
Juvenal, j. 63, 168, 207, 491; ii. 223

KAHLBAUM, Georg, ii. 426
Kahn, Leopold, i. 335
Kalkoff, Paul, ii. 370
Kant, i. 86, 91, 137, 143, 198, 241, 351, 407, 490, 549, 550, 551, 561;
ii. 8, 25, 178, 214, 244, 273, 277, 284, 290, 291, 292, 300, 312, 314,
315, 319, 329,
389, 390, 391, 393, 402, 404, 405, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 427, 428,
434, 435, 440, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 450, 458 f., 490—95, 496, 497,
498, 499, 500, 501, 503. 517, 526, 528, 544, 555
Karabacek, ii. 338, 339
Kautsky, Karl, ii. 356, 361
Keller, Ludwig, ii. 131, 351, 370
Kelvin, Lord, ii. 327
Kempis, Thomas à, ii. 392, 412, 413
Kepler, i. 4, 54; ii. 427, 521, 522, 555
Kern, H., i. 177
Khaldun, Mohammed Ibn, i. 398, 406
Kingsmill, Thomas W., ii. 249
Kirby, William, i. 20
Kluge, Friedrich, i. 219, 400, 423; ii. 32, 241
Knebel, Karl Ludwig von, i. 35
Knuth, Paul, i. 283
Koch, Max, ii. 341
Kollmann, Jul., i. 527, 531, 533, 534, 537
Kopp, Herm., ii. 265
Koran, The, i. 414, 433
Krasinski, Valerian, i. 515
Kraus, Franz Xaver, i. 56, 539; ii. 104, 107, 115
Krebs, Nicolaus, i. 561; ii. 278, 430
Kropf, Franz Xaver, ii. 157
Kuenen, A., i. 442
Kuhlenbeck, i. 158

LABEO, M. Antistius, i. 157
La Chaise, Père de, ii. 62, 377
Lafayette, Marquis de, ii. 383, 384

574 INDEX

Lagarde, Paul de, i. 235, 519; ii. 373, 374, 411, 501
Laible, Heinrich, i. 338, 355, 481
Lainez, Diego, i. 572
Lamennais, H. P. R. de, ii. 97
Lametrie, Julien P. de, ii. 456, 502
Lamprecht, Karl, i. 107 545, 546, 547, 548; ii. 107, 110, 111, 230, 274,
333, 343, 358, 361, 405, 411, 431, 511

Lange, Friedrich Albert, i. 73; ii. 286, 292, 391, 440, 517
Lão-tze, ii. 250, 251, 263
Lapouge, G. de, i. 373, 397, 512, 522
Lassen, Christian, i. 338, 403, 404, 405, 418
Lavosier, ii. 293, 324
Leber, ii. 348
Lecky, W. E. H., i. 316; ii. 230
Lehrs, K., i. 79
Leibniz, ii. 179, 201, 293, 301, 403, 439, 441, 442, 472, 537
Leist, B. W., i. 67, 94, 106, 125, 133, 146, 147, 151, 157; ii. 8, 125
Lémann, Abbé Joseph, i. 349
Le Maout, Em., ii. 310
Leo X. (Pope), ii. 102
Leo XIII. (Pope), i. 69, 560; ii. 162, 168, 173, 176, 179
Leo the Isaurian, Emperor, ii. 11, 94, 95, 96
Leon, Mose de, i. 337
Leonardo da Vinci, i. 82, 83; ii. 189, 192, 193, 273, 288, 300, 301, 302, 315, 335, 336, 364, 376, 390, 410, 439, 498, 502, 504, 514, 518, 519, 520, 524, 526, 527, 551, 558
Leonhard, Rudolf, i. 124, 157
Leonidas, i. 61, 62, 172
Leopardi, Giacomo, ii. 194
Lessing, i. 14; ii. 496, 506, 513, 530, 536, 539, 542, 543, 561
Le Tellier, Père, ii. 378
Lichtenberg, G. Chr., i. 4, 267; ii. 318, 475, 492, 519, 520
Liebert, Narcissus, ii. 126
Liebig, Justus, ii. 201, 220, 236, 245, 268, 313, 315, 316, 318, 320, 322, 523
Linnaeus, i. 193, 373, 499, 522; ii. 233, 308, 309
Lipmann-Cerfberr, Salomon, i. 329
Lippert, Julius, i. 73
Livingstone, David, i. 116; ii. 266
Livy, i. 114, 397
Locke, John, i. 86; ii. 302, 326, 362, 442, 443, 449, 450, 451, 452, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 472, 475, 479, 522
Lombardus, Petrus, i. 165
Lotharius, Emperor, ii. 142
Loyola, Ignatius, i. 563—73; ii. 79, 111, 157, 194, 382, 415, 430
Lubbock, Sir John, i. 20, 21, 22, 73, 107, 108
Lucian, i. 78, 302—309, 310, 312, 313, 320, 395; ii. 154, 224, 497
Lucretius, i. 35, 167
Luden, Heinrich, ii. 389
Ludwig, Heinrich, i. 83; ii. 301
Louis IX., ii. 160
Louis XIV. ii. 224

Louise, Queen, i. 502
Lull, Ramon, i. 81; ii. 396
Luschan, F. von, i. 266, 373, 374, 375, 376, 387, 392, 395, 399
Luther, Martin, i. 3, 4, 165, 183, 219, 241, 350, 385, 452, 479, 489, 501, 513, 516, 520, 522, 540, 541, 553, 562, 572, 576; ii. 34, 36, 44, 64, 66, 67, 80, 81, 99, 110, 120, 132, 136, 163, 172, 175, 179, 244, 258, 278, 281, 350, 359, 366—67, 385, 388, 389, 397, 399, 402, 406, 407, 408, 409, 414, 418, 419, 423, 428, 431, 439, 469, 495, 538
Lyell, Sir Charles, i. 53
Lycurgus, i. 8, 9, 58, 67, 97, 103

MACCOOK, H. C., i. 20
Maecenas, i. 38
Maeterlinck, Maurice, i. 20
Magalhães, ii. 281, 284—85, 521
Mahaffy, Professor, i. 63
Mandelstam, Professor, i. 335
Manning, Cardinal, ii. 137
Mantegna, ii. 189
Marcus Aurelius, i. 35, 123, 124, 170; ii. 163
Marcel, Étienne, ii. 333

575 INDEX

Marcion, i. 238; ii. 44, 59, 413
Marco Polo, ii. 261, 284, 353
Mardonius, i. 61
Marius, i. 96, 100, 287
Martineau, Harriet, ii. 363
Marx, Karl, ii. 344, 361, 362
Maspero, G., i. 62, 301, 360, 362, 364, 367, 442, 446; ii. 26
Mathias von Janow, i. 514
Mathilda, ii. 189
Maximinus, i. 130
Maxwell, Clerk, ii. 237
May, R. E., ii. 177, 363
Mayer, Julius Robert, ii. 237
Mead, i. 238
Megenberg, Konrad von, ii. 284
Melancthon, i. 562; ii. 551
Mendelssohn, Moses, i. 434, 458; ii. 404, 479
Menzel, Wolfzang, ii. 23, 141
Mertz, Georg, ii. 157
Merx, Adalbert, i. 433; ii. 411
Methodius, i. 510

Metternich, Prince, i. 349
Meyer, Eduard, i. 455, 462
Meyer, Hans Heinrich, ii. 237
Michael, Emil, ii. 360
Michael of Bulgaria, i. 510
Michael Angelo, i. 79; ii. 189, 192, 194, 212, 219, 410, 496, 503, 504, 508, 514, 518, 519, 520, 521, 523, 545, 546, 547, 559, 562
Milič, 514
Mill, John Stuart, i. 70; ii. 344
Miltiades, i. 66
Milton, ii. 139, 186, 511
Mirabeau, Count, i. 349; ii. 380, 382, 383
Mirandola, Picus von, ii. 390, 431, 445
Mitford, Wm., i. 65
Mocatta, David, i. 341
Moggridge, J. Traherne, i. 20
Mohammed, i. 116, 299, 337, 361, 401, 404, 407, 418, 420, 472, 492, 507, 511, 565, 571; ii. 91, 395
Molinos, Michael, ii. 419
Möller, Alfred, i. 19
Mommsen, Theodor, i. 94, 99, 101, 105, 109, 112, 115, 116, 117, 118, 130, 132, 140, 168, 170, 208, 242, 342, 345, 501; ii. 95, 115, 117, 347
Montaigne, i. 22
Montefiore, C. G., i. 223, 224, 391, 392, 401, 413, 415, 421, 422, 426, 434, 445, 460, 464, 467, 478, 480, 485, 488
Montesquieu, i. 46, 101, 552, 558, 574; ii. 369, 542, 559
More, Thomas, ii. 361, 362, 431
Moriz-Eichborn, Kurt, ii. 558
Morris, Wm., ii. 362, 363
Mortillet, Gabriel de, i. 374, 500
Moses, i. 424, 433, 485, 502; ii. 275, 280, 288, 413
Mozart, i. 280, 503; ii. 523, 538
Müller, Etfried, i. 160
Müller, Hermann (Historian), i. 565
Müller, Hermann (Botanist), i. 283
Müller, Johannes von, ii. 331—43
Müller, Chancellor von, i. 346, 576; ii. 318, 458
Müller, Karl, i. 235, 554; ii. 18, 30, 59, 84, 500
Müller, Max, i. 18, 48, 209, 431, 436; ii. 24, 251
Muntz, Eugène, ii. 194, 550
Münzer, Thomas, ii. 418
Musaeos, i. 31
Myron, i. 303

NAPOLEON, i. 97, 114, 332, 344, 349, 550; ii. 152, 331, 383
Navarra, Bruno, ii. 286

Neander, August, i. 219, 511, 514, 553; ii. 18, 76, 85, 127, 130, 132
Nebuchadnezzar, i. 448
Nehemiah, i. 462, 464, 484, 491
Nelson, Lord, i. 574
Nero, i. 119, 123, 208
Nestorius, ii. 28, 87, 121
Neumann, Karl J., i. 119
Newton, i. 4, 54, 91, 270, 413, 551; ii. 299, 444, 521, 522, 523
Nicetus, i. 55
Nicodemus, ii. 34, 49
Nicolas I. (Pope), ii. 274
Niebuhr, B. G., i. 99, 101
Niese, J. A. B., i. 28
Nietzsche, Fr., i. 153
Nikolaus von Welenowič, i. 514
Noailles, Cardinal de, ii. 380
Novalis, i. 14, 415; ii. 14
Numa Pompilius, i. 96, 126; ii. 151

576 INDEX

OCCAM, ii. 392, 398 f., 402, 403, 405 f.
Oldenberg, Hermann, i. 243, 437, 483
Olen, i. 31
Omar Khayyám, i. 398, 407; ii. 416
Origenes, i. 253, 311, 562; ii. 9, 35, 44, 49, 50, 62, 66, 71, 81, 82, 84, 89, 90, 92, 109, 120, 121, 129, 398, 513, 514, 516
Orpheus, i. 31
Ostrorog, Johann, i. 516
Otto I., ii. 100, 145
Otto II., ii. 100, 142
Ovid, i. 167
Owen, Robert, ii. 344, 353

PACHOMIUS, i. 314; ii. 30
Palestrina, Giovanni P. da, ii. 511
Panaetius, ii. 18
Pânini, i. 431, 432; ii. 271
Papin, Denis, ii. 335
Papinian, i. 153, 169
Paracelsus, ii. 197, 295, 392, 425, 426, 427, 433, 439, 453, 473, 520
Parkman, Franz, ii. 111
Pascal, Blaise, ii. 298
Pasteur, Louis, ii. 237, 328
Pater, Walter, ii. 546
Paul, The Apostle, i. 119, 120, 194, 218, 219, 492, 500; ii. 33, 35, 37,

44, 54, 71, 72, 76, 77, 78, 80, 82, 244, 379, 391, 393
Paul III. (Pope), i. 55; ii. 167
Paul of Samosata, ii. 88
Paulitschke, Philipp, i. 53
Paulsen, Fr., ii. 430
Pausanias, i. 61
Peip, Albert, ii. 417
Pelagius (and the Pelagians), ii. 38 f., 76, 121
Pépin, i. 555; ii. 273
Peppmüller, Rudolf, i. 60
Perez, Antonio, ii. 98, 148
Pericles, i. 67, 158; ii. 9, 516
Perugino, Pietro, ii. 191
Peschel, Oskar, i. 401, 457, 564
Peter, The Apostle, i. 119; ii. 74, 98, 105, 115, 117, 146, 167, 173
Petrarch, ii. 189, 430, 433, 541
Pfeiffer, Franz, ii. 412, 422
Pfleiderer, Otto, i. 179; ii. 30, 35, 63, 66
Phidias, i. 42, 225, 303, 307, 309; ii. 219, 507, 515, 517
Phillipe le Bel, ii. 160, 164
Philippson, Ludwig, i. 333, 413, 414, 415; ii. 35
Phillips, George, i. 559; ii. 157, 162, 168
Philo, i. 119, 217, 218, 336; ii. 42
Philolaus, i. 55
Pilate, i. 236, 237
Pisistratus, i. 59, 65
Pius V., ii. 167
Pius IX., ii. 69, 119, 151
Plato, i. 25, 41, 45, 47, 48, 49, 56, 59, 67, 80, 82, 84, 85, 86, 87, 89, 91, 108, 155, 158, 178, 197, 267, 306, 412, 416, 419, 502; ii. 17, 19, 22, 31, 49, 60, 82, 256, 313, 314, 329, 463, 555, 564
Pliny, i. 35; ii. 28
Plotinus, i. 77; ii. 70
Plutarch, i. 41, 55, 59, 65, 78, 98, 156, 161
Poggio, Brac., i. 515
Polanco, i. 565
Polycletus, i. 303
Pompey, i. 96, 101
Pomponazzi, Pietro, ii. 429, 443
Poppaea Sabina, i. 119
Praxiteles, i. 303; ii. 515
Prichard, Hesketh, i. 290
Priestley, Joseph, ii. 324
Proclus, i. 77
Proudhon, P. J., ii. 344
Ptolemaeus, i. 52, 53; ii. 200

Pufendorf, S. von, i. 142
Purbach, ii. 520, 521
Pythagoras (and Pythagoreans), i. 41, 47, 54, 76, 82, 86, 432; ii. 16, 517,
555 Pytheas, i. 52; ii. 270

QUENSTEDT, Fr. Aug., i. 53

RABL, Carl, i. 44
Racine, ii. 523
Radbert, Paschasius, ii. 128, 129
Rainer, ii. 132
Râmakrishna, i. 436
Rambaud, Alfred, ii. 230
Ramsay, W. M., i. 356; ii. 18, 59, 95

577 INDEX

Ranke, Johannes, i. 22, 264, 265, 266, 291, 333, 368, 498, 527, 528,
531, 562; ii. 161, 197, 204
Ranke, Leopold von, i. 61, 79, 85, 99, 118, 125; ii. 368
Raphael, i. 79, 419; ii. 189, 192, 194, 410, 512, 514, 518, 519, 520, 522,
524, 562
Ratramnus, Bertram, ii. 129
Ratzel, Friedrich, i. 94, 258, 266, 362, 375, 401, 402
Ravenstein, ii. 171
Ray, John, i. 533; ii. 233, 308, 310, 312, 314, 315
Realis, A., i. 342
Reclus, Elisée, i. 164; ii. 209
Regiomontanus, i. 4; ii. 286, 520, 521
Reibmayr, Albert, i. 283
Reid, Thomas, ii. 203
Reicke, Rudolf, i. 561
Reinach, Salomon, i. 94, 266, 400; ii. 203
Reinisch, Leopold, ii. 79
Rembrandt, ii. 242, 408, 496, 504, 505, 509, 522, 550, 552, 553
Renan, Ernest, i. 119, 120, 180, 181, 206, 207, 209, 211, 220, 230, 293,
294, 295, 296, 297, 299, 331, 338, 367, 379, 382, 383, 386, 398, 399,
400, 401, 405, 411 f., 424, 426, 434, 436, 442, 444, 446, 490; ii. 18, 42,
90, 92, 95, 102, 109
Reni, Guido, ii. 191
Reusch, Franz H., i. 513; ii. 380
Reuss, Eduard, i. 356, 453, 461, 467; ii. 55, 66, 237
Réville, Albert, i. 205, 209
Réville, André, i. 342; ii. 357
Richelieu, ii. 375, 376
Richter, Jean Paul Friedrich, i. 14, 317; ii. 288

Richthofen, Ferd. von, ii. 209, 249
Riemann, Hugo, ii. 511
Riemer, F. W., ii. 505
Rienzi, Cola, ii. 333
Robert of Gloucester, ii. 262
Robespierre, ii. 381
Rogers, J. E. T., ii. 355, 356
Rohde, Erwin, i. 31, 70, 74, 75, 85, 88, 219; ii. 124
Rohde, Friedrich, i. 289
Romanes, J. G., i. 18, 20, 23
Roscoe, H. E., ii. 323
Rothschild, i. 333, 344, 346, 349, 459
Rousseau, J. J., i. 91, 142, 159; ii. 251, 252, 267, 303, 381, 396, 435, 492, 495
Rubens, Peter Paul, ii. 524
Rubens, William, i. 473, 476
Ruysch, Johann, ii. 286

SAADIA, i. 481
Sabatier, Paul, ii. 408, 415, 424
Sabellius, ii. 88
Sachs, Hans, ii. 423
Sachs, Julius, ii. 307
Sainte-Beuve, C. A.; ii. 40, 62, 130, 309
Sallust, i. 99, 100
Salmeron, Alonso, i. 572
Sanchuniathon, i. 230
Savigny, F. K. von, i. 94, 101, 133, 148, 168, 280, 539, 555, 559; ii. 5, 117, 149, 189, 237
Savonarola, ii. 194, 410
Sayce, A. H., i. 362, 367, 368, 369, 394, 395, 409, 459
Scaliger, Julius Caesar, i. 573
Scaevola, Mucius, i. 153, 156
Schack, F. von, i. 403
Scharbarza, i. 208
Schechter, Salomon, i. 391, 445 f.
Scheele, Karl W., ii. 324
Schell, Hermann, ii. 137
Schelling, Fr. W. von, ii. 437, 455, 459, 499, 500
Schiaparelli, Giovanni V., i. 54, 55, 57
Schiller, i. 14, 15, 16, 17, 27, 29, 51, 69, 74, 192, 217, 280, 372, 495, 502, 503; ii. 11, 187, 210, 219, 220, 243, 303, 324, 325, 409, 413, 414, 435, 447, 465, 480, 486, 493, 496, 497, 498, 499, 521, 523, 527, 534, 542, 546, 558, 563
Schleicher, Aug., i. 499
Schleiermacher, Friedrich, ii. 410

Schlosser, Friedrich, ii. 469
Schmidt, Joh., i. 499
Schmoller, Gustav, ii. 360
Schneider, Karl C., i. 44
Schoenhof, J., ii. 350

578 INDEX
