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**Title:** Mountain Meditations, and some subjects of the day and the war

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**Release Date:** June 30, 2009 [EBook #29277]

**Language:** English

**Credits:** Produced by Audrey Longhurst, adhere and the Online Distributed Proofreading Team at <https://www.pgdp.net>

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AND SOME SUBJECTS OF THE DAY AND THE WAR \*\*\*

# **MOUNTAIN MEDITATIONS**

AND SOME SUBJECTS OF  
THE DAY AND THE WAR

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AUTHOR OF "AUGUST STRINDBERG:  
THE SPIRIT OF REVOLT"



LONDON: GEORGE ALLEN & UNWIN LTD.  
RUSKIN HOUSE 40 MUSEUM STREET, W.C. 1

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## MOUNTAIN-TOPS

Frères de l'aigle! Aimez la montagne sauvage!  
Surtout à ces moments où vient un vent  
d'orage.

VICTOR HUGO.

I belong to the great and mystic brotherhood of mountain worshippers. We are a motley crowd drawn from all lands and all ages, and we are certainly a peculiar people. The sight and smell of the mountain affect us like nothing else on earth. In some of us they arouse excessive physical energy and lust of conquest in a manner not unlike that which suggests itself to the terrier at the sight of a rat. We must master the heights above, and we become slaves to the climbing impulse, itinerant purveyors of untold energy, marking the events of our lives on peaks and passes. We may merit to the full Ruskin's scathing indictment of those who look upon the Alps as soaped poles in a bear-garden which we set ourselves "to climb and slide down again with shrieks of delight," we may become top-fanatics and record-breakers, "red with cutaneous eruption of conceit," but we are happy with a happiness which passeth the understanding of the poor people in the plains.

Others experience no acceleration of physical energy, but a strange rousing of all their mental faculties. Prosaic, they become poetical—the poetry may be unutterable, but it is there; commonplace, they become eccentric; severely practical, they become dreamers and loiterers upon the hillside. The sea, the wood, the meadow cannot compete with the mountain in egging on the mind of man to incredible efforts of expression. The songs, the rhapsodies, the poems, the æsthetic ravings of mountain worshippers have a dionysian flavour which no other scenery can impart.

Yesterday I left the turmoil of a conference in Geneva and reached home amongst my delectable mountains. I took train for the foot of the hills and climbed for many hours through drifts of snow. This morning I have been deliciously mad. First I greeted the sun from my open chalet window as it rose over the range on my left and lit up the great glacier before me, throwing the distant hills into a glorious dream-world of blue and purple. Then I plunged into the huge drifts of clean snow which the wind had piled up outside my door. I laughed with joy as I breathed the pure air, laden with the scent of pines and the diamond-dust of snow. I never was more alive, the earth was

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never more beautiful, the heavens were never nearer than they are to-day. Who says we are prisoners of darkness? Who says we are puppets of the devil? Who says God must only be worshipped in creeds and churches? Here are the glories of the mountains, beauty divine, peace perfect, power unfathomable, love inexhaustible, a never failing source of hope and light for our struggling human race. I am vaguely aware of the unreasonableness of my delirium of mountain joy, but I revel in it. And I sing with Sir Lewis Morris—

More it is than ease,  
Palace and pomp, honours and luxuries,  
To have seen white presences upon the hills,  
To have heard the voices of the eternal gods.

10

The emotions engendered by mountain scenery defy analysis. They may be classified and labelled, but not explained. I turn to my library of books by mountain-lovers —climbers, artists, poets, scientists. Though we are solitaries in our communion with the Deity, though we worship in great spaces of solitude and silence and seek rejuvenescence in utter human loneliness, we do not despise counsels of sympathy and approval. The strife rewarded, the ascent accomplished, we are profoundly grateful for the yodel of human fellowship. And—let me whisper it in confidence—we do not despise the cooking-pots. For the mountains have a curious way of lifting you up to the uttermost confines of the spirit and then letting you down to the lowest dominions of the flesh.

11

“Examine the nature of your own emotion (if you feel it) at the sight of the Alps,” says Ruskin, “and you find all the brightness of that emotion hanging like dew on a gossamer, on a curious web of subtle fancy and imperfect knowledge.” Such a result of our examination would but add to our confusion. Ruskin's mind was so permeated with adoration of mountain scenery that his attempts at cool analysis of his own sensations failed, as would those of a priest who, worshipping before the altar, tried at the same time to give an analytical account of his state of mind. Ruskin is the stern high priest of the worshippers of mountains; to him they are cathedrals designed by their glory and their gloom to lift humanity out of its baser self into the realization of high destinies. The fourth volume of *Modern Painters* was the fount of inspiration from which Leslie Stephen and the early members of the Alpine Club drank their first draughts of mountaineering enthusiasm. But the disciples never reached the heights of the teacher. Listen to the exposition by the Master of the services appointed to the hills:

“To fill the thirst of the human heart for the beauty of God's working—to startle its lethargy with a deep and pure agitation of astonishment—are their higher missions. They are as a great and noble architecture, first giving shelter, comfort, and rest; and covered also with mighty sculpture and painted legend.”

There is a solemn stateliness about Ruskin's descriptions of the mountains, which in the last passage of the chapter on *The Mountain Gloom* rises to the impassioned cadences of the prophet.

12

He could tolerate no irreverent spirits in the sanctuary of the mountain. Leslie Stephen's remark that the Alps were improved by tobacco smoke became a profanity. One shudders at the thought of the reprimand which Stevenson would have drawn down upon himself had his flippant messages from the Alps come before that austere critic. In a letter to Charles Baxter, Stevenson complained of how “rotten” he had been feeling “alone with my weasel-dog and my German maid, on the top of a hill here, heavy mist and thin snow all about me and the devil to pay in general.” And worse still are the lines sent to a friend—

Figure me to yourself, I pray—  
A man of my peculiar cut—  
Apart from dancing and deray,  
Into an Alpine valley shut;

Shut in a kind of damned hotel,  
Discountenanced by God and man;  
The food?—Sir, you would do as well  
To cram your belly full of bran.

13

The soul of Ruskin was born and fashioned for the mountains. His first visit to Switzerland in 1833 brought him to “the Gates of the Hills—opening for me a new life—to cease no more except at the Gates of the Hills whence one returns not. It is not possible to imagine,” he adds of his first sight of the Alps, “in any time of the world a more blessed entrance into life for a child of such temperament as mine.... I went down that evening from the garden terrace of Schaffhausen with my devotion fixed in all of it that was to be sacred and useful.” [1]

[1] *Life of Ruskin*, by Sir Edward Cooke (George Allen and Unwin Ltd.).

That profound stirring of the depths of the soul which Ruskin avowed as the impetus to his life's work is only possible when the mind is fired by a devotion to the mountains which brooks no rival. “For, to myself, mountains are the beginning and the end of all natural scenery,” he wrote in *The Mountain Glory*; “in them, and in the forms of inferior landscape that lead to them, my affections are wholly bound up.” And he completely and forever reversed Dante's dismal conception of scenery befitting souls in purgatory by saying that “the best image which the world can give of Paradise is in the slope of the meadows, orchards, and cornfields on the sides of a great Alp, with its purple rocks and eternal snows above.”

14

No lover of mountains has approached Ruskin in intensity of veneration. Emile Javelle is not far away. Javelle climbed as by a religious impulse; his imagination was filled by Alpine shapes; he, like Ruskin, had forfeited his heart to the invisible snow-maiden that dwells above the clouds. When Javelle was a child his uncle showed him a collection of plants, and amongst them the “Androsace ... rochers du Mont Blanc.” This roused the desire to climb; the faded bit of moss with the portion of earth still clinging to the roots became a sacred relic beckoning him to the shrine of the white mountain. In the same way Ruskin, mature and didactic, yet withal so beautifully childlike, tells us “that a wild bit of ferny ground under a fir or two, looking as if possibly one might see a hill if one got to the other side, will instantly give me intense delight because the shadow, the hope of the hills is in them.” Both lovers showed the same disdain of the mere climber. Javelle's Alpine memories record his sense of aloofness from the general type of member of the Alpine Club.

15

Whilst Ruskin's communion with the mountains found an outlet in prolific literary output, and a system of art and ethics destined to leaven the mass of human thought, the infinitude and grandeur of mountain scenery had a dispersive effect on Javelle's mind. I can so well understand him. He wandered over the chain of Valais—my mountains (each worshipper has his special idols)—the Dent du Midi, the Vaudois Alps, and the Bernese Oberland in search of beauty, more and more beauty. He ascended peak after peak, attracted by an irresistible force, permeated by a desire for new points of view, forgetful of the haunts of men.

16

And when, between times, Javelle tried to write a book, a great and learned book on rhetoric, he could never finish it. For seven years he laboured at preparing it, collecting notes, seeking corroborative evidence. His Alpine climbing had taught him the elusiveness of isolated peaks of knowledge. He saw that rhetoric is dependent on aesthetics and aesthetics on psychology and sociology and philosophy, and all on anthropology; that there are no frontiers and no finality and no knowledge which is not relative and imperfect. It was all a question of different tops and points of view, and so the book was not finished when he died, still in search of the super-mountain of the widest and largest view, still crying out his motto, “Onward, higher and higher still! You

must reach the top!"

Beware, O fellow mountaineers, of such ambitions. For that way madness lies. I know the lure and the shock. As I write this I sit gazing across the valley upon the mountain on my right. It is known by the name of the Black Head; it has a sombre shape, it has never been known to smile. It towers above me with a cone-shaped top, a figure of might and dominion. For a dozen years it has checked my tendency to idealistic flights by reminding me of the inexorable laws of Nature. It is true it does not conceal the smiling glacier in front of me, with its ceaseless play of light and shadow, colour and form, but it arrests the fancy by its massive immovability. And yet, when I leave my little abode of bliss and wander forth into the heights above (ah, humiliation that there should be heights above), I find my black top subjected to a process of shrinking. As I reach the top it ignominiously permits itself to be flattened out to a mere ridge without a head, a Lilliputian hill bemoaning its own insignificance.

17

Such are the illusions of the mountain play. Yet the climb and the heights have ever served man as a symbol of the search for certainty. Lecky invokes the heights as the only safe place from which to view history and discover the great permanent forces through which nations are moved to improvement or decay. Schopenhauer compares philosophy to an Alpine road, often bringing the wanderer to the edge of the chasm, but rewarding him as he ascends with oblivion of the discords and irregularities of the world. Nietzsche's wisdom becomes pregnant upon lonely mountains; he claims that whosoever seeks to enter into this wisdom "must be accustomed to live on mountain-tops and see beneath him the wretched ephemeral gossip of politics and national egoism."

But the mountain-tops make sport of the certainties of philosophers as well as of those of fools. The safest plan is to ascend them without too heavy an encumbrance of theories. You may then meet fairies and goblins who beckon you to the caves of mystery, you may stray into the hills of Arcadia and meet Pan himself. "Sweet the piping of him who sat upon the rocks and fluted to the morning sea." You may even find yourself on Olympus, the mount of a thousand folds, listening to the everlasting assault upon the Gods by the Titans, sons of strife. And if you are very patient you may witness Zeus, the lightning-gatherer, pierce the black clouds and rend the sky, illuminating hill and vale with the fierce light which makes even the battle of Troy intelligible.

18

You may bathe your soul in that *Natura Maligna* which only reveals its blessings to pagans and poets. Byron is the chosen bard of the destructive might of the mountains—

Ye toppling crags of ice!  
Ye avalanches, whom a breath draws down  
In mountainous o'erwhelming, come and crush  
me!

---

The mists boil up around the glaciers; clouds  
Rise curling fast beneath me, white and  
sulphury,  
Like foam from the roused ocean of deep Hell,  
Whose every wave breaks on a living shore,  
Heaped with the damned like pebbles.

He had the nature-mystic's thirst for a touch of the untamed power of Nature, for communion with the magnificence of death, shaking the mountain with wind and falling snow, with leaping rock and earth-eating torrent. Such would fain die that they may experience the joys of being possessed by Nature. For they have entered on the marriage of life and death, heaven and hell, and out of the roaring cataclysm of destruction they rise winged with a new life.

19

Whilst the poets chant the awful power of the distant mountain, Byron comes to us out of the mountain, fashioned by its force, intoxicated by the wine of its wild life. Mountain climbers meet with strange and unexpected

bedfellows in the course of their wanderings. In his cry for the baptism of the wild winds of the mountain, Matthew Arnold approaches Byron closely—

Ye storm-winds of Autumn

Ye are bound for the mountains—  
Ah, with you let me go

Hark! fast by the window  
The rushing winds go,  
To the ice-cumber'd gorges,  
The vast seas of snow.  
There the torrents drive upward  
Their rock-strangled hum,  
There the avalanche thunders  
The hoarse torrent dumb.  
—I come, O ye mountains!  
Ye torrents, I come!

20

Shelley sings exquisitely of its grandeur, its ceaseless motion; he voices the wonderment of man before the complex problem of Mont Blanc. But his mind has never participated in the revels on the mountain, he has not lost and barely recovered his soul in adventurous crevasses. He retains something of the old horror of the desolate heights—

A desert peopled by the storms alone,  
Save when the eagle brings some hunter's  
bone,  
And the wolf tracks her there. How hideously,  
Its shapes are heaped around! rude, bare, and  
high,  
Ghastly, and scarred, and riven.—Is this the  
scene  
Where the old Earthquake-dæmon taught her  
young  
Ruin?

There is a trace of the same awe in Coleridge's deathless hymn to Mont Blanc—

On thy bald, awful head, O sovran Blanc,  
O dread and silent mount!

21

Nearly all the poets have been moved by the primitive sense of their awe-commanding power. Wordsworth never forgets the blackness, though he is, above all, the bard of mountain light and sweetness, of warbling birds and maiden's haycocks. The poet does not lose the blessed gift of wonder possessed by children and savages. And nothing in Nature can startle the mind like the sight of a mighty range of mountains. They recall primitive feelings of fear before the great unknown, they tower above the human form with a colossal imperturbability which withers our importance and confuses our standards of value. Victor Hugo never quite freed himself from the mediæval dread of the mountains or the mediæval speculation on their meaning. His letters to his wife from the Alps and Pyrenees record his impressions with a painstaking and detailed accuracy which does not forget the black-and-yellow spider performing somersaults on an imperceptible thread hung from one brier to another. The emotion after an hour on the Rigi-Kulm "is immense." "The tourist comes here to get a point of view; the thinker finds here an immense book in which each rock is a letter, each lake is a phrase, each village is an accent; from it arise, like a smoke, two thousand years of memories."

22

Here speaks the true panoramic man, the man whose mind attains to fulness of expression on mountain-tops from which the whole landscape of life may be contemplated. And yet he notes the "ominous configuration of Mount

Pilatus" and its terrible form, and writes of adjoining mountains as "these hump-backed, goitred giants crouching around me in the darkness." The Rigi appears as "a dark and monstrous perpendicular wall."

His mind is occupied with the presence of idiots in the Alps. He finds an explanation: "It is not granted to all intelligences to co-habit with such marvels and to keep from morning till evening without intoxication and without stupor, turning a visual radius of fifty leagues across the earth around a circumference of three hundred." On the Rigi his musings on the magnificence of the view are checked by the presence of a cretin. Behold the contrast! An idiot with a goitre and an enormous face, a blank stare, and a stupid laugh is sole participator with Victor Hugo in this "marvellous festival of the mountains."

23

"Oh! abysm!" he cries; "the Alps were the spectacle, the spectator was an idiot! I forgot myself in this frightful antithesis: man face to face with nature; Nature in her superbest aspect, man in his most miserable debasement. What could be the significance of this mysterious contrast? What was the sense of this irony in a solitude? Have I the right to believe that the landscape was designed for him—the cretin, and the irony for me—the chance visitor?"

The idiot and the mountain shared, no doubt, a supreme indifference to the commotion which their proximity had set up in the poet's mind. With his love of antithesis Hugo had seized the picture of the glories of the mountain wasting themselves before the gaze of the senseless idiot. Apart from geographical conditions and hygienic defects there is an interesting æsthetic problem connected with the presence of idiots in the mountains. It is not only the idiot who is indifferent to the beauties of the Alps; the sane and healthy peasant whose eyes wander over the glaciers and snow-fields as he rests for a few minutes from hoeing his potatoes is not moved by the sight to ecstatic delight.

24

I have many dear friends amongst peasants. They are richly endowed with common sense and kindness of heart; their brains can compete favourably with those of the folk of any other country. Their hard struggle with a rebellious soil has given them a quiet determination and tenacity of purpose which are the root of Alpine enterprise and resourcefulness. They possess character and independence in a high degree—mental reflexes of the peaks of freedom, ever before their eyes. But they, children of the mountain, born and bred amidst its beauties, are surprisingly insensitive to beauty.

I remember one exquisite sunset—one of those superlative sunsets that burn themselves into the consciousness with a joy akin to pain, and of which only a few are allotted to each human life. I stood watching the sinking sun throw a crimson net over the snow mountains as the shadow of night crept slowly up the hillside. The sky took on an opal light in which were merged and transcended all the colours of the day. Every pinnacle and rock was lit up as by a heavenly fire, the pines were outlined like black sentinels against the sky, guardians of that merciful green life from which we spring and to which we return. My old friend the goat-herd and daily messenger from the highest pastures stood beside me. "Beautiful, Pierre," I said, "and in this you have lived all your life."

25

"Yes," he said, slowly shifting the pipe from the left side of his mouth to the right; "the cheese is fat and good in the mountains, and the milk is not poisonous as it is in the plains, but it is hard work for the back to carry it down twice a day." He looked at me as if searching for better understanding. "But I will tell you something nice," he added, by way of stirring up my sluggish imagination; "the little brown cow has calved, and this autumn we are going to kill the old cow, and we shall have good meat all the winter."

Far be it from me to join in the thoughtless generalizations about the obtuseness of the Alpine peasant which have disfigured some of the literature of climbing. These climbers have shown infinitely greater obtuseness before Alpine realities than the peasants derided by them. True, a star may compete

in vain with a cheese in suggesting visions of joy, but our supercilious climbers forget that their admiration of nature's marvels is generally built up on a substratum of cheese—or the equivalent of cheese—plentifully supplied by the labour of others. There is another class of climbers who idealize the peasant and the guide, and who write of Alpine peasant-life as if it were nothing but a series of perilous ascents nobly undertaken for the advancement of humanity.

I can understand the indifference of the peasant to the visions around him. After a hard day's scything or woodcutting on slopes so steep that the resistance of one's hob-nailed boots seems like that of soft soap, I have felt profoundly healthy and ready to go to bed without listening to any lyrics on the Alps. And even the thought of Tennyson's "awful rose of dawn" would not have roused me before the labour of the next day.

But we—how proud I am of that "we"!—who have chosen hard labour on the mountain know something which the mere visitors (though they be members of many Alpine Clubs) know not. We have a sense of home which no other habitation can impart—a passionate love of the soil, a unity with the little patch that is our own, bringing joys undimmed by any descriptions of other-worldly possessions. Our trees may be wrecked by an avalanche, our garden plot may be obliterated by a land slip; the stone walls we build up in defiance of the snow are always pulled down by mountain sprites. Our agriculture is precarious, and every carrot is bought by the sweat of our brow. The struggle keeps pace with our love—there is a tenfold sweetness in the fruit we reap. And when fate compels us to leave our mountains we are pursued by restlessness. We know no peace, no home elsewhere. We do assume the airs of Victor Hugo's cretin when we are placed face to face with the riches of Cræsus or the splendours of Pharaoh.

We must reluctantly admit that the phenomenon of cold indifference to mountain scenery may occur without any corresponding degree of idiocy. In the *Playground of Europe*, Leslie Stephen told us that a man who preserves a stolid indifference in face of mountain beauty must be of the "essentially pachydermatous order." He commented at length on the peculiar temperament of those who have expressed dislike of his perfect playground—Chateaubriand, Johnson, Addison, Bishop Berkeley. Bishop Berkeley, who crossed Mont Cenis on New Year's Day 1714, complained that he was "put out of humour by the most horrible precipices." There is huge comfort to be drawn from Stephen's pages descriptive of the "simple-minded abhorrence of mountains," and from his categorical declaration that love of the sublime shapes of the Alps springs from "a delicate and cultivated taste." But we are puzzled by the presence outside the pale of some who cannot rightly be called "pachydermatous." I am turning over the pages of Sarah Bernhardt's autobiographical revelations. "I adore the sea and the plain," she writes, "but I neither care for mountains nor for forests. Mountains seem to crush me, and forests to stifle me." Strange that the high priestess of expression, the interpreter of every phase of human passion and sorrow, she who dies terribly twice a day, and mercilessly conducts us to the attenuated air and dizzy heights of intense emotion, should feel no kinship with the mountains. It may be that they are antagonistic to the fine arts of simulation and will brook no companionship of feeling that is not real. And her stage-worn heart is certainly not in alliance with Fiona Macleod's *Lonely Hunter*.

But my heart is a lonely hunter that hunts on  
A lonely hill.

We might assume that the traditional wildness of the great tragedienne would have found a chord of sympathy in the avalanche or in the fierce torrent breaking over the rocks. Rousseau's hysteria and wild assaults on the conventions of Society and literature have been traced to the mountains. Lord Morley emphasizes that Rousseau "required torrents, rocks, dark forests,



mountains, and precipices," and that no plains, however beautiful, ever seemed so in his eyes. There is naturally a complete divergence of opinion between lovers and haters of mountains as to their effect on the literary mind. We like to associate peaks of genius with peaks of granite. Ruskin found fault with Shakespeare's lack of impression from a more sublime country as shown by the sacrilegious lines—

Rush on his host, as doth the melted snow  
Upon the valleys whose low vassal seat  
The Alps doth spit, and void his rheum upon.

30 | There are anomalies in the capacity for æsthetic enjoyment of mountain scenery which exclude some minds which we should expect to find amongst the devotees and include others for whom we might look amongst the scoffers. Dickens was profoundly affected by the mountain-presence. His letters show the true rapture. Of the scenery of the St. Gothard he writes: "Oh God! what a beautiful country it is. How poor and shrunken, beside it, is Italy in its brightest aspect!" He sees "places of terrible grandeur unsurpassable, I should imagine, in the world." Going up the Col de Balme, he finds the wonders "above and beyond one's wildest expectations." He cannot imagine anything in nature "more stupendous or sublime." His impressions are so prodigious that he would rave were he to write about them. At the hospice of the Great St. Bernard he awakes, believing for a moment that he had "died in the night and passed into the unknown world." Tyndall's scientific ballast cannot keep him from soaring in a similar manner. His *Glaciers of the Alps* contains some highly strung sentences of delight. "Surely," he writes of sunset seen near the Jungfrau, "if beauty be an object of worship, these glorious mountains with rounded shoulders of the purest white, snow-crested, and star-gemmed, were well calculated to excite sentiments of adoration." His wealth of words increases with the splendour of the views in which he revels; he becomes a poet in prose, he calls up symbol and simile, he strains language to express the inexpressible. The sky of the mountain is "rosy violet," which blends with "the deep zenithal blue"; it wears "a strange and supernatural air"; he sees clear spaces of amber and ethereal green; the blue light in the cave of the glacier presents an aspect of "magical beauty." There is true worship of the idol in the following lines descriptive of sunrise on Mont Blanc:

31 | The mountain rose for a time cold and grand, with no apparent stain upon his snows. Suddenly the sunbeams struck his crown and converted it into a boss of gold. For some time it remained the only gilded summit in view, holding communion with the dawn, while all the others waited in silence. These, in the order of their heights, came afterwards, relaxing, as the sunbeams struck each in succession, into a blush and smile.

32 | Tyndall holds the mastership of polychromatic description of the beauties of the mountain; he makes us feel his own response to their call to the depths of æsthetic perception in the human soul. Words gush forth from him in a fervour of gratitude for the pleasures of the eye. He may measure and weigh, he may set out as an emissary of cold scientific investigation: he returns hot with admiration and raving of the marvels of God upon the hills. But even he reaches a point where the realization of the utter inadequacy of expression paralyses the desire to convey the emotion to others. "I was absolutely struck dumb by the extraordinary majesty of this scene," he writes of one evening, "and watched it silently till the red light faded from the highest summits."

Verestchagin astonished his wife by painting his studies of snow in the Himalayas at an altitude of 14,000 feet, tormented by hunger and thirst and supported by two coolies, who held him on each side. She had the pluck and the endurance to follow him on his long climbs, but being a less exalted mortal, her sense of fitness was unduly strained by the intensity of Verestchagin's devotion to clouds and mountain-tops. "His face is so frightfully swollen," she tells us, "that his eyes look merely like two wrinkles,

the sun scorches his head, his hand can scarcely hold the palette, and yet he insists on finishing his sketches. I cannot imagine," she reflects, "how Verestchagin could make such studies." There were, nevertheless, occasions when the inaction, following on intense æsthetic emotion, stayed Verestchagin's busy brush. One day, relates Madame Verestchagin, he went out to sketch the sunset:

He prepared his palette, but the sight was so beautiful that he waited in order to examine it better. Several thousand feet below us all was wrapped in a pure blue shadow; the summits of the peaks were resplendent in purple flames. Verestchagin waited and waited and would not begin his sketch. "By and by, by and by," said he; "I want to look at it still; it is splendid!" He continued to wait, he waited until the end of the evening—until the sun was set and the mountains were enveloped in dark shadows. Then he shut up his paint-box and returned home.

As I read these lines I find myself wondering how many paint-boxes have been shut up by the sight of the mountains. I know many have been opened, and, amongst these, not a few which might have served humanity better by remaining shut. But we may safely assume that despite the general tendency of mountain worshippers to attempt to paint—in colours strong and language divine—the effect on their minds, there are exceptional instances of noble and self-imposed dumbness. Not the dumbness which is practising the old device of—

Reculer pour mieux sauter,

but a genuine silence of humility before the mysteries of nature. We sigh in vain for a glimpse of these exceptional souls. They resist our best climbing qualifications and are as inaccessible as the mists above our highest tops. And we prefer, naturally, our talking companions, those who shrink not from the task of ready interpretation.

"The Alps form a book of nature as wide and mysterious as Life," says Frederic Harrison in his *Alpine Jubilee*, in one of those clear-cut and well-measured passages of mountain homage, which are balm to the tormented hearts of those who feel themselves afloat on the clouds of mystery. "To know, to feel, to understand the Alps is to know, to feel, to understand Humanity."

I am not at all sure this is true; it is probably entirely untrue. Humanity—in the abstract—is apt to suffer an enforced reduction in magnitude and importance when seen from Alpine heights. But it is one of those phrases which we hug instinctively as the bearers of food for hungry hearts. We do not want Leslie Stephen's reminder of metaphysical riddles, "Where does Mont Blanc end and where do I begin?" We do not want to be paralysed by philosophic doubt for the rest of our mortal lives on the hills. We prefer to be stirred to emotional life by those who are transported by love of beauty to the realms of unreason.

In the autobiography of Princess Hélène Racowitza—the tragically beloved of Ferdinand Lassalle—there is evidence of such transport. She has but reached one of the commonplaces of tourist ventures. From the Wengern Alp she watches the play of night and dawn on the Jungfrau:

Again and again the glory of God drew me to the window. In the immense stillness of the loneliness of the mountains, the thundering of the avalanches that crashed from time to time from the opposite heights was the only sound. It was as if one heard the breath of God, and in deepest reverence one's heart stood almost still.

She beholds the moon pale and the summit of the Jungfrau glitter in "a thousand prismatic colours" from the rising sun:

Once more I was shaken to the depths of my soul, thankful that I was allowed to witness this and to enjoy it thus. A great joy leapt up in my heart, which more surely than the most fervent prayer of thanks penetrated to the infinite goodness of the great Almighty.

The sincerity of the religious feeling is enhanced by its simplicity. The more

complex experiences of the true mystical nature retain the same intensity of devotional fervour. Anna Kingsford, whose interpretations of the inner meaning of Christianity place her in the foremost rank of modern mystics, was caught up to God by the beauty of the mountains. Her friend and biographer, Edward Maitland, describes their effect on one in whom a fiercely artistic soul did combat with a frail and suffering body. It was whilst near the mountains that she conceived her beautiful utterance on the Poet:

But the personality of the Poet is Divine: and being Divine, it hath no limits.

He is supreme and ubiquitous in consciousness: his heart beats in every Element.

The Pulses of all the infinite Deep of Heaven vibrate in his own: and responding to their strength and their plenitude, he feels more intensely than other men.

Not merely he sees and examines these Rocks and Trees: these variable Waters, and these glittering Peaks.

Not merely he hears this plaintive Wind, these rolling Peals:

But he is all these: and with them—nay, IN them—he rejoices and weeps, he shines and aspires, he sighs and thunders.

And when he sings, it is not he—the Man—whose Voice is heard: it is the voice of all the Manifold Nature herself.

In his Verse the Sunshine laughs; the Mountains give forth their sonorous Echoes; the swift Lightnings flash.

The great continual cadence of universal Life moves and becomes articulate in human language.

O Joy profound! O boundless Selfhood! O Godlike Personality!

All the Gold of the Sunset is thine; the Pillars of Chrysolite; and the purple Vault of Immensity!

Anna Kingsford did not consciously seek the mountains to find there the release of imprisoned powers of utterance. The mountains sought her by their beauty and called forth the true mystic's ecstasy of communion. Mystics of all times and all religions have found inspiration and strength of spirit on the hilltops; they have forsaken the haunts of men for the silence of the heights, preparing themselves by meditation and self-purification to receive the Beatific Vision. They have gone up alone in anguish and uncertainty, they have come down inspired bearers of transcendental tidings to men. These messengers of the spirit have known the joys of illumination and the secret of the strength of the hills.

Others have sought in agony and mortification of mind the vision which was denied them. For in chasing away the images of sin they forgot to make room for the images of beauty. With Simeon Stylites, they point to their barren sojourn on the hills:

Three winters that my soul might grow to thee,  
I lived up there on yonder mountain-side,  
My right leg chained into the crag, I lay  
Pent in a roofless close of ragged stones.

It is to the rarefied perception of beauty that we may trace the quickening of spirit which artists and poets experience on the mountains. Heine, going to the Alps with winter in his soul, "withered and dead," finds new hope and a new spring. The melodies of poetry return, he feels once again his valour as a soldier in the war of liberation of humanity.

The process of unburdening hearts has been continuous since we discovered the boundless capacity of the hills to hide our shame and discharge our thunder. Petrarch set the example on the top of Mont Ventoux when he deliberately recollected and wept over his past uncleanness and the carnal corruptions of his soul. I never tire of that dearly sentimental mixture of world-weariness and nature-study which Elisée Reclus called the *History of a Mountain*. "I was sad, downcast, weary of my life. Fate had dealt hardly with me: it had robbed me of all who were dear to me, had ruined my plans, frustrated all my hopes. People whom I called my friends had turned against me when they beheld me assailed by misfortune; all mankind with its

conflicting interests and its unrestrained passions appeared repulsive in my eyes." Thus he invites us to follow him towards the lofty blue peaks. In the course of his wanderings he finds Nature's peace and freedom, and as his love of the mountains expands, kind tolerance returns to his heart. He takes geological and meteorological notes, he studies men and beasts on the peaks, and never forgets to draw moralizing comparisons. The climb is to him the symbol of "the toilsome path of virtue," the difficult passes, the treacherous crevasses reminders of temptations to be overcome by a sanctified will.

40

I am afraid modern climbers show scant regard for Elisée Reclus' rules for moral exercises. Many are moved by an exuberance of physical energy which rejoices in battle with Nature. They love the struggle and the danger, the exercise and the excitement. They find health and good temper, jollity and good-fellowship, through their exertions. They glory shamelessly in useless scrambles which demand the sweat of their brow and the concentrated attention of their minds. They seek to emulate the chamois and the monkey in hanging on to rocks and insecure footholds. When they do not climb, they fill libraries with descriptions of their achievements, dull and unintelligible to the uninitiated, bloodstirring and excellent to the members of the brotherhood. They write in a jargon of their own of chimneys and buttresses and basins and ribs, of boulders and saddles and moraine-hopping. They become rampant at the thought of the stout, unworthy people who are now dragged to the tops by the help of rope-chains and railings. They sarcastically remark that they may have to abandon certain over-exploited peaks through the danger of falling sardine-tins. They issue directions for climbing calculated to chase away the poet from the snow-fields, as when Sir Martin Conway says that a certain glacier must be "struck at the right corner of its snout," and "its drainage stream flows from the left corner."

41

They do not hesitate to admit that they would continue to climb even if there were no views to be enjoyed from the tops. "I am free to confess," wrote A. F. Mummery, "that I would still climb, even though there were no scenery to look at." And Mrs. Aubrey Le Blond echoes this sentiment in a defiant challenge to their uncomprehending critics. "To further confound the enemy," she writes, "we do not hide the fact that were no view obtainable from the summit a true climber would still continue to climb."

Why do they climb? The motives are many—the result joy. Yes, joy, even in the providential escapes and the "bad five minutes," beloved by our naïve scribes of the ice-axe, in the perils and death which they court for the sake of adventure and exploration. Sir Martin Conway speaks of the systematic climber as the man for whom climbing takes the place of fishing and shooting. How depressingly banal! Yet Sir Martin Conway has written some of the finest tributes to the glories of the Alps, and has shown himself a master of artistic interpretation of their wealth of beauty. Whymper excels in matter-of-fact history of climbs, yet there is an undercurrent of reverence for the mysteries of Nature's beauty.

42

The expert cragsman climbs to attain acrobatic efficiency, and may aim at nothing higher than inspired legs. Mrs. Peck climbed to establish the equality of the sexes. Mr. and Mrs. Bullock Workman climbed in the Himalayas with strong determination to name a mountain Mount Bullock Workman. They did, and the mountain, which attains 19,450 feet, is none the worse. Climbers are exceedingly human in their love of getting to the top before fellow-climbers. Here they follow the ordinary rules for human conduct in commerce, politics, and literature. There have been some loud and unseemly quarrels as to honours and fame attendant on the first successful conquest of a desirable peak. It has been generally held that if you cannot get a mountain to yourself you can at any rate devise a new route. But I cannot bring myself to speak harshly of such failings. The utmost I will say is that it were better if such enthusiasm were tempered with a little humour.

43

Mark Twain saw through that deadly seriousness of the pure climber. He

saw the fatuity of mere peak-hunting. It impressed him strongly even on the Rigi-Kulm. "We climbed and climbed," he writes in *A Tramp Abroad*, "and we kept on climbing; we reached about forty summits: there was always another one just ahead."

But the pure climber is always a fountain of delight, even though he does not see himself as others see him. The pages of Conway, Mummery, Sir Claud Schuster, and Bruce abound in gems of nature-lore, ever fresh and ever alluring. As I search for more self-revelation in my books by mountain-lovers, I find myself observed through the window. It is only a cow on her way to the hollow tree into which the water courses out of the earth. But the cow brings me back to the strenuous Alpine life, and I find myself concluding, as I replace the books on their shelves, that I do not care why men climb so long as they climb in spirit and body.

44

## THE BORDERLAND

This evening the blind man came up the path from the village. I was sitting on a stump of pine listening to the merry peal of the bells of the little village church below. He carried a milk-can, and felt his way with a long staff, with which he tapped the stones in front of him. He hesitated for a moment as he passed me, as if vaguely conscious of a disturbing presence. We have been good friends, the blind man and I, and have had many a talk on this, our common path. But to-night I sat silent, wondering. For a message had reached me that a friend had been killed in battle. A man strong and active in body, intensely alive and sensitive in soul. One of those whom we can never think of as dead, so wholly do they belong to life.

45

The blind man stopped at a little distance. He chose a place where the trees have been cleared and the snow mountains spread themselves for the feast of the eyes of those who can see. He put his milk-can and his staff on the ground, and stood for a moment with head bowed as if crushed by his infirmity. Then he threw up his hands and raised his head, as though a sudden vision had come to him—his whole body tense and expectant, like that of a man who strains every nerve to catch a message from the hills across the valley. For a minute he remained still, as if receiving something in his hands borne by the silence. Then he picked up his staff and his can. He turned round and faced me for a moment before resuming his journey. There was a smile on his lips and a strange radiance in his sightless eyes, and I wished that I, too, might see what he had seen.

46

For the darkness with which we are afflicted lay heavily around me, and seemed greater even than the blindness of the eyes. The war has brought the mystery of death to our hearts with pitiless insistence. Every bullet that finds its mark kills more than the soldier who falls. Ties of love and friendship are shattered hour by hour and day by day, as the guns of war roar out their message of destruction. We are all partners in a gigantic Dance of Death such as Holbein never imagined. To him Death was the wily and insistent enemy of human activity and hope, a spy watching in the doorway for an opportunity to snap the thread of life. We have cajoled and magnified Death until he has outgrown all natural proportions; through centuries of war and preparation for war we have appealed to him to settle our national differences. We have outdone the earthquake and the cyclone in valid claims upon his power and presence; we have outwitted pestilence and famine in our efforts to hold his attention. We, of the twentieth century, have attained mastery in the art of killing. We kill by fire and bursting shell, we kill by mine and gas. We dive under the surface of the water to surprise our enemy, we fly in the air and sow fire and devastation upon the earth. We have chained science to our chariot of Death, we have made giant tools of killing which mow down

regiments of men at great distances. We send out fumes of poison which envelop groups of human beings, killing them gently, and emphasizing the triumph of art by leaving them in attitudes simulating life. We project shells so powerful that men disappear in the explosion, melted, disintegrated by its destructive force.

And when long-distance scientific methods of man-killing fall short of the passions of the fray or the exigencies of the fight, we return to the primitive ways of savages, and kill by dagger and knife, by bayonet and fist. Thus millions of men are slain in this war, which has achieved superiority over all other wars in history by the number of its dead and its gigantic destructiveness. And other millions of men and women are plunged into sorrow and mourning for the dead, and to them the meaning of life is hidden behind a veil of tears and blood.

There is an incongruity about death on the battlefield which assails the mind. The incongruity is there notwithstanding the probability that the soldier who faces the fire of the enemy will be killed. It defies the mathematical calculation of chances. It rises naturally as a protest against the sudden termination of life at its fullest. Death after a long illness, at the eventide of life, partakes of the order of falling leaves and autumnal oblivion. It may come softly as sleep when the day's work is done; it may come mercifully to end bodily pain and wretchedness. There are moments in every life when the ebb of physical force is so low that death seems but a step across the border—a change by which we desire to cure the weariness of thought. The soldier goes into battle charged with youth and life, buoyant with energy of muscle and nerve. Death seizes him at the noontide of life and leaves us blindly groping for other-worldly compensation.

The present war is being fought against a background of questions which cannot be suppressed by discipline or the mere fulfilment of patriotic duty. The old acceptance of the social order is passing away. The old acceptance of religious nescience is passing away; there is a new impatience to reach the foundation of things, a popular clamour for explanation of the riddles of life. Out of the decivilizing forces of war, its tumult and wreckage, there emerges a new quest for truth. Simple souls are troubled with a warlike desire for evidence of immortality. The parson's exhortations to live by faith and unreasoning acceptance of ecclesiastical doctrine fall on inattentive ears. "There is a shocking recrudescence of superstition and devil-worship," said a clergyman to me the other day; "people consult fraudulent mediums and fortune-tellers."

I listened to him and remembered an afternoon's visit to a bereaved mother. She is a charwoman endowed with the scientific mind. Her son had been killed by an exploding shell. Only a fragment or two had been necessary for the task. Jimmy had no chance. Courage and energy had never failed him. The spirit that dwelt within his thin and somewhat stunted body would have rejoiced in battle with a lion. But shells are no respecters of spirit. Jimmy had successfully fought poverty and ill-health; he had risen from a newspaper-boy's existence to the dizzy heights of a milkman's cart. His pale face with its prominent eyes and rich, chestnut forelock bore an expression of indomitable Cockney confidence in the ultimate decency of things. He had always been kind to his mother. "More like a girl than a boy," she said, "in the way he cared for his home and looked after me." And now Jimmy was dead: the message had come that he would not return. "And why is he dead," said the mother to me, "and where is he?" She was sitting in her kitchen, which bore its usual aspect of order and cleanliness. But her face looked as if some disordering power had passed over her. "I asked our curate to explain where Jimmy is," she continued, "and he told me that doubt is a sin, and that we shall meet again on the day of resurrection. And when I told him that I felt Jimmy quite close to me in this kitchen, a week after his death, and that I thought I heard his voice calling me, the curate said I ought not to think of

such things. Faith and hard work were the best cure for such fancies, he said."

"But do you know what I did?" she added in a whisper, intended to deceive the curate, "I went to one of those mediums that Mrs. Jones knows about. I paid a shilling, and we all sat in a ring, and the medium saw Jimmy and described him, just as he is in his uniform and cap, a little over the right ear, and the scar across his nose—you know, the scar from the fall down the front steps when he was nine—and all smiling, and showing the missing tooth. 'Jimmy wants you to know that he is happy, very happy,' she said, and then Jimmy came and spoke through the medium. 'Mother,' he said to me, 'I want you to give my pipe with the silver band to Charlie, and don't make no bones about it.' Then I knew it was Jimmy, for Jimmy always used to say 'don't make no bones about it.' And now I feel he is alive somewhere, and I shall go again to the medium and find out more."

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I thought of this when the clergyman complained of the prevalence of superstition and visits to mediums. I suggested that he should investigate the subject of spiritualism and the reasons for its appeal to sorrow-stricken relatives and friends of soldiers. The suggestion was indignantly rejected. Religion was to him a theory based on revelation vouchsafed thousands of years ago; it was now a system of stereotyped belief and conduct, strangely removed from the perplexities and anguish of the individual soul. His academic mind recoiled from the grotesque and trivial messages associated with séances and the performances of professional psychics.

We are wont to contemplate immortality in much the same manner as we contemplate the moon. It is something remote and incapable of active interference in our daily life and tasks. It sheds a pale and pleasant light on our earthly pilgrimage, and we in our turn render homage to the mellow beauty which it imparts to our poetic imagination. Only children cry for the moon. We know it is unattainable.

52

The rejection of the crude theories of spiritualism is not altogether the result of wilful blindness. In our innermost minds, in the region beyond the grasp of the brain and its ready generalizations, we hunger for inexpressible reality, for life beyond the stars. We have eaten of the tree of sense-knowledge: we have seen, heard, felt, tasted. We want a reality above the traffic and deception of the senses. Vaguely, but insistently we feel the call to the life of the spirit, and when its definition eludes us, we prefer silence and faith. It is then that the familiar prattle of the séance-room offends us. We sought freedom, light, absolution from the trammels of personality, and we are told that the dead appear in bodies and clothes, that they toil and fret, that they inhabit houses and cities. Our plains Elysian suffer an invasion of lawyers and physicians, of merchants and moneylenders. The weariness of repetition pursues us.

And yet we may be more completely the victims of illusion than our vendor of spiritualistic revelation. We who cherish the belief in immortality forget that death can be naught but the shedding of a form. The substance is unchanged. The fabric of the mind is woven day by day by impressions and ideas, by experience and action. Nobody questions the commonplace phenomena of the shaping of individuality and character. Habits, occupation, tastes, and desires mould a distinct personality out of the common clay. The experience of death cannot dissolve the personality. The death-process can neither whitewash a man's sin nor exalt him beyond his virtue.

53

And thus it is that he who dearly loved a joke may joke still, and he who thought he was collecting fine old pictures may still indulge his taste. Delusions! Not impossible or even unlikely. Kant demonstrated once for all our complete enslavement by phenomena and our inability to approach things-in-themselves. Spiritualistic interpretation of post-mortem conditions offers no exception. Imagination continues to master our souls. Spiritualism offends us by offering bread-and-butter when we expect moonshine.

We are loath to part with the belief that death transforms the character by one great stroke of spiritual lightning. Vanity, envy, meanness, greed, the foibles and frailties of human nature, repel us when we imagine their persistence in others after death. We infinitely prefer the thought that they should be purged and radiant with spiritual effulgence. We are not so sure about ourselves, for the objective classification of the qualities which go to form our own character is a difficult achievement. And the idea of dispensing with essential parts of our mental equipment does not commend itself to us. There is a point in all our philosophy where speculation seeks the natural repose of the unknowable. It is quickly reached when we attempt to probe the mystery of selfhood.

The plain question whether the dead can communicate with the living persists in spite of the imperfections of the answer. The war has made it paramount, and only second in importance to the crucial query: Do they live? There is a clamour for evidence, signs, messages, testimony. The human heart cries out for comfort. "Yesterday he breathed the same air, felt and thought as I do. To-day he lies dead, his body shattered, his hopes wrecked, his happy laughter silent. Does he know? Does he feel and remember? Is there an eternal gulf of silence between us?"

O! for the touch of a vanished hand,  
And the sound of a voice that is still.

The Church tries vainly to ban the new inquisitiveness. The intercourse with familiar spirits is condemned as a theological offence, a vainglorious and futile storming of the citadel of God. The secret of the tomb must be preserved, though the masses of Christendom have ceased to believe in the long and mouldering sleep of the centuries before the summons to the Judgment. They are no longer scorched by the threat of eternal fire, nor soothed by the hope of clouds and harps. The love that is in them would not tolerate the infliction of an eternity of torture on a fellow-soul, and their conception of the love of God cannot place Him below the promptings of human mercy. The reason that is in them is not attracted by the promise of a heaven of rosy inaction and strifeless rest. The contrast of heaven and hell, so powerful a corrective of human waywardness in mediæval times, fails to impress the modern mind. The windows of experience and knowledge have been opened too widely, the powers and manifold possibilities of the earth lie open and tempt to the search for a super-mundane world, not poorer and more complex, but richer and more lavish in creative force.

The law supports the opposition of the Church and frowns on the practice of mediumship and clairvoyance. The law denies the possibility of spirit intercourse and forbids the exercise of supernormal faculties in exploring the untrodden realms of the future. Prosecutions are instituted under the old Witchcraft and Vagrancy Acts, and psychic practitioners are fined or sent to prison in the hope of stemming the tide of inquiry. The law and the spirit were ever at variance. But it is difficult to understand why those who mourn, and who ask questions, should be deprived of the comfort which they may find through visits to professional mediums. The risk of deception and false pretences is there, it is true, but that risk exists everywhere. There are lawyers, politicians, and physicians who tell "fortunes" and practise "witchcraft" of their own brand, decidedly more harmful and disruptive than the visions of the unlettered clairvoyant.

The magistrate, who sends a clairvoyant to prison because he is convinced that all claims to psychic gifts and to communion with discarnate spirits are fraudulent, is not troubled by his ignorance, and the evidence of psychic research is not acceptable in his court. He typifies the perpetual official, ever ready to suppress new and evolutionary thought. After all, psychic science fares no worse than the physical sciences in the judgment of respectable mediocrity. The progress of science in the nineteenth century was one long



conquest of territory in the land of the impossible. Inventors and inventions have met with incredulity and mockery. Railways, steamships, aeroplanes, telegraphy, telephony and cinematographs have all emerged from the region of "impossibilities." Röntgen-rays and radium have descended from the sphere of miracles.

58

Experience should endow us with cautiousness in proclaiming impossibilities of the future. The study of psychic science has imposed no greater strain on my reason than the attempt to explain the mysteries of biology and astronomy. Observation and classification do not necessarily imply elucidation. The miracle of the foetus taking human shape and soul, or of the oak rising out of the acorn and the brown earth is to me as baffling as the materialization of a spirit. The marvels of the cell-life and the daily chemistry which maintain the body charm my attention as much as the mysterious clouds of light with which spirits are wont to signalize their presence in the séance-room. I have sat for hours on a summer night by the Mediterranean watching the phosphorescent waves throw a luminous spray over the shore, and meditating on the inexhaustible fertility of the sea. And I have watched with the same intense wonder the phenomena of the soul illuminated by the *daimon* of inner vision and the infinite manifestations of the power of spirit over matter. From the point of view of science there is no clearly defined frontier between the natural and the supernatural, the commonplace and the miraculous. All is soil for the plough, all defies our designs for complete explanation. From the point of view of religious emotion, there is the greatest possible difference between the sciences of psychic force and those that seek to probe the mysteries of the physical world. The question of the immortality of the human soul is infinitely more engrossing than that of the formation of the skull of neolithic man. The strictly evidential demonstration of communion between the living and the dead might be almost negligible in quantity, and yet the importance of one rap from the world of discarnate spirits, scientifically demonstrated, would outweigh tomes of theories in physics.

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True, those who live in the spirit need no demonstrations provided by scientific investigators of psychic problems. The mystic consciousness with its intuition of immortality, its sensitiveness to the vibration of life on all planes and in all forms *knows*, and in knowledge transcends alike the boundaries of religionists and scientists. The mystic may smile at the labour expended during the last fifty years on establishing a strictly evidential basis for the study of transcendental facts. He has conquered the inherited blindness of our race, and sees spirit not as a supernatural demonstration, vouchsafed now and then to doubting humanity, but as the living Presence of which he is joyously a part. He does not fall into the common error of forgetting that we are spirits sheathed in flesh, but bearing within ourselves the power over matter which is destined to achieve the miraculous. He can dispense with a medium, being himself a fountain of light, and experiencing the wondrous self-illumination of which Thomas Treherne sang—

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O Joy! O wonder and delight!  
O sacred mystery!  
My soul a spirit infinite!  
An image of the Deity!  
A pure substantial light!  
That being greatest which doth nothing seem!

O wondrous Self! O sphere of light,  
O sphere of joy most fair;  
O act, O power infinite;  
O subtile and unbounded air!  
O living orb of sight!  
Thou which within me art, yet me! Thou eye  
And temple of His whole infinity!

But the spiritual raptures of the mystics of all ages have not moved souls

struggling in the outer darkness for tangible proofs of immortality. To them the application of the methods approved by reason and tested by scientific application will ever be welcome. They know that the mind of man has wrested secret after secret from the earth by observation, by experiment, by deduction. They know that the great generalizations of science—the theories of the indestructibility of matter, of gravitation, of the conservation of energy—are but counters of mind exchanged in default of elusive realities. They know that the pressure of research has reduced many of the lesser generalizations and theories to a fluid and amorphous state. “Immutable” laws have been turned into faulty conclusions, hastily drawn and readily abandoned before the advance of new facts. The fixity of the elements in chemistry, the undulatory movement of light, the stability of the planetary orbits, the indestructibility of the atom, are all abstractions which have been subjected to the reforming processes of new thought.

Progress in physics has been marked by bold hypotheses dealing with imponderable forces, and by experiments disclosing hidden properties of matter. The hypothetical ether has been as fruitful in the liberation of thought as the demonstration of the existence of the X-rays.

The application of methods of scientific accuracy to the physical phenomena of spiritualism involves no revolution in mental processes or reversal of the laws of logic. The publication of the results of the classical experiments in materialization undertaken in 1874 by Sir William Crookes with the medium Florence Cooke caused incredulous amazement, for the simple reason that the custodians of science had not applied themselves to the lessons afforded by the continuous shifting of their frontiers. Crookes' report that Katie King, the spirit who took material form during the séances, was a perfect, though mysterious replica of the natural-born human being, roused no general scientific interest. He asserted that Katie was physiologically complete. That she walked, talked, expressed intelligence and feeling, that she had a regularly beating heart and sound lungs. He further pointed out that the personality of Katie in appearance and character differed considerably from that of the medium, and that it was impossible to regard the materialized form as but a phantasm of the living. A stupendous discovery or a pitiful figment of a lunatic brain! But no flash of lightning rent the halls of learning; Sir William Crookes' researches into radiant matter could safely be accepted as workable intellectual ground, but not his researches into spiritual dynamics.

And yet there was no unorthodoxy in his methods of research; he imposed strict conditions of experimental control. There is a strange reluctance in accepting the necessity for “mediums” in psychic manifestations. If these things are possible, we are told, why not here, now, anywhere, in broad daylight? Why mystifying circles, cabinets, and subdued light? Our scoffers forget that scientific investigation always requires a medium and method. The need of the telescope and the microscope is not questioned, but the thought of the planchette evokes ridicule. The practical success of wireless telegraphy depends on the use of an adequate medium for the transmission of electricity. The most meagre training suffices to prevent the declaration that if wireless messages cannot be sent without apparatus they cannot be sent at all.

Notwithstanding the indifference of the majority of scientists, the problems of spirit intercourse have proved sufficiently attractive to stimulate a vast amount of experimentation and theorizing. The study of mediumship has necessarily become the study of consciousness and the occult powers of the human mind. In the centre a handful of fearless scientists: Crookes, Wallace, Richet, Flammarion, Morselli, Baraduc, Myers, Lombroso, Lodge, and Barrett; in the inner circle a number of academic investigators, disdaining alike the premature proclamation of phenomenal results and the obstinate denial of facts; in the outer circle an ever-growing mass of souls clamouring for the crumbs of evidence, hungry for something personal and soul-warming in our dealings with the Divine dispensation.

The annals of psychic science—in different tongues and of different continents—are largely devoted to the investigation of trance, clairvoyance, clairaudience, telepathy, hypnotism, dreams, premonitions, automatic writing, visions, and messages from the dying, multiple personality, and all the phenomena associated with the subconscious self. Many students have dispensed with the spirit hypothesis as an unnecessary and embarrassing complication in a subject already overburdened with difficulties. Spirit messages are to them examples of the activity of the subliminal self, and a medium is a person gifted—or cursed—with extraordinary subconscious force and lucidity. Materializations, they argue, are produced through the effluvia of the living and controlled by the subliminal forces of the participators in the séance. Spirits are nothing but thought-forms. The painstaking investigation recorded in the *Proceedings* and *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* has to a great extent been carried on by inquirers unencumbered by any bias towards “spookery.” But the theories in elaboration of psycho-pathological vagaries and dissociation of personality which have been substituted for the spirit hypothesis certainly do not err on the side of intelligible explication. They have but deepened the mystery and show the vista of new and unexplored paths in psychic science.

Others, again, who are not unwilling to believe that the phenomena are produced by the action of intelligences other than that of the medium, abandon further study because of the meagreness of the intellectual results. They have waited on the visitors from another world, notebook in hand, plying them with careful questions intended to increase our modest store of knowledge. The replies were unsatisfactory, commonplace, sometimes ludicrous. Attempts to write a passable textbook on life in the spirit world have failed lamentably. The indignation of the sorely disappointed scientist was voiced by the late Professor Hugo Münsterberg, of Harvard, in his *Psychology of Life*:

Thousands and thousands of spirits have appeared; the ghosts of the greatest men have said their say, and yet the substance of it has always been the absurdest silliness. Not one inspiring thought has yet been transmitted by this mystical way; only the most vulgar trivialities. It has never helped to find the truth; it has never brought forth anything but nervous fear and superstition.

His denunciation embraces the whole subject of spiritualistic evidence and ends in utter pessimism—

Our belief in immortality must rest on the gossip which departed spirits utter in dark rooms through the mouths of hypnotized business mediums, and our deepest personality comes to light when we scribble disconnected phrases in automatic writing. Is life then really still worth living?

I have every sympathy with the complaint. But our psychologist forgot that life is largely made up of trivialities, and that the spirits of the dead, if they really wish to make themselves known to us, can do so with greater certainty of being recognized by reminding us of events and objects with which they are associated in our memory than by presenting us with a corrected version of the nebular theory. The average medium and the average gathering of inquirers are not distinguished by any great intellectual achievement. The general educational level may be low and the total capacity to sift and weigh evidence may fall short of that of an undergraduates' debating society. Yet the evidence produced may not only be entirely soul-satisfying to the participants, but perfectly acceptable to a critic contented with the average quality of evidence current in a court of law. It may even be true that the evidential value rises with the number of trivialities recorded.

And “the truth” which Professor Münsterberg sought in vain is demonstrated to others through the same trivial evidence, as is shown by the verdict of Alfred Russel Wallace:

Spiritualism demonstrates by direct evidence, as conclusive as the nature of the case admits, that the so-called dead are still alive; that our

friends are often with us, though unseen, and give direct proof of a future life—proof which so many crave, but for want of which so many live and die in anxious doubt. How valuable the certainty to be gained from spiritual communications! A clergyman, a friend of mine, who witnessed the phenomena, and who before was in a state of the greatest depression, caused by the death of his son, said to me, "I am now full of confidence and cheerfulness. I am a changed man."

It is not unnatural that the answers given to those who ask for admittance to the closed door of the mysteries of the human soul should be pitched in the same key as the inquiry. Disappointment is not uncommon. I have taken part in séances of every kind, with cautious investigators devoid of all spiritualistic bias, with unsophisticated believers in a supernatural source of all psychic phenomena, with scoffers convinced that every medium is an impostor, and that nothing but a little common sense is needed for the exposure. The results have been largely dependent on the mentality of the investigators. Failure to understand this is responsible for much of the disappointment and contempt with which otherwise intelligent critics have dismissed the subject. The accumulated thought-power, the collective mind of those who participate, profoundly influence the medium and the quality of the communications received. One stubborn soul may wreck the meeting. I remember an evening at the house of Mr. W. T. Stead. There had been a series of highly successful demonstrations of "spirit voices," distinctly audible and perfectly intelligible. A well-known minister of the Church visible joined the circle—a man clothed in all the outward signs of spirituality, uniting clerical decorum with an emotional fervour in preaching which had made him a popular favourite. Though feeling has now and then led him into unconventional paths of theological thought, fate has surely marked him for the adornment of a bishopric. He came to study the alleged powers of the medium. He doubted everything and everybody. The easy faith and unquestioning acceptance of miraculous events of which he was not ashamed whilst in the pulpit had now been exchanged for vigilant suspicion and impatient analysis. He plied the medium with questions, bludgeoned her with requests for evidence that she was not deluded or deluding. He turned himself into cross-examining counsel, proud of his discrimination and his immunity against the insidious appeal of the supernatural. He succeeded. The medium was confounded, she lost her power; the phenomena did not occur. The atmosphere was chilled. Some of us felt we would rather have been visited by the village blacksmith than by this priestly exponent of sweet-faced materialism.

I do not deny that I have often been struck with the intellectual poverty of messages from the spirit world. They are often silly, and not seldom untruthful. The silliness and the untruthfulness are faithful reflections of common human failings, and only show that heavenly wisdom is as unattainable through the average spiritualistic channels as it is in the Houses of Parliament or the courts of law.

I can imagine a radiant and purely spiritual being attempting to convey a true description of the state of spiritual bliss to a circle of men and women representative of cultured thought, and practical efficiency in the affairs of the world. Let the circle include a few university professors, some successful men of business, a couple of judges, a sprinkling of journalists, an archdeacon or two, and some authors of repute. Let them all be actuated by a strong desire to obtain reliable information and to give a fair and unprejudiced hearing to the visitor.

The visitor is necessarily hampered by the necessity for a medium. It may be that the senior judge is gifted with psychic powers and that the method of communication chosen is that of trance.

The learned brain-cells would transmit the message up to a certain point, but when an effort was made to depict unfathomed depths and heights of transcendental experience, the judicial mind would rebel. The sense of logic would be strained. The conception of the possible would be violated. A fearful

consciousness of being guilty of uttering lies would persist, in spite of efforts to subdue reason. Language would break in the attempt to find words for the inexpressible, the message would be blurred and incoherent. The judge might pull himself together, feeling that the turbulent thought-waves of contending counsel form a much safer ground on which to pronounce truth than the fourth-dimensional hurricane with which he had just battled. And the audience might turn with relief to the thought of dinner outside Bedlam.

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By some wild flights of imagination we may picture another kind of circle. Let a poet be the medium; Swedenborg, Dante, Blake, Socrates, Jacob Böhme, Tasso, Milton, Eckart, Ruysbroek, St. Teresa, Joan of Arc, Emerson, Shelley, and a few more visionaries, and dreamers be of the circle. Let our Radiant Being try again. The vibrations of the combined psychic force would respond more readily to the world-strangeness of the visitor. There would be fewer mental obstacles raised by the sense of the impossible. The restraints of logic would be more easily overcome. The avenues of supersensual impressions would be open. The medium would transmit the message to a point far beyond that possible to our psychic judge, and the audience would encourage him by their readiness to grasp the revelations made. The language of mysticism, philosophy, and poetry would be strained to its utmost capacity. Then a sense of incompleteness, of deficiency, of hopeless relativity would overcome the audience. The medium had exerted every spiritual faculty to receive the truth. But the visitor could not convey celestial realities to terrene minds.

73

Every true artist in words, or colour, or sound is always haunted by the inexpressible—by spiritual impotence to overcome the laws of imprisonment in the flesh. He clutches at symbol and suggestion, at parable and fable, conscious of the truth that the unreal is the most real.

The goats have gathered round me as I sit musing in the gloaming. The leading goat is a handsome animal, generally respected and feared by the rest of the herd. He has excellent knowledge, inherited and acquired, of the uses of mountains, and his venerable beard adorns a head of undisputed male ascendancy in the tribe. I bear him a grudge. He is in the habit of eating my sapling pines, carefully planted by me and carelessly nipped in the bud by him. I have expostulated with him in a variety of ways—some gentle, others forceful, but he is incorrigible. He will not understand that my young pines are beautiful, and that they are expected to grow into fine trees. He has no sense of beauty, of symmetry, of fitness. He is only a beast. He has no soul—I pause, remembering the ineffectual attempts of my Radiant Being to inspire human souls with a greater vision. Are we not all goats before the gaze of more finely organized creatures?

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The evolutionist need not be disheartened by the thought. Nature is unexhausted. Desire and experience are ever creating new forms, new organs. A child's book of beasts will supply the requisite suggestion: the neck of the giraffe, the stripes of the tiger, the tail of the beaver may, without offence, provide analogies for the faith in organic human perfectibility. The processes of natural selection and variation cannot have been brought to a standstill; they must be at work now and may yet—should surroundings and necessity create the demand—halve the neck of the giraffe, give snow-white lamb's clothing to the tiger, and turn the rudder of the beaver into the prehensile tail of the monkey. There is no biological completion, no finitude. It is only a matter of time—sufficient time—and our bodies may become as strangely interesting to posterity as are to us the dinosaurs and mammoths of the remote past.

75

Mind is not arrested by formal obstacles. It builds, destroys, and rebuilds. It may take a million years to fashion a useful organ. Slowness is no deterrent. The powers that shaped the genius of Michelangelo and Shakespeare out of the rude brain of savage man needed time, but the achievement was worthy of the labour. To-day there are signs and portents that psychic faculties once possessed by the very few are in process of development in the many, that

new senses are awakened which will find contact with realities hitherto unperceived. The imperfections of mediumship and the remoteness of a psychic super-humanity, godlike in wisdom and ethereal in constitution, do not conceal the trend of mental evolution. The medium is often a strange blend of spiritual and carnal tendencies, of knowledge and ignorance, of delicate perception and denseness. Those who expect saintliness as the first attribute of psychic advancement will certainly be disillusioned. These gifts and graces may appear, not only without any corresponding degree of culture and learning, but associated with a certain vulgarity of thought and conduct. The psychic is essentially impressionable, liable to mental contagion, easily stirred by suggestion. The tendency to instability, to emotional excess, is part of this receptivity which culminates in the state of being "controlled." An untrained psychic who is mastered by his impressions, instead of being their master, may easily be induced to tell lies and give false messages by a visitor who is determined to discover fraud. The same psychic may rise to unaccustomed levels of spiritual clear-sight in the presence of a visitor who demands the truth only.

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The ladder of psychic development is long and arduous to mount. The number of the climbers steadily diminishes as the top is reached. Here, as elsewhere, there is a common crowd, content with the steps nearest the earth, in morals a faithful reflection of average humanity. They are neither better nor worse, they are merely different. They are the masons of the mind, a race of builders, addicted to a workmanship of their own.

To a discerning psychologist they are profoundly interesting, heralds of a new race and a new age; to an unsophisticated alienist they are merely insane, dangerous victims of sick brains. The whole fabric of evidence relating to lunacy would be broken up by the admission that these strange people who fall into trance and speak unknown tongues or convey messages from the dead are sane. Current theories of psycho-pathology would be hopelessly disturbed by the admission that there may be a super-sanity in which clairvoyance and clairaudience are normal and healthy manifestations of life. A person who professes to be an exponent of psychometry, who recalls circumstances and events from the "aura" of inanimate objects, such as a letter or a glove, is naturally classed with the insane. Hallucinations *en masse* are proffered as explanation of the physical phenomena which take place. Thus only can orthodox psychiatry remain unperturbed when heavy objects are lifted without any apparent cause, when unearthly sounds and voices are produced, when human forms take shape, are seen, and disappear.

77

The study of psychic faculties is above all a study of consciousness. Maeterlinck speaks of "the gravest problem that can thrill mankind, the knowledge of the future." The knowledge of the present, of the hidden powers and graces within our souls, is even more thrilling. I can imagine no science of greater importance, no investigation more worthy of devotion. The profundity of the problems is but an incitement. We have not hesitated to tabulate the stars, to weave precious conjectures as to their courses and destinies. Is the human soul more remote and inscrutable? We are assured that it has five windows and no more, that it is useless to look for others. But when an increasing number of explorers in the house of life tell us that there are six or seven or more, we may at any rate listen and follow their directions. Obscurantism is revelling in proclaiming prohibited areas of investigation.

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I recognize that the problem is complicated by the mixture of truth and falsehood, of genuine psychic powers and counterfeit practices. There are impostors and parasites who by dint of glib tongues and nimble wit deceive the foolish and the credulous. Browning's Sludge is not entirely extinct. Honest workers who turn their gifts to professional uses and who depend on the patronage of the public are subject to peculiar temptations. They are visited by the worldly and the covetous, they are exploited by sensation-mongers and fraud-hunters, they are subjected to conditions entirely inimical

to spiritual poise and lucidity. Some resort to fraud. The report that the medium failed to satisfy the client is apt to interfere with business, and failure is, therefore, shunned. But the law does not trouble to distinguish between the honest and the dishonest person who claims psychic gifts. From the legal point of view it is all pretence. It is imperatively necessary that genuine psychic gifts should be protected from the depredations of frivolity as well as from the interference of an obsolete law. We have some idea of protecting great and uncommon gifts in music, mathematics, and poetry, but we leave psychic gifts without help or training. An institute for the study of Psychic Science in all its branches, with facilities for training and assisting individual gifts, would remove some of the worst features of the present system. A genuine psychic should be the holder of some form of certificate or licence entitling him to use his gifts for the benefit of others.

Of course, the subject bristles with difficulties, but I do not see that they are more insuperable than those which presented themselves when first the idea of registering and licensing the medical and legal professions presented itself. And those who are indignant at the thought of the clairvoyant charging a fee may profitably reflect on the general assumption that the labourer is worthy of his hire. The deans and bishops who discourse so eloquently on the sins of the necromancers are not, I believe, renouncing the material benefits and emoluments of their priestly calling.

I do not look to visits to professional mediums for initiation into the higher mysteries of the human spirit. They may show the casket—precious as an indication of the contents, but of little value to those who are bent on finding the jewel within. And I agree that no advanced soul is “controlled” by a discarnate spirit, but rises through aspiration and self-restraint to union with higher intelligences. I can see no light or love in the attitude of those professors of Christianity who denounce all spiritualistic tendencies as anti-Christian. It seems to me that the whole Christian faith is spiritualistic in the widest sense of the word. The Old and the New Testaments are permeated with the belief in the reality of communication between the living and the dead. The injunction in the Old Testament against sorcerers and wizards was intended to check tendencies to unreasonable and dangerous superstition.

Moses may have had excellent reasons for forbidding occult practices amongst the Jews. Saul, who had put away those that had familiar spirits and the wizards out of the land, was not unlike some modern adversaries of spiritualism when in the day of his trouble and fear he consulted the medium of Endor. The accepted prophets of Israel were, after all, typical of mediumship. “And the Spirit of the Lord will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man.” They practised bold fortune-telling in matters large and small, national and cosmic. To-day they would surely be imprisoned as rogues and vagabonds under the Vagrancy Act. The New Testament contains no direct prohibition of the use of psychic powers and many stories of dreams, visions, and premonitions.

“Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit,” wrote St. Paul in the First Epistle to the Corinthians. “For to one is given, by the Spirit, the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge, by the same Spirit.... To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues.... And God hath set some in the Church; first, apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.” The praises of charity and prophecy are sung by the Apostle—a strange combination in harmony to those who now seek to separate the Christian faith from its supernatural origins. Christianity exhorts us not to believe every spirit, but to “try the spirits whether they are of God,” whilst the ecclesiastic bids us chase away the spirits, which he assumes to be of Satan.

The dull materialism which smothers all signs of independent spiritual

experience is the negation of all the forces which animated the Master. The earthly life of Christ, with its supernatural manifestations, its miracles, and its wonders, was the supreme demonstration of the spiritualistic conception of the power of transcending matter. The appearance of Moses and Elias on the Mount of Transfiguration, whether regarded as a vision or as a materialization, was of the order of the phenomena which are now banned as anti-Christian.

No; those who, having wandered in the darkness of death and blindness, find a ray of light within their own being need not fear the judgment of the Mediator. Here in the freedom of the mountains I feel something of the inscrutable certainty, the joy of a secret conviction, that wisdom waits on our tortuous paths in the Borderland.

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84

## REFORMERS

Of all generalizations—false and semi-false—the one dividing human beings into those who are content with the world as it is and those who wish to reform it is the most comforting to me. No division of sheep and goats was ever more blatantly simple. Some are born dull-witted, conservative, insensitive, unimaginative—they cling passive to the old planet, content to be whirled round in the purposeless dance of the heavenly bodies. Others are chronic sufferers from divine discontent—they open their eyes with critical intent, they are always conscious of the oblique, the unrighteous, the worthless in their surroundings. They have a sense of power, a will to change things. To them the world is a lump of dough, to be shaped and trimmed into good, serviceable bread.

I know the division is unreal and that reformatory ardour in one direction is not seldom combined with flint-hearted indifference in another. But the proposition is good and sufficient for everyday purposes, and acts as an admirable stimulus in the Camp of the Challengers.

85

Who can deny that reformers are more interesting than preservers? They vibrate with life and creative energy, they defy impossibilities, they carry enthusiasm aloft on their banners of assault on the existing order of things. Our preservers seem tame and stale indeed. They hobble about the borders of the well-cultivated garden of custom and propriety, they find admirable shelter against the fierce winds of revolt in the offices of bureaucracy. Officialdom is their divinity and respectability their key to life. They may be necessary—as buffers—but they depress us by their dulness.

Reformers can be dull too, but they are redeemed by the homage which they pay to spiritual adventures. They are narrow-minded, but their narrow-mindedness is relieved by intensity of purpose. They are not seldom aggressive, argumentative, unpleasant, but they refresh the dry world by being thoroughly alive. It seems, indeed, as if life were only made tolerable through the ferment of the desire to reform. Even the most stagnant pools of the human soul are sometimes stirred by the breeze of change. We all hope, we all look forward, we all grope for a future which will be better than the present. In some the hope is firmly rooted to earth and man-made conventions, in others it soars to other-worldly perfection.

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The world teems with causes and movements that rouse the imagination and press human lives into the service of the future. The genesis and development of causes show similar features wherever and whenever they appear. A soul is astir with an idea, a resentment, a call for change. Others heed the message, respond to the cry for action, feel that this idea, this one idea, is the most important in the world. Societies and leagues are formed, opposition is encountered, and the leader becomes sanctified through abuse and resentment. The idea is embraced by hundreds and thousands; it becomes



a doctrine, a creed, a mental atmosphere in which men live and have their being. Fierce battles take place between the adherents of the idea and the opponents. Blind prejudice and hatred are encountered. Martyrs are made. The crusade is hallowed by suffering and sacrifice. It becomes an impelling spiritual necessity, an expression of religion. Gradually the forces of the opposition are weakened. Concessions and compromises are offered. There are signs of the contagiousness of the idea even in the house of the adversaries. The triumph comes with time, and the turbulent waves of controversy recede into gentle ripples of approval. And for many a cause for which men have suffered and died, posterity has but a yawn. "Just think of it—all that fuss and all that turmoil over something so obvious."

Seen superficially, this is a fairly accurate account of the fate of movements for the reform of some glaring injustice, some hoary cruelty of the past. But is it true? Is the world slowly but surely getting better—are the monsters of ignorance and tyranny slain one by one by our great reformers and laid to rest for ever in a grave of ignominy? We accept the axiom that slavery has been abolished. Of all causes that commanded devotion, struggle, persistency, the anti-slavery movement stands forth as a moral protest of supreme import. Wilberforce and Lincoln, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and Clarkson fought for a principle which may well be regarded as the very soul of civilization. The Civil War brought the ideals of human rights and equality into bloody conflict with the forces of oppression and commercial exploitation. The new consciousness of human fellowship made white men lay down their lives for the freedom of black men. A worthy cause, a sublime offering, a task to which we would like to say "Done, done, once and for all time!" But is it done? Slavery is not only inherent in every savage and barbaric race, it is not only paramount in the mind of the Arab trader. Once the social bulwark of the ancient civilizations of Babylon, Egypt, and India, of Greece and Rome, it persisted in Europe throughout the Middle Ages, and survived as serfdom of one kind or another through centuries of advancing culture. The desire for power over fellow-beings, for opportunities to control their lives and exploit their labour, is apparently irradicable. Slavery is still amongst us in a hundred forms and under new names. All military conquest involves the ancient practices of serfdom. The conquered nations become slaves of the invader; by obedience they live, by disobedience they die. The persistence of slavery seems, then, to be a demonstration of the unchangeability of human nature and of the ultimate hopelessness of idealist causes. In every reform accomplished the practical application is local, transitory, dependent on racial and geographical conditions. There is obviously a great change in our penal methods. We do not mutilate our criminals or scalp them for the preservation of their souls, and we have lost confidence in the rack and the thumb-screw. But we need only transport ourselves to other lands and study other people's views of judicial necessities, and we shall find that the punitive systems of the thirteenth or the eighteenth centuries are still with us. Theoretically the blood of the black and the white man is of the same good quality, and yet very little provocation is needed for the outbreak of race riots. Negroes and negresses who have given offence to white people need harbour no illusions concerning the restraining influences of our Western civilization.

Like a mountain in eruption the war has thrown up the sordid passions, the hidden reserves of destructive hate and cruelty in our common human soul. In war all things are permissible. To murder, to maim, to destroy, to deceive, to make hideous waste of fertile land, to cause weeping and wailing amongst the innocent—these are the necessities of warfare. They are the commonplace incidents of war. There are others. It brings to the surface strata of human nature to which culture has never descended. It explodes our humanitarian theories by a series of well-directed mines. The ancient horrors of devices for the punishment of the enemy are feeble competitors with our modern inventions. Our poison gas, our burning oil, our metallic monsters that spit death on the enemy and crush his fine defences, our flying bomb-throwers, all

show that we have not as yet succumbed to humanitarian or Christian ethics. There have been some startling illustrations of the folly of assuming that we have safely and irrevocably traversed certain stages of human indifference. We shuddered at the revelations which called Florence Nightingale to the Crimea; we now shudder at the heartless carelessness revealed by Commissions and Reports. The triumph of Red Cross organization, the mass of charitable and voluntary effort to relieve suffering, the heroism and splendour of individual sacrifice, soften, but do not reverse, the impression of a general humanitarian débâcle.

We may, of course, take shelter behind the jejune explanation that there are two worlds with two moralities. One is war and the other is peace. We may affectionately survey the hospitals and orphanages, the institutions for the blind and the mute, the asylums and the charities with which each belligerent country pays tribute to the virtues of the merciful life. Whatever we do, we cannot dispel the darkness by a frenzied denunciation of war. The monster is not outside ourselves; it is created and sustained by the hardness of our hearts and the obtuseness of our brains. The responsibility is ours in war as well as in peace. Reformers of all ages have battled with the wickedness of the world, they have stormed stronghold after stronghold of social iniquity. Their failures are no less conspicuous than their successes. Human nature is infinitely pliable and infinitely resistant.

Is it, then, all a matter of change and recurrence? Do culture and morality grow like flowers in a garden, obedient to the will and taste of the gardener, but destined to fade and die with the turn of the season? Do not the civilizations of the past with their perfection of knowledge and art mock our faith in the permanency of human achievement? Babylon and Egypt, Athens and Rome carried the seed of corruption within their husk of glory. They had elaborate systems of social organization, of laws, of elucidation of the mysteries of life. They saw beauty and pursued it, in colour and sound, by word and chisel. The gods were kind to them, and now and then dispensed with altar and temple. Divine presences revealed themselves in brook and cornfield, on mountain-tops and in the faces of animals. Reformers of all kinds were amongst them: men of the sword with dreams of Empire and conquest for the good of the nation, priests who demanded sacrifice in the name of a god, orators who by skilful laying of words taught the art of philosophic calm. Problems faced them, social iniquities troubled them; they grappled with morals and strove to build up a better and happier future.

I was sinking into a reverie over the fall of Babylon and the problems of recurrence when Marie-Joseph arrived. Marie-Joseph is my oldest and dearest peasant friend. She is over seventy and devoted to hard work. Her face is rosy and wrinkled, and when she laughs it becomes a mass of merry furrows. Her body gives one the impression of an animated board. It is strikingly flat and stiff, and proudly erect. She works in the fields and tends the cows, and when she bends down to hoe the potatoes or cut the grass, she just folds herself in two. The stiff straight back in the neat black dress is different from all the other toiling backs on the slopes. When I look down from the mountain-tops to the pastures and plots below, I can always distinguish the back of Marie-Joseph from the others. To-day she brought me a present of milk and potatoes, and we sat down to chat over a cup of coffee—nay, four cups of coffee, for Marie-Joseph has no cranky ideas about abstinence from food and drink, and I must, perforce, pretend I have none. I love her and her ways, though she always manages to disturb me when I wish to work or think. Writing and thinking are not work to Marie-Joseph. She is wholly innocent of the former dissipation and carries out the latter function without any trouble or fuss. She is, therefore, justified in disposing of my painful efforts with a contemptuous shrug of her wooden shoulders.

“Marie-Joseph,” I said cautiously, when I had watched the third cup of coffee disappear, and duly discussed butter and cheese, wine and cows, “do

you think the world is getting better?" She was slicing a chunk of bread with her capacious pocket-knife, and stopped short. Her small bright blue eyes peered at me curiously. "I mean, do you believe there is real progress—that we are better than we used to be?"

The knife came dancing down on the plate. "Better?" she said; "not at all; we are worse. Why, when I was young we used constantly to have processions and carry le Bon Dieu, and I tell you the harvest was different from what it is now. And the young girls were modest then; they all wore aprons, and our curé used to insist on them wearing aprons, for, said he, all women should wear aprons."

"All women should wear aprons," I repeated mechanically, as my thoughts flitted back to Babylon.

95

Marie-Joseph saw and misinterpreted my disappointment. "Did you grasp what I said?" she asked; "there is no modesty nowadays. And you people who come from England," she added sternly, "with your short skirts and your peculiar ways, don't improve matters."

I felt duly rebuked, and during the rest of the hour which Marie-Joseph wasted on me, I sought to re-establish myself in her opinion by discoursing on the merits of *soupe au fromage*.

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We all have our chosen test of moral worth, and perhaps our judgment of the decline and rise of social virtue is as easily swayed by personal predilection as was that of Marie-Joseph. To me the persistence of the same cruel and stupid customs throughout the centuries is a source of perplexed pessimism. I cannot brush aside the problem by a facile reference to reincarnation. If John the brigand was a cut-throat and a robber in his twentieth appearance on this planet, why should he persist in these idiosyncrasies in his twenty-third return as George the politician and successful captain of industry? This is not at all a fair representation of the theory of reincarnation, I shall be told. It is not, but it is one of those to which we are driven in the desperation of impatience. A friend of mine, a high authority on matters theosophical, knows of a potent explanation and anodyne for moral impatience. Humanity, he tells me, is always being recruited from Mars. Mars, in spite of its canals, is a low and wicked planet, with a reptilian population. When the Martians advance a little beyond the moral status of their fellow-creatures and close their bloodthirsty eyes in death, their spirits are wafted to our planet, there to take on new garments of flesh. The influx of brutal souls is perennial. This explains why, Churches and missionary effort notwithstanding, we have always savages, cannibals, and barbarians (and Prussian militarists?) with us. But there is comfort in the other side of the picture. When we in our turn have learnt all the lessons of this miserable globe of folly, when we have mastered all the virtues and shed all the vices, when we long to be free from the trammels of sense and appetite and sickness and ambition, we are transferred to Mercury. Mercury is a highly evolved planet, a spiritualized existence, free from the obsessions of sex and greed, an abode of love and freedom.

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Oh, how I sigh for Mercury!

Supposing this sinful earth is only a school for reformed Martians; supposing human nature and history always repeat themselves, and the end is as the beginning and the beginning as the end? The first steps in education accomplished, the scholars would be removed to better premises, and to a more advanced course of instruction. But the old school would receive new pupils and go on in the same humdrum way. There would be the same harsh teachers, the same ignorance and obstinacy, the same punishment and suffering. The worst of it is that Mercury does not seem exempt from the general curse of nothingness which seems to brood over all physical existence. There is no stability even in solar systems. Even we puny creatures can divine something of their birth and death. Out of whirling nebulae suns and planets are born; souls slowly evolve on worlds which were once balls of

fire. There are endless diversity and specialization, myriads of creatures rise out of the furnace of life. Some gain ascendancy and lay claim to mental supremacy, to science and religion and the overlordship of the universe. I am sure Mars, Mercury, and Tellus are equally prone to this weakness. One day—in the uncountably many of solar mornings—there is a collision, a breaking up of all the old forms through contact with some mysterious roving mass of burning matter. The planets with their kings and prophets disappear in fire and gas, The perturbation in the vast Cosmos of Change is probably not greater than that caused by the fall of an old and rotten tree before the cleansing winds of spring.

All mankind clings to the hope that something escapes destruction and rises unchangeable and eternal above the domain of nothingness. In that hope we strive for better things and go forth to reform life, and in the striving we find our spirit. We know we are shortsighted and sometimes blind, and that the fight is often hopeless. But the joy, the imperishable joy, lies in the struggle. Don Quixote is inexpressibly dear to us because he personifies the ridiculous tasks which we attempt, though we know them to be ridiculous.

There is a human need which is always paramount, yet surprisingly little recognized. It is the need of an enemy. Life is a perpetual looking forward to a time when we shall have conquered. We are happiest when we see the enemy in all his ugliness and wickedness, and can draw our swords without any doubt as to his presence. We prefer solid dragons of evil to flitting butterflies of sin. We are ever in search of the enemy in our schemes of reform, our political wrangles, our moral crusades. The growth of individuality is indissolubly bound up with cognizance of the enemy. He may be hiding in the bowels of the earth, defying the attempt to tame the soil to our advantage; he may be mocking our efforts to find scientific solutions to the riddles of nature; he may be encamped in our own souls, confounding our goodness and demolishing our moral defences. But he must be there. Without him life would be stagnant, energy and virtue purposeless.

War satisfies the human hunger for a sight of the enemy. All the vague sense of evil which in peace-time makes the morality of our next-door neighbour a matter of anxious concern to us is now solidified in hatred of the foe of the country. Smaller enmities are patched, national brotherhood is recognized. The country at war with us becomes the target of all our moral bullets. Tyranny, cruelty, lust, greed, and all manner of abomination dwell there; its people are the servants of Antichrist.

The evil seen in the enemy stimulates unseen good in the masses, to whom the sacrifices of war would be impossible but for the conviction that the nations have been sharply divided into sheep and goats. The abolition of war will come about when we have learnt to eliminate sham enemies and to recognize the real one within our own hearts. In our present stage of cosmic education, the idea of a negative peace is entirely repellent. Now and then, after a bout of too much talking or too much doing, we may dwell tenderly on the thought of complete inaction and stillness. A nightmare is an excellent means of inducing a desire for dreamless sleep. But normal, natural humanity shuns complete rest. Hence the notorious failure—mental and physical—of complete holidays. We must attack something, and if there is no work to attack, we attack the inanimate stupidity of our surroundings. It is strange that the laborious task once achieved should so often become the thing abhorred. Scales fall from our eyes, perspective is restored, and we see what a trumpery affair held us enthralled. I have often thought with dismay of the effect on scores of reformers, whom I know, if the reform to which they have sworn allegiance should be accomplished. To many this would be a personal disaster of the gravest kind. For years they have poured their mental energy and their devotion into one channel. The enemy was always there, to be beaten at sunrise and cursed at sunset. The cause inspired high ideals and hard work; self and selfish matters were neglected in the pursuit of victory.

Life eventually became identified with the cause and its vicissitudes, and, like the picture in Olive Schreiner's story, the work took on brighter and more wonderful colour, whilst the painter became paler and paler. Narrowness of vision and purpose became essential conditions of efficiency, and gradually human attributes became sharpened into fanatical weapons of assault. Few reformers live to see the triumph of their cause, and fewer still succeed in preserving equilibrium of judgment.

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There is, verily, every excuse for the pointed energy of reformers. The world is full of horrors that cry aloud for extirpation; one head cannot easily harbour knowledge of all the strongholds of wickedness. True, those who are called by the spirit to become missionaries of mercy can harbour a greater measure of sympathy than the average man. The average man suffers through incapacity to reach the fountain of spiritual replenishment at which the saints refresh their parched throats. An acute sensitiveness to the suffering of others, without a corresponding power to reach the sources of comfort, leads to the abyss of madness. Nature imposes limits to sympathy in most minds, barriers of forgetfulness without which healthy thought is impossible. The danger to the mind of indulging in unlimited sympathy has been emphasized by the most divergent students of psychological law. Herbert Spencer analysed it with characteristic thoroughness. Nietzsche went farther. He reacted violently against the onslaughts of pity in his own soul, and in philosophical self-defence inverted the promptings of compassion. The war has shown the human need of self-defence against excessive sympathy. We are surfeited with horrors on land and sea; the ghastly truth of a carnage which exceeds anything known in history, of maimed and broken lives, of starving and homeless people, is shunned lest we lose our reason in impotent and disruptive pity. The man of bayonet and bomb, who a short time ago spent mildly exciting days over his desk in the City, and who was anxiously concerned over the indisposition of his neighbour's cat, has made himself a heart of steel for the purposes of the war. If sympathy interfered with the issue of every bullet and the thrust of every bayonet, there would be an end to military efficiency. The civilian has not seldom gone far beyond the needs of emotional self-defence and equipped himself with a heart of stone. The perfect Man of Sympathy—controlling His sympathy, yet radiating it to all the world and its sins—was Jesus Christ. His compassion had none of the corrosive qualities which drove Nietzsche to distraction. He could retain the consciousness of all the suffering which men inflict on fellow-creatures and yet keep ever abundant the measure of His pity and the regenerating power of His love. He saw the root of our evil, the one cause and the one remedy. He is the catholic and consistent reformer, whilst we—we of the smaller measure—flounder in the web of a hundred causes.

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Each cause can be endowed with an importance which outdoes all the others. Education—can any one deny the overwhelming need of proper concentration on its possibilities? "Here we have a generation of ignorant, selfish, immoral creatures, devoid of a sense of social responsibility," says our first reformer; "why, the remedy is obvious: let us begin with the children in the schools. Is any one so dense as not to perceive the all-pervading importance of the guidance we give to the young?"

"It is no use beginning with the children whilst those who teach them are so hopelessly sunk in materialism and stupidity," says our second reformer. "Look at the education laws; they are all ill-conceived and ill-administered. Education is not only a failure; it is a dead-weight of falsehood and class tyranny which hampers progress. Let us go straight for socialism and equal human rights and opportunities. Your education is only used to perpetuate industrial slavery and to keep the children of the working classes ignorant of the blood-sucking system into whose meshes they will be thrown unless we combine and make our influence felt now."

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"You are neglecting the most obvious duties which should come first," says

the quiet and motherly voice of the third reformer; "infants die by the hundred thousand owing to neglect. There will soon be no babies for you to instruct either in materialism or socialism. The race will die out whilst you talk. Look at the slums and the careless, ignorant mothers; we want infant-welfare work, we want a new baby cult, we want to teach people parental responsibility."

"Nonsense," breaks in the virile voice of the fourth reformer; "what you want is to take people away from the slums, to bring them back to the country. Land nationalization is what we need—a free, healthy life, far removed from the factories that kill soul and body by the grinding monotony of existence. Man was made for life on the soil, for contact with sun and wind, flowers and trees. They will give health and life to your babies."

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"Your schemes have only a secondary importance"—the voice of a prominent suffragist is now heard. "Give women the vote and these reforms will follow. Men have made all these abominable laws and customs; women will bring in just and human laws and change all social life. As for the suggestion that country life will improve the standard of living, I can only say that it is made in ignorance of the real conditions. Look at the farm labourer's wife and her home-life. She is often the most miserable, worn-out creature, who tries in vain to keep the children and herself properly fed and clothed. Her life is a long travesty of the laws of health."

"Naturally," comments the temperance reformer, "whilst you allow the labourer to soak himself in drink and to spend his money at the public-house. Drink is the root of all our social troubles: it ruins the body and corrupts the mind, it poisons the unborn children, fills our prisons and asylums. You may legislate and equalize opportunities as much as you please; so long as you allow the cursed liberty of drink there can be no health and no human decency. Prohibition is the most urgent of all our needs."

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An athletic-looking young man, rosy-cheeked and clear-eyed, who had been listening with a somewhat supercilious smile, now joins in the debate. "There would be no need for you to bother about drink if you could persuade people to give up flesh-eating. Vegetarianism is the cure of all ills. It drives away disease and the craving for stimulants, it gives you pure blood and a desire for the really simple life. I live in a tent on ninepence a day and sleep in the open. I grow my own fruit and vegetables and do my own cooking. Thoreau is my master and Carpenter my friend. I hate smoky cities with their slums and their shambles and your whole sickly civilization."

"Sickly!" repeats a Christian Scientist, with reproachful emphasis on the word. The speaker is a woman of sixty, whose face bears the stamp of successful self-discipline and a sound physique. "I have seen vegetarians who looked extremely sickly. Before I became a Christian Scientist I, too, sought health by various systems of diet. Now I know that all disease is but an error of mortal mind, and in *Science and Health*, by Mrs. Eddy, we are told——"

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She was not allowed to finish her sentence, for a Congregational minister, famous for his pulpit denunciations of sin, has risen and gravely waves his hand to ensure a respectful hearing. "All you people," he says, in a voice vibrating with solemn indignation, "are pursuing fleeting shadows. The kingdom of God is within. This false cult of health by self-hypnotism, or health by living like the beasts in the field, gives undue weight to things which, after all, relate to the body. It is the *soul* of man that is important, not where he lives or what he eats. We need the fear of God and the thirst for His mercy; we need the Divine guidance which will transform and sanctify our social relations."

"And pray how has the Church dealt with the war?" cries the pacifist who has now risen, his eyes ablaze with denunciation of the minister. "The Christian Church—established or unestablished—is nothing but the handmaid of the politician and the State, the servile echo of capitalists and diplomatists. You talk of Divine guidance and the sanctification of life. How do you respect

life and the teaching of Jesus Christ? Jesus said, 'Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you.' You, His professed followers, bless war and its orgies of hate. You stand by hypocritically thanking God for your own sanctity, whilst Christians drench battlefields with the blood of Christians. The abolition of war is the reform to which you should all bend your lives and direct your prayers. Even now you have not learnt your lesson. Your social order, your laws, your constitution, your personal liberties, your lives and those of your children, are thrown to the Juggernaut of war, and yet you continue your futile pursuit of shadows. Without peace there can be no reform."

I have joined in the debate, I have heard all these voices. They are familiar to me with the familiarity of the songs of our childhood. Their sentiment is true, oh so true! yet so sadly inadequate. The reformers are valiant and true, and every one has hitched his waggon to his pet star. Happiest are those who do not encounter the cross-influence of rival stars or see the irony of our human limitation of sight and achievement. The blood-red cross of the crusader will stand no admixture of colour. The soul dominated by one idea gains ground. Henri Dunant, Florence Nightingale, Elizabeth Fry, General Booth, Josephine Butler—these succeed by dint of their singleness of purpose. The narrowness serves to concentrate the strength and accelerate the work.

The reformer may be bigoted and unreasonable, but he must be an optimist whilst pursuing his object. He must believe in life and in the inherent goodness of the earth. He must be a stranger to the dyspeptic melancholy through which Carlyle saw the world as a "noisy inanity" and life as an incomprehensible monstrosity. Macbeth is called to denounce life as "a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury," and "signifying nothing." Macbeth must be shunned by the reformer as the monk repels the visits of Satan in the desert. He must share the hopefulness of Sir Thomas More. Utopia is possible here, now, and everywhere, though execution is likely to be the penalty of too close application to principles.

He must not fear the companionship of the crank. He had better recognize that he is one. What is a crank? The dictionary is somewhat vague as to the meaning. I find that the verb is unravelled as "bend, wind, turn, twist, wind in and out, crinkle, crinkle." The last two appeal to me strongly. How I have crinkled and crinkled over wrongs and horrors which I have discovered on my little path! No crank can see his crankiness at the time of cranking, though sometimes he sees it afterwards. The crank is a person who holds views which to us seem ridiculous. The man who first objected to cannibalism was a crank. The man who first thought lunatics should not be chained to walls or left naked on unsavoury beds of straw was a crank. Galileo was an intellectual crank of the shameless type. Shelley is the beautiful crank of all times, champion of forlorn causes, the inspired rebel of the spirit.

There are small and noisy and irritating cranks. I have met scores of them. They are intense, but shortsighted. Some are delightfully ingenuous, with the lovable simplicity of the child. Others are of a morbid and carping disposition, with an inordinate sense of their own importance.

I have for many years been the privileged though unworthy recipient of confidences and schemes for the elimination of all manner of cruelty and wickedness from the world. My office in Piccadilly has received within its sympathetic walls a procession of born cranks, of souls charged with high missions for the betterment of the world. Faddists, eccentrics, dreamers, mystics, workers chained to lifelong slavery by their dominant idea, have poured out their plans to me. Sometimes visitors came who clearly had crossed the unguarded frontier between sanity and insanity, interesting and pathetic and clever, yet of the great order of God's fools. They were not unhappy, for their path was brilliantly lit by an idea, whilst the rest of the world was plunged in darkness. They would scold me and pity me because I

refused to follow their light, but they were never unkind.

There is an old blue easy-chair in the office, dilapidated and springless, in which I have deposited my cranks. I always choose a hard, uncomfortable seat opposite, from which I conduct my defence against the insidious appeal of the visitors. Their faces do not fade from my memory. They haunt me with a gentle refrain of the world-as-it-might-be. The world as they would like it to be is certainly not always habitable, but it is generally one of exuberant imaginative verdure.

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Here is the man who wants to abolish sex. He believes in spirit. He is timid and womanly, his mind is pure and inexpressibly shocked at the carnal desires which disfigure the otherwise fair picture of humanity. Love, marriage, procreation, cannot these be purged from the base and degrading obsessions of sex? By abstinence, by concentration, we may eliminate them. Surely the story of the Fall makes it quite clear that we were never meant to perpetuate such gross mistakes.... Here is the woman who believes sex to be the source of all good, all life, all joy. She holds a medical degree and is passionately opposed to the emancipation of womanhood. She is unmarried, and dresses with old-fashioned emphasis of the eternal feminine. With a soft and languid smile she deprecates the fate which sent her to the medical school instead of the nursery. "Why," she tells me, with radiant eyes, "everything is sex; poetry, painting, sculpture, religion are sex. Women who suppress their sexual nature by pursuing the chimerical advantages of votes and professions are guilty of race-suicide. Race-suicide must be stopped." There is the believer in the immediate return of Jesus Christ and the approaching end of the world. He comes as a convert with a message, and laden with books of prophecy. A year ago he was still a successful man of business, and a gay soul with no inclination towards the holy life. The merry twinkle in his eye has disappeared, and in its place I see the dull glow of an obsessing idea. "What is the good of all your struggle and your agitation?" he says; "everything will come right and the wicked will be punished. Join me in proclaiming the coming of the Lord. Let people be warned and repent in time." There is the lively, mercurial lady in green who deals in statesmanship and high politics, who knows everybody of importance, and who controls the fate of nations through her magic influence behind the scenes. To-day she has been to the War Office, yesterday the Home Office trembled at her approach, to-morrow certain officials in high diplomatic circles will know to their cost what she thinks of them. There is the pompous lady of a hundred committees. She has a passion for committees, and no sooner has she formed one or sat on one than she discovers the general unworthiness of the assembly. She comes to expose people, to prove how utterly incapable they are of managing affairs.

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The priestess of some system of New Thought arrives. She is pleasant and unruffled. "Can you deny," she asks, "that nothing exists for you but that which you allow to enter your mind?" No, I cannot. "Very well, then, you can control the universe by thought. You can gain happiness, health, peace of mind, and long life. By thought and meditation you can make for yourself a world of harmony, a consciousness which excludes everything that is ugly and painful and jarring." I murmur that this is no doubt possible, but it seems a trifle selfish whilst so many human souls are struggling in the sea of trouble. I am sharply pulled up. "I thought you would be too immersed in the wretched folly of agitation to understand," she says; "I came to show you the better way." She is followed by the clothes enthusiast. He wears sandals and has discarded the abomination of starched linen. "We are forming a Society for the Revival of Greek Clothing," he announces. "From the æsthetic and the hygienic points of view, nothing is more important than the clothes we wear." I venture on a feeble Teufelsdröckh joke. He does not condescend to listen. "We must get rid of hideous trousers and feet-strangling skirts [I am lost in admiration over the indictment of the skirt, for I remember a certain reception in Washington in the days of the snake-skirt when I stumbled and

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fell at a moment when a little dignity would have been my most precious possession]; we must wear loose white draperies amenable to the air and the washtub." I quite agree, but raise some practical obstacles and a few conventional pegs of delay. They prove intolerable, and my visitor departs convinced that I am not one of the elect.

Missionaries of dietetics come in a motley procession. There is the man who believes we can eat anything provided we masticate everything with bovine thoroughness; there is the man who believes that we ought to eat nothing during long bouts of purgative fasting, and who lives cheerfully and inexpensively on hot water during two yearly periods of twenty days. There is the woman who has found the nearest approach to nectar and ambrosia in the uncooked fruits and vegetables of the earth, which, properly pounded, are digested, and make of our sluggish bodies fit receptacles for Olympian wisdom. There are the people who have discovered the one cause of all disease. It may be uric acid or cell proliferation or hard water—there is always a complementary cure. I listened one day with much interest to an exposition of the evils of salt. Salted food, I was told, is the cause of our troubles. We are salted and dried until all power of recuperation is driven out of our nerves and muscles. I was asked to study the subject. The theory was well supported by scientific reasoning and evidence, and on the following evening I had thoroughly entered into the saltless ideal. A vision of the dispirited haddock had materially assisted my conclusion when a visitor was announced. He was preceded by a card showing impressively that he was a man of learning in theories of disease. "I have come," he said, "in the hope that you will take an interest in my experiments and conclusions with regard to disease in general. I have discovered that the one cure for rheumatism, consumption, and cancer is salt, plenty of common salt."

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The trouble with all these people is not that they are all wrong. They are probably all right. It is a question of angles and quality of the grey matter of the brain. The trouble is the limitation of experience and outlook imposed by fate upon each individual.

A league or society is theoretically the one human institution which is akin to heaven. You have an object and a programme. You know you are occupied with the most important task in the world. But you feel powerless alone. You send out your appeal for support and kindred souls flock to your banner. Can anything be more soul-satisfying than a community of those who think alike, who feel alike, and who work for the same end? Anarchy is impossible, and you decide on a constitution and rules for the management of your spiritual brotherhood. A committee is appointed to control the affairs of the union, and officials to carry out its wishes. Now you have the ideal of which you dreamt, the pure collective force which should prove irresistible. Friends within and enemies without.

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But you have not excluded the canker of human differences. Your kindred souls discover that, though they think alike on the one point which drew you together, they differ strongly on others. There are other opinions, religious and political, than those which come within the purview of your little organization. You surprise some of your friends in the act of discussing your denseness in matters of which they have a firm and clear grasp. You begin to wonder how it is possible for people who have such a perfect vision of certain necessary lines of reform to manifest such unmitigated stupidity in regard to others. If you are wise, you resign yourself to the inevitable divergence of mind; if they are wise, they agree to pardon your shortcomings.

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Fanatics flower in a society like poppies in a wheat-field. They have lost sight of everything but the urgency of the cause. They are intolerant because they have no knowledge of human nature and no self-criticism wherewith to check the wild ideas that sprout beneath their immense self-confidence. They turn withering scorn on committees and officials who refuse to give effect to their suggestions to burn the House of Commons, or stop the traffic of

London, or commit combined suicide in Hyde Park as a protest against the continuance of the iniquity which they denounce. They would do things in a different manner. They intend to show the world and politicians that their views cannot be ignored with impunity. For you and your lukewarm followers they have nothing but contempt—the contempt which is earned by the coward. The fanatic is troublesome, but comparatively easy to deal with. There is another product of organized reform on which you cannot so easily shut the door. It is the ideologue who rides the scheme to death. It is the doctrinaire who must form systems within systems and policies within policies. It is not enough that you have set out to suppress something or to encourage something. You must follow his particular way. He is in terror of compromise and sees profligacy in sweet reasonableness. He knows the tragic failure of other movements with vacillating policies. This one must be saved at all costs. 'Twere better to smash the whole movement than proceed along undesirable lines. He would scorn victory that came through avenues not recognized by him. Certain words and phrases have completely captivated his imagination. With them he fences heroically and causes a sufficiency of clatter and noise. He is in deadly earnest and will brook no rivals. Parties within parties are formed, and the energies which should be directed towards fighting opponents are absorbed in combat within the society.

There is another element of disaster which now and then gains ascendancy in the community of reformers. It is the professional agitator, the parasite who will speak for or against a principle according to the economic advantage which one side or the other may offer. You may hold that such a man is not altogether undesirable, provided he can “organize” and persuade people that the society is worthy of support. You may think that he is no more blameworthy than the lawyer who pleads your views so eloquently and who handles the jury with such consummate skill, though his sole incentive is your fee and not your case. If you act on such a belief and allow your professional agitator to manage your society, you will certainly one day find your ideals turned to ashes and your organization for moral action turned into money-making machinery.

Whilst life teaches you that societies are frail human institutions and that conferences and congresses do not bring about the millennium, you are saved from despair if you keep ever fresh your sense of humour.

There are problems in the life of the reformer which the mountains never fail to put before me. I have so often come to them from the heat and turmoil of controversy. I have come like a soldier from battle, covered with mud and slightly wounded, yet exultant in the spirit of the fray. The mountains speak to me, and lo! another self appears. They speak to me of beauty, of peace, of the infinite mystery of life; they give me broad effects of light and shade, and obliterate the small pictures which pursue me on the plains. Yesterday, in the stillness of Alpine midwinter, the moon shone clear and full on the glacier. I sat gazing at the outlines of the peaks trembling in the pale light of a perfect evening. The noisy mountain torrents were held captive in prisons of ice, but here and there the sound of an irrepressible rivulet threading its underground way through stones and earth brought to my ears a song of spring. I love the trees, the sky, the snow—all my senses respond to the call of the solitude of Nature. I felt free and happy; I sank into the state of bliss in which the soul is conscious of no desire. Surely this is better than the strife and the sordid cares of the camp; surely one may walk apart and enjoy the fruits of tranquillity? Our consciousness can admit but an infinitesimal part of that which is: let us then fill it to the brim with the joy of beauty, with the harmony of being at rest. Then I remembered the things which lay beyond my peaks and my moonlight: a vision of prisons and shambles, of battlefields and slums, passed before my eyes. How can one forget! How can one enjoy peace and beauty! Duty bids us to descend, love bids us to share the suffering.

And yet are there not two ways of seeking perfection, two paths clearly

defined and well trodden throughout the ages—reform of self and reform of others? What may at first sight appear as æsthetic or mystic egoism is perhaps the better way. The hermit who forsakes the world and renounces the social ties and burdens which most men count of value is bent on the purification of his own soul. Monasticism—with all its faults—recognized the essential need of self-examination and self-discipline. It bade us cleanse our souls, conquer our own temptations, by a rigid system of religious exercise. Our modern reformer is not always conscious of any need for self-reform. He lustily attacks the misdoings of others and remains happily ignorant of the Socratic rule, *Know thyself*. “Every unordered spirit is its own punishment,” says St. Augustine, and the disorder is not removed by assaulting the faults of others. We have, first and last, to be captains of our own souls. There is an element of absurdity in the thought that the aim and purpose of human life is for each soul to hunt for the sins and imperfections in others. The enjoyment of self-criticism and self-culture seems a simpler and less circumstantial rule of life. Asceticism, abnegation, prayer, remoteness from the passions that rend the worldly, bring peace and content. But they limit experience and give a false simplicity to the problems of life. Early Christian monasticism held that as this world is the domain of the devil, the only safety lies in flight from it. Such a view precludes the possibility of social reform on a general and lasting basis. It has a radical consistency and a scientific precision which are only disturbed by the course of actual events. Supposing all humanity could be withdrawn, every precious brand snatched from the burning and the whole made into a vast monastery? The devil would be sure to slip in and cause a disturbance.

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The social reformer assumes that the world is worthy of his care, and that we are here to make it as habitable as we can. He lives in the midst of sinful humanity and accepts the inheritance of earthly conventions. He may choose to live in the slums whilst his spirit clamours for a hermitage amongst the blue hills. His ways may be crotchety and his temper irritable—what does it matter so long as he is carrying out his appointed task in the cosmic order?

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To the true nature-lover there is no renunciation in forsaking the things prized by most men. His virtue may be vice concealed; he gathers bliss where others find boredom. Give me a tree, a perfect tree, and you may keep your palaces. Give me the green fields with a hundred thousand flowers, and you may keep your streets and your piles of gold. Give me the wild wind and the breath of the torrent, and I have no wish to hear your hymns. There is a brazen self-sufficiency about the nature-lover which baffles and offends the mind of the crowd. The most amazing thing about him is that he turns hardship and deprivation into pleasure. Take away his house and he shelters in a cave. Deprive him of your company and he laughs to himself. Take away his possessions and he tells you he is rich because he wants so little, whilst you are poor, for you have surrounded yourself with a hundred unnecessary wants. Like Antæus, the mythical giant, he derives his strength and his power to overcome enemies from contact with the earth. He discovers a mode of being, behind and beyond ordinary existence. He says to the busy crowds of industry and commerce, to the men and women who wear out their lives in the joyless chase of success: “You will die before you know satisfaction and rest. Come and be human, come and grow in the sunshine and the rain.” He finds that two-thirds of the reforms for which men labour would not be needed if the artificialities of society were abandoned. He is, of course, unpractical and self-centred. Listen to Thoreau, the arch-enemy of the social treadmill, and to his scorn of reformers:

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Who is that intemperate and brutal man whom we would redeem? If anything ail a man so that he does not perform his functions, if he have a pain in his bowels even—for that is the seat of sympathy—he forthwith sets about reforming—the world. Being a microcosm himself, he discovers—and it is a true discovery, and he is the man to make it—that the world has been eating green apples; to his eyes, in fact, the globe itself is a great green apple, which there is danger awful to think of that the children of

men will nibble before it is ripe; and straightway his drastic philanthropy seeks out the Esquimaux and the Patagonian, and embraces the populous Indian and Chinese villages; and thus by a few years of philanthropic activity, the powers in the meanwhile using him for their own ends, no doubt, he cures himself of his dyspepsia, the globe acquires a faint blush on one or both of its cheeks, as if it were beginning to be ripe, and life loses its crudity and is once more sweet and wholesome to live.

And whilst thus branding those who set out to reform others, he shows his adherence to the great order of self-reformers by the following conclusion:

I never dreamed of any enormity greater than I have committed. I never knew, and never shall know, a worse man than myself.

Thoreau cultivates simplicity with an intense regard for the effect on himself. He is—in spite of his seclusion—above all a prophet amongst men. He made great discoveries in the realm of the mind—the mind attending closely to Nature, but he is too much the naturalist and the land-surveyor to lose himself in the raptures of nature love. He is a stranger to the ethereal touch with which Fiona Macleod opens the magic door of that which is felt but not seen in earth and sky. He misses the mystic hour when ghosts of the green life are about. That hour has been seized by Algernon Blackwood, who makes us feel the fascination, the vague dread of the elemental powers. There is a dream-wood in which the souls of all things intermingle, and once imprisoned there, the nature-lover may not escape until he has paid toll to the pixies.

There is, after all, nothing incompatible in the life of self-enrichment and the life of self-expenditure. They are interdependent, and rule the ancient order of gnosis and praxis. Whether we go to nature or religion or science for replenishment, we must be filled. And the ironic power which presides over our feasts compels the most inveterate egoist amongst us to share his treasures. Mind is for ever craving to give to mind. If we want nothing better than to boast of our superiority, the boasting imparts a lesson to others and is therefore a gift. But the reforming spirit spares few who think. It is generally believed that the purely literary mind scorns the idea of reforming: that art is above moral purpose. I have yet to discover the purely literary mind. Homer and Shakespeare, Goethe and Dante are clearly not of it. Shakespeare, so say the wiseacres, is the strictly impartial dramatist. He depicts the good and the bad, the great and the small, with complete detachment. Naturally, the art is the detachment and the lesson is in the perfect representation. The literary man may indignantly repudiate the idea of “preaching.” “To go preach to the first passer by,” wrote Montaigne, “to become tutor to the ignorance of the first I meet, is a thing I abhor.” He may have abhorred the idea, but through his essays he made himself tutor to innocence and the model of subjective moralizing.

However widely we roam the Republic of Letters, we meet no citizen without a badge of consecrated service. Pretenders, perhaps, usurpers of the titles of others, men to whom literature is nothing but merchandise. These may be totally free from the impulse. Tolstoy, Ibsen, Hauptmann, Hugo are reformers of the first order, whose words are charged with revolt. The transcendentalism of Emerson, the naturalism of Zola, the cynicism of La Rochefoucauld are all convergent streams in the torrent of reforming words which make the soul fertile.

No; the tame and vapid acquiescents are not to be found in literature. Sometimes they furnish material for literature. Their principal use in life is to kindle the souls of reformers with the resentment of which great deeds are born.

## NATIONALITY

I can remember no time in my life when I was not addicted to the study of

humanity. The marvels of faces, types, and characteristics were, I feel sure, with me in my cradle. At the age of ten I had evolved a kind of astrological chart of my own, according to which all human beings, including uncles and aunts, grandmothers and children, could be placed in twelve categories. There were the long-nosed, thin-lipped, sandy-haired, over-principled people, who always knew right from wrong and who grudged me an extra chocolate because it was not the hour to have one. There were the snub-nosed, full-lipped, dark-eyed people, whose manners were jolly and who positively encouraged illicit consumption of fruit in the thin-lipped aunt's garden. There were the shortsighted, solemn people with bulging foreheads and studious habits who saw print and nothing else. They bored me and belonged to my eleventh category. As far as I can see now, my categories were a florid elaboration of the four temperaments of Hippocrates, though I have no idea of the cause of my childish absorption in the subject. It was certainly altogether spontaneous and not encouraged, for I have a vivid recollection of how an eager and eloquent description of my categories (profusely illustrated by mimicry) brought me a sharp reprimand and a very nasty tonic. The tonic was taken under compulsion, but the cure is still unaccomplished.

And now for many years I have sat at my chalet window and seen the world go by. The path from the village below to the peaks and pastures above runs past my nest. On it, in the summer months, there was a straggling procession of tourists and climbers, peasants and townsfolk. They were of all nationalities, and their loud voices proclaimed the immutability of the curse of Babel. I used to be annoyed at the close proximity of the path, until, one day, I discovered its marvellous opportunities for anthropological research. Then I settled down, content to limit my wooing of the solitude to the early morning and the late evening, or the time when the wild autumnal gales brush the mountains clear of trippers and paint the surrounding foliage in glorious tints of red and gold. For I assure you the proper study of man is man, and the proper study of woman is both man and woman.

Here comes the Parisian youth with his charming young mamma of forty. His face is pale and *distingué*, and the black down on his upper lip has been trained with infinite care. Though his grey mountain suit is fashioned for great feats of daring, it has the rounded waist and martial shoulder-lines with which the Parisian tailor pacifies his conscience when he supplies English fashions. His stockings look ferocious. His dark eyes sparkle with inquisitiveness behind the pince-nez. He is vivacity incarnate, he is urbanity on a holiday. Mamma takes his arm and they trip past me. She is pretty, and would be plump if the art of the *corsetière* had not abolished plumpness. Her hat conveys a greeting from the Rue Lafayette, her little high-heeled boots show faultless ankles and the latest way of lacing up superfluous fat above them. A hole and two uneven stones maliciously intercept the progress of that little foot. Mamma stumbles, and is promptly and chivalrously replaced in an upright position by the son. "Mon Dieu!" she cries; "what a path!" and through my open window there floats the odour of *poudre-de-riz* disturbed by nervous excitement. Papa follows. He is fat. No one can deny it, and I do not think he would like any one to try. Honesty is writ large on his rotund countenance. Now he is hot and somewhat weary with the climb. He carries his hat under his arm and large pearls of moisture shine on the puckered forehead. His hair is thick and closely cropped, and strives upward with the even aspiration of a doormat. His cheeks are a little sallow and pendulous. He smiles under his thin moustache, the contented smile of an honest, hardworking, successful man. I know him well; I seem to have met him in a hundred editions in the offices of municipalities and prefectures, behind the counters of banks and shops. He is generally amiable, but he can lose his temper, and when he loses it, it is worth your while to help him to find it.

Here comes the Heidelberg professor, accompanied by two fair daughters. He is tall, of commanding presence, and walks with patriarchal gravity under

a green umbrella. A large pocket, embroidered and ingeniously designed with numerous compartments, is strapped to his waist. He strokes his long, well-trimmed beard as he admonishes the girls to pay serious attention to the natural beauty of the scenery. He rummages the pocket for his field-glasses. "This, dear children, is Mont Blanc. I do not say that our Schwarzwald is not just as lovely in its way. This mountain was first climbed by Paccard and Balmat. It stretches from the Col de Balme to the Col du Bonhomme and the Col de la Seigne. [A book is now extracted from the fourth division of the pocket.] There are the following passes: the Col d'Argentière, the Col...." His eye-glasses slip downwards on his nose. The girls are not listening. Gretchen is entirely absorbed in the fascinating appearance of an Italian who has just passed, and who by unmistakable signs conveyed to her that she is adorable. His flashing eyes, his jet-black hair, his lithe figure, his pointed toes, the nimble way in which he managed to press her hand behind the very back of her father, have stirred her imagination. Hedvig is shocked. The elder daughter is permeated with respect for her father's professorial dignity. Every gesture betrays the capable housekeeper. She seems to be made of squares—good, proper, solid squares. She tells the smiling Gretchen, whose cheeks suggest strawberries and cream, that she must never encourage dark Italians by looking at them. She should look at the ground when such men pass. She should be more attentive to father. The sound of their footsteps dies, and the green umbrella is but a dream. Hedvig has filled my window with visions of a well-ordered German home, of sausages and *Sauerkraut*, of beer and pickled fruit, of embroideries and coffee-parties.

Here comes a hatless representative of young Russia. His clothes are shabby and neglected; he walks with a shuffling, tired movement. But his face is startling. It seems to light up the path with some kind of spiritual fervour. His hair is long and golden, his beard suggests an aureole of virtue, his large blue eyes are penetrating but mild. A confused series of faces flash through my mind—Abraham, Tolstoy, Jesus Christ? Yes, it may seem sacrilegious, but the man is like Jesus Christ. I see now that the likeness is studied, cultivated, impressive. This is one of the *intelligentsia* who has lingered for a while in Geneva or Lausanne *en route* for the haunts of spiritual revolution. A din of dear familiar voices now fills the path and seems to shake the tops of the pines. "I guess you won't try that again. I did Munich in one day, Dresden in one and a half, Berlin in two, and Europe in twenty." Three women and a man stop opposite the chalet. The ladies are charmingly dressed in summer frocks of white and pink and blue, and carry nothing heavier than a parasol. The man is laden with cloaks, rugs, and bags. They peer into my window and try to catch a glimpse of the interior. I hastily draw the curtains and leave one peep-hole for myself. "Quaint houses these Swiss live in," says one. "It isn't a bad shanty," says the man. "Let's have a glass of milk," says another.

"Dew lait," they shout through the window. I callously observe them through my peep-hole. The man is of a fine American type, sinewy, resolute, hawk-eyed. The mountain sunshine provides me with Röntgen rays, and I see Wall Street inside his brow. "Dew lait," they yell. As there is no answer, they hammer at the door. The door is adamant. They leave reluctantly. "I think I saw the face of one of those Swiss idiots through the curtains," says the lady in pink; "of course he would not understand what we said."

There is a delightful readiness to jump to conclusions on the part of visitors. Sometimes they are the reverse of flattering, but they are always a source of delighted interest to me. I remember one day, years ago, when I had gone to draw water at the source, which emerges as a thousand diamonds from the rock and then descends into the hollow trunk of a tree and becomes tame and inclined to domesticity. The cows had come for a drink at the same hour, and we had just exchanged a few polite remarks when I found myself observed by an English clergyman. Yes, unmistakably English. His face was prim and clean-shaven, his collar straight and stiff, upon his lips there played a sweet

and devout smile. He lifted up the tail of his coat ceremoniously and, selecting a clean stone, seated himself upon it. He radiated condescending kindness.

139 "Lor a bun," said he. I asked the cows to excuse me for a moment and turned to him. "Lor a bun," he repeated, this time with a query. I stared uncomprehendingly. The sweet smile became sweeter. "Lor a bun, ma pettit fille, eh?" At last I understood. "Oh, yes, the water is excellent here," I replied, "and freezingly cold if you put your fingers in it." He departed in unceremonious haste.

For some years I have watched the procession of nations on my path. French, German, English, Russian, Austrian, American, Italian—they all brought me a picture of their tribal characteristics, trivial, thumbnail sketches, but nevertheless true to life. It may be urged that holiday-makers do not constitute reliable material for the observation of national peculiarities. I am not so sure. A man on a holiday generally takes his goodwill with him, and endeavours, at least, to restrain his temper and his prejudices. He may fail in the attempt, and be a peevish thing at play, but the attempt will show him at his best. From the hotels below, where the crowds of cosmopolis stayed *en pension* at reasonable and unreasonable terms, the sound of music and songs visited me in the evening. The nations were waltzing. International peace reigned under the auspices of the Swiss hotel keeper. Forgotten were the ancient feuds of dynasty and religion. Common humanity was uppermost.

140 And now the nations are at war. The concourse of friendly strangers who used to meet in the hotels is sharply divided into hostile groups. Travel is suspended or severely restricted. The Frenchman who a short time ago raised his glass in friendly salute to the German at the opposite table, who had guided him across the moraine, is now convulsed at the thought that he could ever forget the essentially brutal and inhuman character of all Germans. The German wishes he had dropped the Frenchman into the crevasse. There would then, he argues, have been one less of these treacherous, mean people, whose love of military conquest is only checked by impotence. He remembers Napoleon and the fact that any insignificant-looking chip of the Latin block may one day threaten the heart of Germany. The easy and good-humoured internationalism of tourist-life is at an end.

141 I do not know to what extent modern facilities for inexpensive travel have helped to establish friendship and understanding between the nations. But I do know that a person who claims to be educated, and who has never travelled abroad, is insufferably boresome. I prefer the society of a mole. The mole does not lecture me on the incalculable advantages of remaining in one's dark passages. I do not shut my eyes to the fact that some people go abroad and come home with their stupidity unmodified by experience. But they have been made uncomfortable, and that is something. A series of pricks of discomfort might dislodge the obstacles to mental circulation. A Swiss hotel may serve to check the contempt which the Philistines of all nations (there is a truly international bond between them) feel at the thought of a foreigner, though the shock of finding oneself amongst such peculiarities of clothes, or frisure, or table-manners may be almost unbearable. "Can you tell me," said a charming but agitated old lady from Bath one day, "of a hotel where there are no foreigners?" "I am afraid I cannot," I answered. "The hotel you have in mind would be full of foreigners in Switzerland, and you would but add to their number."

142 Even the most cosmopolitan habitués of Nice, or Monte Carlo, or Homburg feel the mildly stimulating effect of being in the presence of foreigners. You are interested or disgusted, you are attracted or repelled; your curiosity is aroused; you guess, you weave romances, you make conscious use of the rich material for comparison which lies before you. In Europe, apparently, the nations meet but do not merge. America achieves the miracle. I remember one evening in New York. I had addressed a meeting of good Americans and was coming home in the train. I was tired and unobservant and kept my eyes

closed. Suddenly a loud remark in Danish attracted my attention. I looked up at the row of humanity in the long carriage. Sitting opposite me, standing at my side, hanging by the straps, were the nations of the world. The racial types were there: Slavonic, Latin, Teutonic; the skull dolichocephalic and the skull brachycephalic rested side by side without any attempt at mutual evacuation. I could distinguish the faces of Frenchmen, Jews, Englishmen, Japanese, Germans, Poles, negroes, Italians. They did not study one another. They were journeying home from the day's work. A strange homogeneity brooded over the company. America had put her super-stamp on their brows. They were citizens of an all-human country.

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What, then, is this mysterious power which seems to master the Old World, whilst it is mastered by the New World? Nationality is clearly a mundane thing. It is not generally suggested that heaven is mapped out into national frontiers; the Christian religion and other faiths are bent on roping in all the nations. The missionaries who are sent out to Africa and China go with the conviction that there is room in heaven for the black and the yellow sinner. True, the black and the yellow man will first have to shed their somewhat irregular appearance and come forth white and radiant, but the belief in the possibility of such a feat is proof positive that we regard the nationality of a man as a transient business. Nationality is local, spirituality universal. Nationality is a form, a mould, a means; spirituality is the essence, the force, the object. The problems of nationality are wrapped up in the problems of personality. A personality is an amalgam of likes and dislikes, of habit and prejudice, the product of circumstances and a will. There is such a thing as multiple personality, and there is also multiple nationality. But the simple measure of nationality is severely natural and elemental. It is rooted in the need of understanding and being understood. It begins with love of self (we do love ourselves, in spite of all assurances to the contrary), family, and tribe. In a world of diversity and uncertainty it envelops us with a comforting assurance that there are creatures who feel and think as we do. It endows us with a group-soul, without which we, like ants and bees, cannot face life. The sense of nationality is but an enlarged sense of personality.

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It is a realization of unity which comprises many lesser units. Our household, our village, our country, our constituency, are all independent unities which we deliberately (though not always successfully) press into the service of the greater unity. The lesser unities always run the danger of being superseded by the greater unities. The conditions of soil and climate in a hamlet produce a crop of personalities similar in content and range, a type which we may distinguish by the shape of the nose or the trend of the remarks. Ten neighbouring little hamlets may have their little ways of distinction which separate one from the other, and yet one day—to their dismay—discover that they have greater generalities in common. Once the discovery is made, prudence and common sense demand co-operation. The great nations are built up on the discovery. Italy, Germany, and Great Britain have taken it to heart after endless trials of the smaller unities. America had one severe trial, and then settled down to circumvent and undo the curse of Babel. The sense of separateness, once so precious to Florence, Genoa, and Pisa, could not resist the larger conception of Italy.

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There is no reason, historical or logical, why this expansion of the consciousness of unity should not proceed until there is nothing further to include. The recognition of an all-human brotherhood is followed by the realization of an all-animal brotherhood in which the essential likeness of all that breathes and feels is paramount. Personally, I have never found the slightest difficulty in accepting our near relationship to the apes. On the contrary, every monkey I meet—and I have specially cultivated their acquaintance—reminds me sharply of the simian origin of our dearest traditions.

The consciousness of unity and the consequent sense of separateness from



some other body or bodies are subject to constant change and surprisingly erratic in their application. A bare hint to the Welshman, the Scotsman, the Breton, the Provençal, or the Bavarian that his national idiosyncrasies do not exist, and you will speedily see a demonstration of them. And yet, a moment ago, they felt entirely British or French or German. Swedes, Danes, and Norwegians have each a keen sense of national separateness (and superiority), but let the tongue of slander touch their common nature, and Scandinavia rises in indignant unity. I have attended many International Congresses, and have observed how easily the party is on the verge of grave national crises. Each alliance musters a good-humoured tolerance of the deficiencies of others. But let an opponent of the whole scheme, for which they have assembled, attack the principle which is sacred to all, and there is an immediate truce and concerted action against the intruder. Russian and German troops have found it necessary to suspend their fighting in order to defend themselves against the attacks of wolves. The hungry pack of wolves, waiting by the trenches at night, presented a force which called for united opposition, and the European war had to wait whilst the men of the opposite armies joined in killing them. When the slaughter of wolves was happily over, the human battle was resumed. Supposing, instead of wolves, an airship of super-terrestrial proportions had brought an army of ten-armed, four-headed, and six-legged creatures, bent on dealing out death to the occupants of the trenches, what would have happened? Supposing the inhabitants of a more cruel and vicious planet than ours (cosmological specialists assure us such exist) developed powers of warfare before which the exploits of Hannibal or Attila paled into insignificance, and learnt the art of destroying life not only in their own world but in others as well? They might come armed with new atmospheric weapons, trailing clouds of suffocating fumes to which resistance with guns and bombs would be utterly ineffectual. The horror of the unknown danger would paralyse the war, batteries would be deserted and the trenches would quickly be internationalized. The sense of our common humanity, outraged at the sight and the smell of the monsters, would assert itself. Generals and statesmen of the belligerent peoples—if any were left to direct the defensive—would hold subterranean meetings, and, forgetting the cause for which they sent men to die nobly but a few days ago, would discuss how they could save the united remnants of humanity by strategy and simulation.

The sense of unity is, after all, dependent on innumerable conditions and circumstances over which we have little control. There is the unity of tradition and education, of Eton and Harrow, of Oxford and Cambridge. It moulds opinion and imposes certain restrictions of conduct and prejudices in outlook. Rivalry is an indispensable and normal adjunct of such unity. Races and the honour and glory of one's school and team can stir the group-soul to incredible heights of enthusiasm and effort. There is the instinctive unity of seafarers. Who has not, when crossing the ocean, felt that he was part of a small world independent and isolated from others, but bound together by special ties of adventure? An encounter with an iceberg will bring the common responsibilities and dangers to the notice of the most inveterate individualist, but even while the ship moves uneventfully forward, he, perforce, shares the feeling of oneness. There is the humorous unity which will seize the opposing parties in a court of law and make them join in laughter at some feeble judicial joke just to experience the relief of forgetting that they are there to be contentious.

The advocates of the theory that nations and nationalities are eternally distinct and separate can see no analogy of unity in the simple examples of everyday life. They tell us conclusively that England is England and France is France, and our humble retort that we know as much and something besides is silenced by the further information that each nation has a soul that will tolerate no interference from other souls. They forget, our apostles of the creed of separateness, that the States of to-day are built up on a vast mixture of races and nationalities. They forget, also, that nationality is not a fixed and

immovable quantity. Like personality, it is alive and changing, susceptible to influence and experience, liable to psychic contagion from the thoughts and emotions of others. There is no pure nationality. Hybrids are regarded as inferior creatures, as biological outlaws. The truth is, we are all hybrids. Our bluest blood has all the shades of common colour in it when examined ethnically. Great Britain—and Ireland—contains a mixture of Romans, Angles, Jutes, Saxons, Danes, Normans, and Celts. To-day, Scotch, Welsh, and Irish are mixtures within mixtures. And what is the British Empire? A conglomeration of races and languages, a pan-national product of conquest and colonization, in which the forces of racial modification are always at work obliterating old divisions and creating new claims to national recognition.

The Russian Empire, sown by Vikings, Slavs, and Mongols, has a rich racial flora, including Germans, Poles, Jews, Lithuanians, Letts, Roumanians, Afghans, Tartars, Finns, and scores of others. The Great Russians, the White Russians, and the Little Russians may each claim to have sprung from the purest Russian stock, but no one has as yet been able to settle satisfactorily the meaning of that claim. The Russians have successively been proved to be of Mongol, Slav, Teutonic, Aryan, Tartar, Celto-Slav, and Slav-Norman origin. Italy, believed to be the home of pure Latin blood, has sheltered and mingled a great number of races, such as Egyptians, Greeks, Spaniards, Slavs, Germans, Jews, and Normans. The Republics of Central and South America are to a large extent peopled by half-breeds. Here the commingling is flagrant and offensive to the partisan of the superiority of the white race. Spain in Mexico and Portugal in Brazil have produced a wild-garden crop which is the despair of the custodian of racial law and order. The search for national purity brings many unexpected discoveries and destroys various theories. It reveals the fact that America has no monopoly of racial amalgamation.

France and Germany appear to us as opposites and irreconcilables. Yet, if you pursue Germany to the hour of her birth you will find that her mother was France. Examine France physiologically and you will find that her muscles and arteries have a German consistency. A thorough investigation of the origins of Germany may prove that she is more Gaulish than Gaul. The Germanic invasions of France are matters of elementary history. Originally a mixture of Ligurians, Celts, Phœnicians, Greeks, and Romans, she is only Latin in part. Cæsar conquered Gaul, but the Roman mixture has not obliterated previous or subsequent additions. The Latin blood of France was thoroughly diluted by Visigoths, Burgundians, Franks, Vandals, Normans, and other peoples of Germanic stamp. When Gaul was partitioned into the Burgundian kingdom, Austrasia, and Neustria, there were already present the selective processes which, centuries later, shaped the French and the German souls. Neustria clung to Roman culture, whilst Austrasia nurtured the seeds of the specific *Kultur* which attained its full bloom in the twentieth century. Through rivalry and war the two types persisted. Charlemagne crushed the rebellious Saxon spirit and conquered Bavaria. He unified the divergent tendencies, but only for a time. In 843 his empire was partitioned. France grew out of the western portion, Germany out of the eastern. Lotharingia or Lorraine was established as a middle kingdom. Did kind Fates design it as a guarantee of peace and stability?

The Germans are apt to claim for themselves a pure and Valhallic origin, an exceptionally unmixed descent of the highest attributes. The primogenial origin may be hidden in obscurity, but the German people have absorbed Gauls, Serbs, Poles, Wends, and a medley of Slav and Celtic races which confound all claims to racial purity. Slavs settled in Teutonic countries and Teutons settled in Slavonic countries. The German colonists who invaded Russia at the invitation of Catherine II were imported to strengthen Russia, just as the Great Elector helped thousands of Huguenots fleeing from France to settle in Brandenburg, and gave them the rights of citizenship for the sake of the vitality which they would impart to his depopulated country.

The belief in the unalloyed purity of races and the consequent battles for national exclusiveness seem to be founded on one of those gigantic illusions which hold humanity captive for centuries. Here, as elsewhere, knowledge will spell freedom. When we realize that here and now nations are in course of transformation, that the divisions of the past are not the divisions of to-day, and that we, despite conservatism and resistance, are made to serve as ingredients in some great mixture of to-morrow, momentous questions arise. Are nations made by war and conquest? Are peoples amalgamated by oppressive legislation? Do political alliances between States create international unities?

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Such alliances have not in the past caused any organic union. The nations have met like partners at a ball and danced to the tune of the dynastic or religious quarrel which happened to be paramount at the time. The grouping of nations in alliances has simply been a means of more effective prosecution of military campaigns, a temporary convenience to be discarded when no longer needed. If the example of the past is to be followed, then Great Britain, France, Russia, Italy, and America, though holding hands now, will separate when the war is over, and may find it necessary to use the same hands for chastizing each other. Alliances have been political games and devices, useful or useless according to the shrewdness of their instigators, but of no value in promoting love between nations. Old-time enemies become friends, and old-time friends become enemies at the command of the political drill-sergeant. England was the hereditary enemy of France. Prussia was the ally of England. In the war of the Austrian succession, France in alliance with Prussia fought England and Austria. During the Seven Years War Prussia, allied to England, fought Austria allied to France. England, allied to France and Turkey, fought Russia in the Crimea. Turn the kaleidoscope of history and you see the English driven out of Normandy, Napoleon defiling Moscow, the Russians attacking Montmartre. Any schoolboy, can trace the changing partners in the grand alliances of the past, or refuse to commit them to memory on account of the bewildering fluctuations in international friendship.

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A fiery common hate, though acting as a powerful cement for a time, is no guarantee of durability. Napoleon and the French were hated by the nations, as Wilhelm and the Germans are hated to-day. Rapacious designs for hegemony have always brought about a corresponding amount of defensive unity on the part of those whose independence was threatened. Whether it is Spain or France or Germany that dreams of world-supremacy, the result is international combination. Richelieu and Bismarck rouse the same resentment. A great hatred cannot by itself create a lasting unity, for hatred is apt to grow out of bonds, and, having settled its legitimate prey outside the circle, generally ends by turning on its neighbours within it.

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Who can deny that nations have been made by conquest? Heroic self-defence, anger, bitter opposition to the violation of liberty, are of little avail if the psychological factors are favourable to amalgamation. A few decades, a few centuries, and there is fusion between oppressor and oppressed. Hence the loyalty of conquered nations to their foreign masters, at times, when rivals vainly hope for trouble. Hence the indisputable fact that many a nation which but a short time ago fought valiantly for liberty now manifests not only passive resignation, but positive contentment. If, on the other hand, the psychological factors do not favour amalgamation, the legacy of resentment and opposition is handed on from generation to generation and the injury is never forgiven. Cases of contented acceptance are quoted as evidence of the ultimate blessings of war by the adherents of the theory that efficient military measures constitute right. To me they are rather evidence of the strength and endurance of the pacifying forces in human life, and of the sovereignty of the greater unities which draw nations together. If, in spite of the injuries and devastations of war, it is possible for men to forgive and to labour for the same social ends, that is surely proof that the peoples erect no barrier to

brotherhood. The truth is, war sometimes achieves that which pacific settlement and free intercourse always achieve.

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History has a cavalier way of recording the benefits of conquest. The feelings of the great conquered receive scant consideration. It is enough that after the passage of some centuries we contemplate the matter and declare the conquest to have been beneficial. Was not France invigorated by the wild Northmen who overran her territories and settled wherever they found settlement advantageous? The Normans, originally pirates and plunderers, intermingled with the gentler inhabitants of France. When they turned their eyes to England they were already guardians of civilization. And we blandly record the Norman conquest of England as an unqualified benefit, as an impetus to social amenity, art, learning, architecture, and religion. Protests are useless. The earth abounds in instances of the spread of knowledge, inventions, culture, through war and subjugation. The "rude" peoples who cried out at the outrage, and who fain would have kept their rudeness, receive no sympathy from posterity.

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This, I repeat, is no argument for the perpetuation of the old ways of aggression. We have reached a new consciousness and a new responsibility. We see better ways of spreading the fruits of civilization. In the past ambition and brute force, hatred and suspicion, fear and deceit, have had full play. In spite of barbaric warfare and Machiavellian politics the human desire for unity and co-operation has not been uprooted.

The principle of nationality is emerging from the tortuous confusion of the ages. We see that it follows no arbitrary rules of state or empire. It is a law unto itself: the law of mental attraction and community. The centres of passionate nationhood—Poland, Finland, Ireland—withstand all attempts at suppression. You cannot break a strong will to national independence by sledge-hammer blows. In all the wars of the past nations have been treated with contemptuous indifference to the wishes of the people. They were there to be seized and used, invaded and evacuated at a price, to be bought and sold for some empirical or commercial consideration. In the treaties of peace, princes and statesmen tossed countries and populations to each other as if they had been balls in a game of chance.

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A new conception of human dignity and of the inviolability of natural rights now demands a revaluation of all the motives and objects for which governments send subjects to battle. Democracy is finding her international unity. A great many wars of the past are recognized as having been, not only unnecessary, but positively foolish. The force of an idea is threatening to dispel the force of arms. The idea which rises dominant out of the European war is the conviction that nations have a right to choose their own allegiance or independence; that there must be freedom instead of compulsion; that real nationality is a psychological state, a tribute of sympathy, a voluntary service to which the mind is drawn by affection. To some who lightly praised the idea, treating it as an admirable prop to war, the consequences and application will bring dismay. For here you have the pivot of a social revolution such as the world has never yet seen. It cannot only remain a question of Belgium, or Serbia, or Alsace-Lorraine. It will inevitably be retrospective and prospective. It cannot be limited to the possessions of Germany or Austria or Turkey. It will not pass over India, South Africa, and Egypt. All empires have been extended by conquest of unwilling nationalities. Bitter wars have been fought in Europe for colonial supremacy in other continents. The unwilling tribes of Africa, Asia, and America who have been suppressed or exterminated to make room for the expanding nations of Europe knew little of the liberty of choice which has now become the beacon of militant morality. The principle—if triumphant—will be destructive of empire based on military force. It will be destructive of war, for war is national compulsion in its most logical and uncompromising form. If there is nothing and nobody to conquer, if you may not use armies to widen your national frontiers, or to procure valuable land for economical

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exploitation, the incentive to war will be removed. The principle will be constructive of a commonwealth of nations, and empires which have achieved a spiritual unity will survive the change of form.

161 Nationality may be merely instinctive. It is characterized by the my-country-right-or-wrong attitude, and knows not the difference between Beelzebub and Michael. It is primitive and unreasoning. Nationality may be compulsory—a sore grievance and a bitter reproach to existence. It may be a matter of choice, free and deliberate, a source of joy and social energy. Such nationality—whether inborn or acquired—is the best and safest asset which a State can possess. It is generally supposed that the naturalized subject must be disloyal in a case of conflict between his country of adoption and his country of birth. Such a view assumes that all sense of nationality is of the primitive and unreasoning kind. It precludes all the psychological factors of attraction, education, friendship, adoption, amalgamation. It is ignorant of the fact that some of the bitterest enemies of Germany are Germans, who have left Germany because they could stand her no longer. These men have a much keener knowledge of her weak spots than the visitors who give romantic accounts in newspapers of her internal state. The whole process of naturalization may be rendered unnecessary and undesirable by future developments in international co-operation. As things are, it is a formal and legal confirmation of an allegiance which must exist before the certificate of citizenship is sought. Once given, the certificate should be honoured and the oath respected. To treat it as a scrap of paper is unworthy of a State which upholds constitutional rights. There are doubtless scoundrels amongst naturalized people. It would be strange if there were not. But to proclaim that a naturalized subject cannot love the country of his choice as much as the country of his birth is as rational as the statement that a man cannot love his wife as much as he loves his mother. Now I have touched on a delicate point. He may love his wife, but he must repudiate his mother, curse her, abuse her, disown her. In time of war some do, and some do not. I am not sure that the deepest loyalty is accompanied by the loudest curses.

162 There is a class of people—I have met them in every country—who are devotees of the simple creed that you should stay at home and not interfere in the affairs of others. Travel you may, with a Baedeker or a Cook's guide, and stay you may in hotels provided for the purpose, but you must do it in a proper way and at proper times, and preserve a strict regard for your national prerogatives. But you should not go and live in countries which are not your own. To such people there is something almost indecent in the thought that any one should deliberately wish to shed his own nationality and clothe himself in another. They form the unintelligent background against which the wild and lurid nationalists of every tribe disport themselves in frenzied movements of hate and antagonism. An irate old colonel (very gouty) said to me the other day: "A man who forgets his duties to his own country and settles in another is a damnable cur. So much for these dirty foreigners who overrun England."

163 I ventured to remind him that the English have settled in a good many places: in America, in Australia, in spots fair and foul, friendly and unfriendly; that they have brought afternoon tea and sport and Anglican services to the pleasure resorts of Europe and the deserts of Africa. Meeting with no response, I embarked on a short account of the past travels and achievements of the Dutch, the Spaniards, and the French in the art of settlement in foreign lands. I ended up by prophesying that the aeroplane of the future will transport us swiftly from continent to continent and make mincemeat of the last remnants of our national exclusiveness. He was not in the least perturbed. "That is all rubbish," he said; "people ought to stick to their own country."

164 I am afraid neither he nor anybody else can check the wanderings of individuals and peoples which have gone on ever since man discovered that

he has two legs with which he can move about. And naturalization, after all, is an easy way of acquiring new and possibly useful citizens. The subjects come willingly, whilst the millions who are made subjects by war and subjugation are sometimes exceedingly troublesome. After all, the aim of all the great kingdoms has been to increase and strengthen the population, and differences of nationality have been treated as but trifling obstacles in the way. If the principle of free nationality which is now stirring the world and inspiring a war of liberation is to triumph, then the liberty won must include the individuals who prefer a chosen to a compulsory political allegiance.

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Sometimes the forces of attraction and repulsion create strong ties of sympathy or lead to acts of repudiation which cross frontiers irrespectively of the indications on the barometer of foreign politics. A man may find his spiritual home in the most unexpected place. He may irresistibly be drawn by the currents of philosophy and art to a foreign country. The customs in his own may drive him to bitter denunciation. No one has said harder things of Germany than Nietzsche. Schopenhauer wished it to be known that he despised the German nation on account of its infinite stupidity, and that he blushed to belong to it. Heine fled from Germany in intellectual despair. "If I were a German," he wrote, "and I am no German...." His heart was captured by the French. Goethe and Frederick the Great were both profoundly influenced by the French spirit. Voltaire was most useful at the Prussian Court, for he corrected the voluminous literary and political output which his Prussian majesty penned—in French. But there was something more than mere utility in the tie between the philosopher and the monarch. Frederick was not only trying to handle heavy German artillery with light French esprit; his mind craved for the spices of Gallic wit, his thought was ever striving to clothe itself in the form of France. Another "great" German, Catherine II of Russia, also moved within the orbit of the French philosophers.

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Admiration of Germany and German ways has found the strongest expression in foreigners, and the megalomania from which her sons suffer today may be traced to such outbursts of adulation. Carlyle, the most representative of pro-German men of letters in the Victorian era, wrote in 1870:

Alone of nations, Prussia seems still to understand something of the art of governing, and of fighting enemies to said art. Germany from of old, has been the peaceablest, most pious, and in the end most valiant and terriblest of nations. Germany ought to be the President of Europe, and will again, it seems, be tried with that office for another five centuries or so.... This is her *first* lesson poor France is getting. It is probable she will require many such.

This is blasphemy indeed at the present time. Charles Kingsley was no less emphatic in his admiration of Germany. Writing on the Franco-Prussian War to Professor Max Müller, he said:

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Accept my loving congratulations, my dear Max, to you and your people. The day which dear Bunsen used to pray, with tears in his eyes, might not come till the German people were ready, has come, and the German people are ready. Verily God is just and rules too; whatever the Press may think to the contrary. My only fear is lest the Germans should think of Paris, which cannot concern them, and turn their eyes away from that which does concern them, the retaking of Alsace (which is their own), and leaving the Frenchman no foot of the Rhine-bank. To make the Rhine a word not to be mentioned by the French henceforth ought to be the one object of wise Germans, and that alone.... I am full of delight and hope for Germany.

And to Sir Charles Bunbury:

I confess to you that were I a German I should feel it my duty to my country to send my last son, my last shilling, and after all my own self, to the war, to get that done which must be done, done so that it will never need doing again. I trust that I should be able to put vengeance out of my heart, to forget all that Germany has suffered for two hundred years past from that vain, greedy, restless nation, all even which she suffered, women as well as men, in the late French war.

The attraction of Germany is not only paramount in literature, in Walter Scott and Mill and Matthew Arnold; the superiority of German blood and constitution was an article of faith of the Victorians. The sins of Prussia were forgiven with amazing alacrity. The base attacks on Austria and Denmark evoked no moral indignation. German influence on English life was not only welcomed; historians went so far as to proclaim the identity of England and Germany. Thus Freeman, in a lecture in 1872, stated that "what is Teutonic in us is not merely one element among others, but that it is the very life and essence of our national being..." Houston Chamberlain, in his reverent unravelling of the greatness of the Germanic peoples, is merely carrying on the tradition of the Victorian age. In the application of theories he is a disciple of Gobineau, a Frenchman, who after a profound study of the inequality of the human race became convinced of the superiority and high destiny of Germany. Gobineau and Chamberlain have told the Germans that they are mighty and unconquerable, and the Germans have listened with undisguised pleasure.

Gobineau may be set aside as a professor of a fixed idea. There are other Frenchmen who have paid glowing tribute to Germany. Taine excelled in praise of her intellectual vigour and productivity. Victor Hugo expressed his love and admiration for her people, and confessed to an almost filial feeling for the noble and holy fatherland of thinkers. If he had not been French he would have liked to have been German. Ernest Renan studied Germany, and found her like a temple—so pure, so moral, so touching in her beauty. This reminds us of the many who during the present war, though ostensibly enemies of Germany, spend half their time in proclaiming her perfection and the necessity for immediate imitation of all her ways. Madame de Staël and Michelet expressed high regard for German character and institutions. There are degrees and qualities of attraction and absorption, varying from the amorous surrender with which Lafcadio Hearn took on Japanese form to the bootlicking flattery which Sven Hedin heaps on the Germans. (It is quite futile to seek for an explanation of Hedin's conduct in his Jewish-Prussian descent. He would lackey anywhere. Strindberg dealt faithfully with Hedin's pretensions. Strindberg, alas! is dead, but his exposure of Hedin has been strangely justified.)

Heine is an example of the curious and insistent fascination with which the mind may be drawn to one nationality whilst it is repelled by another. His judgment on England is painful in the extreme:

"It is eight years since I went to London," he writes in the Memoirs, "to make the acquaintance of the language and the people. The devil take the people and their language! They take a dozen words of one syllable into their mouth, chew them, gnaw them, spit them out again, and they call that talking. Fortunately they are by nature rather silent, and although they look at us with gaping mouths, yet they spare us long conversations."

Can anything be more sweeping? Can anything be more untrue? "Fortunately they are by nature rather silent"—imagine the reversed verdict had Heine attended a general election campaign! The unattractiveness of England is softened by the women. "If I can leave England alive, it will not be the fault of the women; they do their best." This is praise indeed, when placed side by side with his dismissal of the women of Hamburg. They are plump, we are told, "but the little god Cupid is to blame, who often sets the sharpest of love's darts to his bow, but from naughtiness or clumsiness shoots too low, and hits the women of Hamburg not in the heart but in the stomach."

France was as delightful as England was doleful:

"My poor sensitive soul," he cries, "that often recoiled in shyness from German coarseness, opened out to the flattering sounds of French urbanity. God gave us our tongues so that we might say pleasant things to our fellow-men.... Sorrows are strangely softened. In the air of Paris wounds are healed quicker than anywhere else; there is something so noble, so gentle, so sweet

in the air as in the people themselves.”

I suppose the only analogy to such superlative contentment is provided by the phenomenon known as falling in love. Happily we do not all choose the same object of affection. England has a curious way of inspiring either great and lasting love or irritation and positive dislike. There seems to be little or no indifference. I believe love predominates.

172 From exiled kings to humble refugees, from peripatetic philosophers to indolent aborigines, the testimony of her charm can be gathered. I speak as a victim. I love England with a fervour born of admiration (without admiration no one ever falls in love). I love her ways and her mind, I love her chilly dampness and her hot, glowing fires (attempts to analyse and classify love are always silly). In her thinkers and workers, in her schemes and efforts for social improvement, in her freedom of thought and speech I found my mental *milieu*.

To me England is inexpressibly dear, not because a whole conspiracy of influences—educational, conventional, patriotic—were at work persuading me that she is worthy of affection. I myself discovered her loveliness. Your Chauvinist is always a mere repeater. He is but a member of the Bandar-Log, shouting greatness of which he knows nothing. True love does not need the trumpets of Jingoism. I have no room for lies about England: the truth is sufficient for me. Though I love England, I have affection to spare for other countries. I feel at home in France, in Sweden, in America, in Switzerland. Your Chauvinist will excuse the former affections on account of “blood.” Swedish-French by ties of ancestry, such a sense of familiarity is natural when set against my preternatural love of England.

173 Chauvinism flourishes exceedingly on the soil of national conceit. That conceit is prodigious and universal. The Germans are past-masters in the art of self-glorification, and their pan-German literature is certainly not only bold but ingenious in this respect. Is any one great outside Germany? Very well, let us trace his German origin. It may be remote, it may be hidden by centuries of illusory nationality, but it must be there. France has her apostles of superiority. Their style is more flexible, their pretensions less clumsy, but they neglect no opportunity of seducing us into a belief that France, and France only, is mistress of the human mind. Russia has her fervid declaimers of holy excellence and the superior quality of the Slav character. It does not matter whether the country is great or small, whether it be Montenegro or Cambodia, it always contains souls who feel constrained to give the world a demonstration of their overflowing superiority. Pan-Germanism, pan-Slavism, pan-Magyarism, pan-Anglosaxism, pan-Americanism grow out of such conceit, systematized by professors and sanctified by bishops.

174 The conceit of nationality often fosters great deeds, and generally finds expression that is more aggressive than intelligent. It takes hold of the most unlikely subjects. It is a potent destroyer of balanced judgment, and will pitilessly make the most solemn men ridiculous. The outbursts of Emerson when under its influence are truly amazing. “If a temperate wise man should look over our American society,” he said in a lecture, “I think the first danger which would excite his alarm would be the European influences on this country.... See the secondariness and aping of foreign and English life that runs through this country, in building, in dress, in eating, in books.”

This rejection savours of the contempt with which some young men turn their backs on the fathers who fashioned them. “Let the passion for America,” he cried, “cast out the passion for Europe. Here let there be what the earth waits for—exalted manhood.” He gives a picture of the finished man, the gentleman who will be born in America. He defines the superiority of such a man to the Englishman:

Freer swing his arms; farther pierce his eyes, more forward and forthright his whole build and rig than the Englishman's, who, we see, is much imprisoned in his backbone.



It is difficult to surmise the exact meaning of being imprisoned in one's backbone. The possession of plenty of backbone is generally held to be a decided advantage. Emerson may have had special and transcendental prejudices against strongly fashioned vertebræ.

The freaks of nationalism are as remarkable as the freaks of internationalism. There is a constant interplay between the two, and the ascendancy of the one or the other often seems strangely capricious. Nationalism is weak where it should be strong, and rigid where common sense would make it fluid. The painful position of most royal families in time of war is an example of the readiness with which nations submit to foreign rulership and influence. Thrones, one would think, should represent the purely national spirit in its more intimate and sacred aspect. Yet the abundance of crowned rulers, past and present, attached by solemn selection or marriage, who are not by blood and tradition of the people, shows the fallacy of this supposition. Napoleon was an Italian who learnt French with some difficulty, and who was at first hostile to the French and somewhat contemptuous of their ways. Maréchal Bernadotte—French to his finger-tips—became King of Sweden. Pierre Loti, interviewing the charming and beloved Queen of the Belgians during the present war, remembers that the martyred lady before him is a Bavarian princess. The delicate and painful subject is mentioned. "It is at an end," says the Queen; "between *them* and me has fallen a curtain of iron which will never again be lifted."

Prominent statesmen, who, one would also think, should be bone of the bone of the nations for which they speak, have often been of alien birth or of mixed racial composition. Bismarck was of Slav origin; Beaconsfield was a Jew. The most picturesque example of such irregularities of the national consciousness is perhaps the presence of General Smuts in the War Cabinet. Once the alert and brave enemy in arms against this country, he is now its trusted guide, philosopher, and friend.

Writers whom posterity classes as typical representatives of the national genius have often been of mixed racial strain, as were Tennyson, Browning, Ibsen, Kant, Victor Hugo, Dumas, Longfellow, and Whitman. The "bastards" of internationalism, so offensive to some nationalist fire-eaters, are not produced by the simple and natural processes by which races are mixed. They are self-created, their minds are set on gathering the varied fruit of all the nations. Genealogically they may be as uninteresting as the snail in the cabbage-patch, spiritually they are provocative and arresting. Romain Rolland and George Brandes challenge and outrage the champions of nationalism by the very texture of their minds. Joseph Conrad, a Pole, stands side by side with Thomas Hardy in his mastership of contemporary English fiction. Conrad in his consummate interpretation of sea-life is, if anything, more English than Hardy.

The future of internationalism is possibly fraught with greater wonders than has been the past. The path will certainly not be laid out with the smoothness which some enthusiasts imagine. The idea and the hope are old as the hills. Cicero proclaimed a universal society of the human race. Seneca declared the world to be his country. Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius declared themselves citizens of the world. St. Paul explained that there is neither Jew nor Greek. John Wesley looked upon the world as his parish. "The world is my country, mankind are my brothers," said Thomas Paine. "The whole world being only one city," said Goldsmith, "I do not care in which of the streets I happen to reside."

Such complete impartiality is a little too detached for the make-up of present humanity. It may suit an etherialized and mobile race of the future. We are dependent on conditions of space and surroundings, we are the creatures of association and love. The master-problem in internationalism is the elimination of the forces of prejudice and ignorance that foster hostility, and the preservation of the precious characteristics which are the riches of

## RELIGION IN TRANSITION

The general destructiveness of war is patent to everybody. The destruction of life, of property, of trade, strikes the most superficial observer as inevitable consequences of a state of war. At the outbreak of hostilities most of us foresaw that the uprooting would not stop short at the sacrifices of livelihood and occupation which were demanded by military necessities. We expected a sweeping revision of our habits, our prejudices, our conventions. We have got infinitely more than we expected. Not only have we made acquaintance with the State—the State as a relentless master of human fate and service; not only have we learnt that individualism—philosophic or commercial—is borne like a bubble on the waters of national tribulation and counts for nothing in the mass of collective effort demanded from us. Industry, commerce, art, learning, science, energy, enthusiasm, every gift and power within the range of human capacity, is requisitioned for the efficient pursuit of war. Liberty of action, of speech, ancient rights which were won by centuries of struggle, are taken away because we are more useful and less troublesome without them. We are made parts of the machinery of State, and we have to be drilled and welded into the proper shape.

The changes imposed on us from without are thorough and have been surprisingly many, but the changes taking place within our own souls are deeper and likely to surprise us more in the end. Everything has been found untenable. Theories and systems are shaken by the great upheaval. Civilization has become a question instead of a postulate. All human thought is undergoing a process of retrospection, drawn by a desire to find a new and stable beginning. Take down Spencer and Comte or Lecky and Kidd from your bookshelf and try to settle down to a contented contemplation of the sociological tenets of the past. You will fail, for you will feel that this is a new world with burning problems and compelling facts which cannot be covered by the old systems. Take down the old books of religious comfort—Thomas à Kempis, or Bunyan, or St. Augustine, and you feel their remoteness from the new agonies of soul. But it is not only the old books of piety which fail to satisfy the hunger of to-day; the mass of devotional writings, especially produced to meet the needs of the war, are painfully inadequate. Rightly or wrongly, there is a sense of the inadequacy of the thought of the past to meet the need of the present. It invades every recess of the mind, it interposes itself in science as well as in religion; it leaves us no peace.

There can be no doubt about it: we are blighted by the great destructiveness. All attempts to keep the war from our thoughts are destined to fail. Without being struck in an air-raid or torpedoed on the high seas, there is a sufficiency of destructive force in the daily events and in our accommodation to live on for them or in spite of them.

Hence the universal demand for reconstruction. It is a blessed word: we cling to it, we live by it. So many buildings have tumbled about our ears, so many foundations were nothing but running sand; a whole galaxy of truths turned out to be lies. Now we must prepare that which is solid and indestructible. Perhaps some great and wise spirit brooding over our world, learned with the experience of æons, of human attempts and mistakes, smiles at the deadly earnestness of the intention to reconstruct. I do not care. We have reached a pass when all life and all hope are centred in this faith: the faith that we can make anew and good and beautiful the distorted web of human existence.

The war has not taught us what civilization is. But it has taught us what it is not. We know now that it is not mechanical ingenuity or clever inventions or

commercialism carried to its utmost perfection. Civilization is not railways or telephones or vast cities or material prosperity. A satisfactory definition of civilization is well-nigh impossible. The past has born a bewildering number of different types, and it is a matter of personal taste where we place the line of demarcation between barbarism and culture. Our Christian civilization is passing through catastrophic changes, and it is again a matter of opinion whether it is in its death-throes or in the pangs of a new birth. But we feel vaguely, yet insistently, that civilization is a state of the soul; it is the gentle life towards which we aspire. It is based on the gradual substitution of moral and spiritual forces for simple brute force. What is the exact relation of religion to civilization? The answer has been as variable as the purpose of the questioners. To some religion is civilization, to others it is merely a temporary weakness of the human mind, to which it will always be prone from fear of the unknown and the wish to live for ever. Comparative studies of the great religions of the world, their past and present forms, do not support the view that civilization is identical with religion. Religions have on many occasions ranged themselves on the side of brute force to the suppression of gentleness and sympathetic tolerance. It is really all a question of the meaning which we attach to the word "religion." Do we mean the Church, set forms of worship and ceremonial, or do we mean the human craving for spiritual truth with the consequent strife to reach certainty, and, in certainty, peace of soul? There is a gulf between the two conceptions of religion.

Religion is questioned as never heretofore. The great destructiveness is passing over the old beliefs. In the clamour for reconstruction we must clearly distinguish between the wider religious life and mere denominationalism.

The vast host of rationalists are busy proclaiming the downfall of religion. The war serves them as material for demonstration. The failure of Christianity to avert bloodshed, and the horrors under which Christendom is now submerged, are naturally used as a proof that the ethic of Christianity is lamentably feeble. The difference between theoretical Christianity and the social practices which the Church condones is held to be damning evidence of hypocrisy and falsehood. The quarrels between sects and divisions, the petty subjects which rouse the ire of the orthodox mind, the persistent quibbling over insignificant details of faith and service, have strained rationalistic patience to the breaking-point. The Church has been found fiddling whilst Rome burns.

Our little rationalists are right, perfectly right, when they point to the shortcomings of the Churches. But they confuse the form with the substance, the frailties of human nature with the irrepressible desire to find God. They have their small idols and their conventional forms of worship, which, if put to the great social test, would prove as ineffective in building the City of Light as the churchgoing of the past. Their prime deity is Science. We are on the point of developing intelligence, they tell us; we at last see through the silly theories about God and the Universe, which deluded the childish and the ignorant of past ages. Assisted by the sound of guns and the sight of general misery, we must at last realize that there is no God to interfere in the troubles of man, and that Churches and creeds are hopeless failures. Science, we are assured, will take the place of religion.

I am a patient and sympathetic student of the propagandist literature of rationalism. I have the greatest admiration for the moral and social idealism which is advocated. I agree that the atheological moral idea is superior to the mere performance of religious ceremonial. But I cannot admire the reasoning or the intelligence of those who use a smattering of science as evidence of the decay of religion. There is something almost comical in the solemnity with which they contrast the commonplaces of scientific observation with the vast mysteries of religion, to the detriment of the latter. "These marvellous researches of the human eye," writes Sir Harry Johnston in a collection of articles entitled *A Generation of Religious Progress*, presumably intended to

portray our rationalistic progress, "so far, though they have sounded the depths of the Universe, have found no God." He is speaking of astronomical investigation, and he has just emphasized the reliability of our five senses.

One wonders whether he is simply echoing the well-known phrase of Laplace, or whether he seriously believes that the non-existence of God is proved by the inability of the human eye to see Him! Nothing could be more unscientific—one hates using that hackneyed expression, but there is no other—than this confidence in the reliability of the senses. It reminds one of the young man who said he could not believe in God because he had not seen Him. He could only believe in things which he could see. "Do you believe you have a brain?" some one asked. The young man did. "And have you seen it?" was the next question.

I shall be told that though the young man could not—fortunately—see his own brain, others might by opening his skull, and that no dissection of brains or examination of stars has ever shown us God. This is exactly the point where our easygoing rationalist misses the mark. Brains and stars do show God to those who have developed the faculties wherewith to perceive Him.

The senses are, after all, very fallible and very variable. A little opium, a little alcohol, a blow on the head, or some great emotion will modify their judgment to an incredible degree. Sir Harry Johnston may not be very representative as an exponent of scientific conclusions about the existence of God, but he is interesting and typical of much of the rough-and-ready opposition to formulated religion. I quote the upshot of his admiration for the feats of the human eye:

Religion, as the conception of a heavenly being, or heavenly beings, hovering about the earth and concerning themselves greatly with the affairs of man, has been abolished for all thoughtful and educated people by the discoveries of science. Perhaps, however, I should not say "abolished" as being too final; I should prefer to say that such theories have been put entirely in the background as unimportant Compared with the awful problems which affect the welfare and progress of humanity on this planet.

The honesty of the conviction is not marred by the fact that it is entirely mistaken. "God is infinitely more remote now (in 1916) from the thoughts of the educated few than he was prior to 1859," writes Sir Harry. This statement is not true. Speculation about God, the meaning of life, the social import of Christianity, was never more rife amongst educated people. Here I must check myself: what does "educated" mean? To be able to read and write, and say "Hear, hear" at public meetings? To have a pretty idea of the positions of Huxley and Haeckel by which to confound the poor old Bible? If by education we mean the exposition of some special branch of the physical sciences, the statement may be true. If we mean men and women with a general knowledge of life and letters, with a social consciousness and humanitarian sympathies, it is ridiculously wide of the truth. There is everywhere a hunger for a satisfying explanation of life. There are restlessness and impatience with dogma and creed, there is a growing indifference to the old sectarian exclusiveness, but there is above all a new interest in God. We need not go to Mr. Bernard Shaw or Mr. Wells for testimony to this interest. They reflect the religious renaissance which is the essence of the reconstruction for which men crave. The symptoms are accessible to the observation of all. Neither priestly intolerance nor rationalistic prejudice can suppress them.

In *The Bankruptcy of Religion*, Mr. Joseph McCabe develops the case against religion with the skill of a trained controversialist. Like the converted sinner in the ranks of the Salvation Army, Mr. McCabe carries special weight to the lines of rationalists and ethicists. For he was once a priest and lived in a monastery, and he left the priesthood and the monastery convinced of the worthlessness of both. He is, therefore, *persona gratissima* at the High Court of Reason. "The era of religious influence closes in bankruptcy," he informs us. He has no patience with attempts at religious reconstruction; he asks us to

shake ourselves free of the vanishing dream of heaven and to leave the barren tracts of religion. He exhorts us to abandon the "last illusions of the childhood of the race":

Linger no longer in the "reconstruction" of fables which once beguiled the Arabs of the desert and the Syrian slaves of Corinth, but set your hearts and minds to the making of a new earth! Sweep these ancient legends out of your schools and colleges, your army and navy, your code of law, your legislative houses, and substitute for them a spirit of progress, efficiency, boldness, and candour!

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Fine words, brave words, honest words, but hollow within. Mr. McCabe is no psychologist. The fables and legends of old times may be abandoned, the desire for the realities round which fable and legend grow remains and cannot be extirpated by a rationalistic operation. Supernaturalism—in the widest sense—is ineradicable. Religion will not be suspended by the discovery that it is possible to formulate excellent theories of social equity without the assistance of priests. The hunger of the human heart for knowledge of God persists though all the old religious systems may prove illusions.

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Our little rationalists imagine that they are hitting the foundations of religion when they successfully assail the crumbling walls of dogmas. Religious life escapes their fire. Faith and hope rise above disillusionment. Love knows instinctively that it is not made of dust. Through the darkness and the wilderness it calls to God, and lo! God responds with light and guidance which outlast earthquakes and massacres. Reject every creed that has been offered as an explanation of the mysteries of life, forsake all the humiliating, joy-killing penances for sin, and God will reveal Himself in the beauty of Nature. He will speak through the impulses of creative art, through music and poetry and painting. He will attract our thought through philosophy and our emotion through the impetus to improve the social order. And science—the greater science, which rejects dogmatism and lies of self-sufficiency as it rejects the crudities of the Creed—takes us by circuitous paths to new temples for the worship of God.

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The tenet that science and religion are incompatible and antagonistic, so dear to the hearts of the scientists in the middle of the nineteenth century, and still repeated with mechanical certainty in every secularist mission-hall, is likely to undergo a complete revision in the near future. The antagonism between dogmatic religion and materialistic science will never be removed. But the signs are apparent everywhere that religion is shedding its adherence to outer forms and entering into the freedom of the living spirit, whilst science is turning to problems which used to lie within the domain of unexplored religion. Religion will become scientific and science will become religious. The principles laid down by Darwin and Huxley have lost their power of stifling religious aspiration; the startling pronouncements in defiant materialism of Büchner and Haeckel now startle none but the ignorant. The anxiety to exclude scientific facts disappears with the realization that all truth, all knowledge, all reason, are subservient to the search for God. The struggle between the wish to believe and the temptation to think caused real distress of mind to many thinkers of the nineteenth century. The choice seemed to lie between atheism and blind submission to authority. "Let us humbly take anything the Bible says without trying to understand it, and not torment ourselves with arguments," said Charles Kingsley. "One word of Scripture is more than a hundred words of man's explaining." The modern mind does not dread the meeting of science and religion. It does not labour to reconcile them. It is conscious of their ultimate identity and their present insufficiency. Hence a new tolerance which is mistaken for indifference by the zealots on both sides. Hence the absence of actuality in the fierce denunciations of Bradlaugh and Holyoake and Ingersoll. They did valiant battle against religious formalism of the past; they were champions of reason and science at a time when religionists fought to exclude both.

It is not science which is undermining the future of institutional religion.

There is a new enemy, more subtle and more powerful. It is the growing consciousness of an intolerable inconsistency between religious theory and practice. The war thus becomes a stumbling-block to faithfulness to conventional Christianity, and the glee of the rationalist is pardonable. I again quote Mr. McCabe:

What did the clergy do to prevent the conflict? In which country did they denounce the preparations for the conflict, or the incentives of the conflict? What have they done since it began to confine the conflict within civilized limits? Have they had, or used, a particle of moral influence throughout the whole bloody business? And, if not, is it not time we found other guardians and promoters of high conduct?

Apart from the fact that the Pope and some lesser religious leaders have denounced and deplored the conflict, and that a comprehensive answer to Mr. McCabe's question would somewhat modify the implied moral impotence of the clergy, we might ask the same questions of the leaders of secularist morality. What have they done to prevent the conflict? Why have their intellectual giants failed to impress upon mankind the folly of war? They have had freedom of speech and action, they have wielded incisive criticism and strength of invective. They have had many decades in which to put into practice the theory of the greatest happiness of the greatest number. But the problem of the persistence of war has somehow escaped atheists and rationalists, just as it has eluded theologians and revivalists.

We may admit that the clergy are more blameworthy than the orators of rationalism. If the teachings of Jesus Christ are to be applied to the art of war, then the art of war is doomed to extinction. If the Church be an international society, based on mutual love and peace, then the perpetration of war on members of the Church is clearly wrong. If the ideals of the Christian life be charity, gentleness, forgiveness, non-resistance to evil, then all war is a violation of the faith. The question is not unimportant. It is not a subject which you can toy with, or put aside as having no immediate bearing on life and duty. If the literal application of the teaching of Christ to social and political life be impossible, then the rationalists are right when they urge us to drop a religion which we profess on Sunday and repudiate on Monday. If the fault lies not in the teaching itself but in the feebleness of the Church, then the Church must clearly be counted a failure. If the cause of the discrepancy is to be found merely in the slowness and obstinacy of the human soul in following the path of righteousness, the practical realization of the Christian ideal will be but a question of time and effort.

The attitude of Christianity towards war may at best be described as a chapter of inconsistencies. "Can it be lawful to handle the sword," asked Tertullian, "when the Lord Himself has declared that he who uses the sword shall perish by it?" By disarming Peter, he stated, the Lord "disarmed every soldier from that time forward." To Origen, Christians were children of peace who, for the sake of Jesus, shunned the temptations of war, and whose only weapon was prayer. The difficulty of reconciling the profession of Christianity with the practice of war constantly exercised the minds of the early Christians. St. Basil advocated a compromise in the form of temporary exclusion from the sacrament after military service. St. Augustine came to the conclusion that the qualities of a good Christian and a good warrior were not incompatible. Gradually the dilemma ceased to trouble the minds of Christians as the needs of the State and citizenship of this world were recognized. After some centuries the Church not only approved of war, but herself became one of the most powerful instigators to military conquest. The Crusades and the ceaseless wars of religious intolerance became "holy" as the spiritual objection to bloodshed receded before the triumphant demands of primitive passions.

Now, as heretofore, we have episcopal reminders of the blessings of war. "May it not be," wrote the Bishop of London soon after the outbreak of the war in 1914, "that this cup of hardship which we drink together will turn out

to be the very draught which we need? Has there not crept a softness over the nation, a passion for amusement, a love of luxury among the rich, and of mere physical comfort among the middle class?"

He leaves the questions unanswered, and incidentally omits to dwell on the shortcomings of the poor in the direction of softness and luxury. He continues:

197 | Not such was the nation which made the Empire, which crushed the Armada, which braved hardships of old, and drove English hearts of oak seaward round the world. We believe the old spirit is here just the same, but it needed a purifying, cleansing draught to bring it back to its old strength and purity again, and for that second reason the cup which our Father has given us, shall we not drink it?

Much has been said in justification of this view of war from the biological point of view. Prussian militarists are experts in the exposition of similar theories. But from the Christian point of view the complacency with which the world-tragedy is put down as a "purifying, cleansing draught" is somewhat disconcerting. Dean Inge, writing in the *Quest* in the autumn of 1914, shows himself to be a disciple of the same school:

We see the fruits of secularism or materialism in social disintegration, in the voluntary sterility and timorous acquisitiveness of the prosperous, and in the recklessness and bitterness of the lower strata. A godless civilization is a disease of which nations die by inches. I hope that this visitation has come just in time to save us. Experience is a good school, but its fees are terribly high!

198 | Were we, then, really so bad that "this visitation" was needed to save us from voluntary sterility (by imposing compulsory?) and the other delinquencies enumerated by the Dean? The nature of the punishment hardly fits the crime. Moreover, such a conception of war as a wholesome corrective is practically indistinguishable from the panegyrics of the extreme militarists whom we are out utterly to destroy. "God will see to it," wrote Treitschke, "that war always recurs as a drastic medicine for the human race." "War," wrote General von Bernhardt, "is a biological necessity of the first importance, a regulative element in the life of mankind which cannot be dispensed with, since without it an unhealthy development will follow which excludes every advancement of the race, and, therefore, all real civilization." "A perpetual peace," said Field-Marshal von Moltke, "is a dream, and not even a beautiful dream. War is one of the elements of order in the world established by God. The noblest virtues of men are developed therein. Without war the world would degenerate and disappear in a morass of materialism." Many perplexed souls have turned to the Church for guidance during this time of destruction and sorrow, and the directions given have often increased the perplexity. The Bishop of Carlisle expressed the opinion that if we were really Christians the war would not have happened. Archdeacon Wilberforce and Father Bernard Vaughan stated that killing Germans was doing service to God. Many who have suffered at the hands of the Germans will be inclined to agree, but the trouble from the point of view of the Christian ethic is not removed by such a simple solution. We cannot but suspect that German prelates have been found who have seen in the killing of women and children by air-raids on London a service to the German God. Dr. Forsyth, in *The Christian Ethic of War*, tells us that "war is not essentially killing, and killing is here no murder. And no recusancy to bear arms can here justify itself on the plea that Christianity forbids all bloodshed or even violence." He reminds us that Christ used a scourge of small cords, and that he called the Pharisees "you vipers," and Herod "you fox." "If the Christian man live in society," he tells us, "it is quite impossible for him to live upon the *precepts* of the Sermon on the Mount. But also it is not possible at a half-developed stage to live in actual relations of life and duty on its *principle* except as an *ideal*." The Roman form of internationalism he regards "as not only useless to humanity (which the present attitude of the Pope to the war shows) but as mischievous to it."

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It is strange that whilst the war has caused a number of ordained representatives of the Christian Church to declare that practical Christianity is an impossibility and the Sermon on the Mount a beautiful but ineffective ideal, it has brought agnostics and heathen to a conviction that socialized Christianity is the sovereign remedy for the national and international disease. They have reached the conclusion that the ethic of the Sermon on the Mount is the revolutionary leaven for which the world is waiting. In his preface on *The Prospects of Christianity*, Mr. Bernard Shaw tells us that he is "as sceptical and scientific and modern a thinker as you will find anywhere." This assurance is intended to help us to regain breath after the preceding pronouncement:

I am no more a Christian than Pilate was, or you, gentle reader; and yet, like Pilate, I greatly prefer Jesus to Annas and Caiaphas; and I am ready to admit that after contemplating the world and human nature for nearly sixty years, I see no way out of the world's misery but the way which would have been found by Christ's will if He had undertaken the work of a modern practical statesman.

This is one of the outstanding mental phenomena of the war: sceptics and thinkers have begun to examine Christianity as a practical way of social salvation. There is a tendency to re-examine the gospel, not with intent to lay stress on historical weakness or points of similarity with other religions, but with the poignant interest which men lost in the desert display towards possible sources of water. It may appear as a coldly intellectual interest in some who are wont to deal with the tragedies of life as mildly amusing scenes in a drama of endless fatuity. But the coldness is a little assumed. There are others who do not attempt to disguise that their whole emotional life is stirred to passionate protest and inquiry, who, though Christians by profession and duly appointed ministers of God, call for a recommendation of Christianity and the establishment of a social order based on the principles of life laid down by Jesus Christ. In *The Outlook for Religion*, Dr. W. E. Orchard condemns the way of war as the complete antithesis of the way of the Cross. "How can people be so blind?" he cries. "Has all the ethical awakening of the past century been of so little depth that this bloody slaughter, this hellish torture, this treacherous game of war can still secure ethical approval?"

Perhaps the great majority of the clergy deserve the indictment of rationalists. Mr. McCabe can prove his case by citing the exceptions. After all, the accusation is neither new nor original. Voltaire set the tune. "Miserable physicians of souls," he exclaimed, "you declaim for five quarters of an hour against the mere pricks of a pin, and say no word on the curse which tears us into a thousand pieces."

Voltaire's powers of satire were roused by the spectacle of the different factions of Christians praying to the same God to bless their arms. The element of comicality in this aspect of war is greatly outweighed by that of pathos. Those who earnestly pray to God to lead them to victory must at any rate be firmly convinced that their cause is one of which God can approve. No believer would dare to invoke the blessing of God upon a cause which his conscience tells him is a mean and sordid enterprise. Voltaire's quarrel was really with the faith in war as a means of determining the intentions of the Divine Will. Success in war has been held, and is held, by Christians to be a sign of the favour of the Almighty. Bacon expounded this view to the satisfaction of coming generations when he referred to wars as "the highest trials of right" when princes and States "shall put themselves on the justice of God for the deciding of their controversies, by such success as it shall please Him to give on either side." The Germans have nauseated the world by their incessant proclamations that they are the favoured and chosen of God. The good old German God has vied with Jehovah of the Israelites in stimulating and sustaining the will to war.

Those atheists to whom all war is an abomination and entirely irreconcilable with the highest human attributes have found complete unanimity in their



repudiation of the idea of a presiding God of Battles in the dissenting objections to war expressed by Quakers, Christadelphians, Plymouth Brethren, and other sects of Christianity. There can be no doubt that the faith in war, and in the Divine guidance of war, is receding. The new conception of God, for which humanity is struggling, will be one entirely different from the jealous and cruel Master of Bloodshed to whom man has paid homage in the dark ages of the past. The truth is that the spiritual objection to war, the realization of its antisocial and inhuman qualities, is becoming a religious purpose which unites Christians and non-Christians, atheists and agnostics, and which carries with it at once a mordant condemnation of the interpretations of the past, and an irrepressible demand for a future free from the old menace and the old mistakes. All sane men and women want to abolish war. General Smuts believes that a passion for peace has been born which will prove stronger than all the passion for war which has overwhelmed us in the past. President Wilson seeks a peace identical with the freedom of life in which every people will be left free to determine its own polity and its own way of development, "unhindered, unthreatened, unafraid, the little along with the great and powerful." Statesmen see the ultimate hope for a free humanity in a change of heart. Mr. Asquith outlines the slow and gradual process by which a real European partnership, based on the recognition of equal right and established and enforced by a common will, will be substituted for force, for the clash of competing ambition, for groupings and alliances, and a precarious equipoise. Mr. Lloyd George insists that there must be "no next time." Viscount Grey warns us that if the world cannot organize against war, if war must go on, "then nations can protect themselves henceforth only by using whatever destructive agencies they can invent, till the resources and inventions of science end by destroying the humanity they were meant to serve." Leagues of nations are proposed, organization for peace on a scale commensurate with the past organization for war is recognized as the principal task of international co-operation.

This new revolt against war is inseparable from the religious revival of the time. The word "revival" conjures up memories of less strenuous times, when men were concerned with smaller problems, and uninspired by the bitter experience of the present—Spurgeon thundering in his Tabernacle, Salvation Army meetings, small gatherings in wayside villages, at which howling sinners were converted and revivalists counted their game by the dozen. The present revival is something for which the past provides no analogy. It is not concerned so much with individual salvation as with the salvation of the race and the world. The petty sins and shortcomings which brought men to the confessional and to the stool of repentance lose importance when compared with the awful omissions which we now recognize as the cause of the calamities which have befallen us. It is not only the existence of war that is rousing the conscience. War is seen to be but a symptom, a horrible outbreak of malignant forces, which we have nurtured and harboured in times of peace. These forces permeate the very structure of society. A new and fierce light beats on our slums, our industrialism, on the old divisions of class and quality, on the standards of comfort and success. Poverty, sickness, and child mortality—the whole hideous war of Mammon through which millions of our fellow-creatures are condemned to the perpetual service of Want—can no longer conveniently be left outside the operations of our religious consciousness.

One thing is certain: we can no longer be satisfied with a religion which pays lip-service to God, and offers propitiating incense to His wrath, whilst it ignores the misery and the suffering of those who have no reason to offer thanksgiving. Religious profession and religious action will have to be unified. The sense of social responsibility is slowly but surely taking the place of the anxiety to assure one's own salvation. Some churches are empty, dead; they have no message for the people, no vision wherewith to inspire the young. They might with advantage close, and their clergy be employed upon some

useful national service. Ritual and incantations are doubtless useful aids to religious worship and the necessary quietude of mind, but they are losing their hold over souls to whom religious life has become a matter of social service. These are of the order spoken of by Ernest Crosby:

None could tell me where my soul might be.  
I searched for God, but God eluded me.  
I sought my brother out—and found all three.

208 The number of “unbelievers” is growing. There are certain doctrines which we cannot believe because they violate our reason, or our sense of justice and fair play. Centuries ago it may have been possible to believe them: that is no concern of ours. To each age its own mind and its own enlightenment. What is more disquieting to the rulers of orthodoxy is that we do not care, that we cannot believe in certain doctrines. Doctrines are at a discount just now. The Church may quarrel over Kikuyu, or the Apostolic Succession, or the Virgin Birth, or marvel at the new possibility of a canon of the Church of England preaching a sermon in the City Temple. We feel that it is infinitely more important that a few experiments in practical Christianity should be imposed on the world. Religion in the past has been conceived as essentially a matter of suppressing the intellect, submitting to oppression and injustice, learning to bear patiently the inflictions of Providence. Religion in the future will demand all the attention which our feeble intellect can offer it, and the conscious and willing co-operation of mankind in the realization of God's plans for a regenerated world.

209 Whilst the Churches addicted to ritualism and literalism decline, the Brotherhood movement gains in force and influence. Men meet to give united expression to their religious impulses. They meet for prayer and worship, but never without immediate bearing on some great social question or object. Opinions are freely expressed. Heterodoxy in details of faith is rampant, and is no obstacle to Christian fellowship. To the Sunday afternoon and evening gatherings of the Brotherhood flock the many to whom the Bible is still a source of spiritual food, and who demand a plain and practical interpretation of its teachings. An impromptu prayer, in which the keynote is the loving fatherhood of God, and its bearing on the brotherhood of man, precedes a homely address or sermon, closely packed with allusions to social and political questions. Or the address is entirely secular; a downright unbeliever has been invited to give the audience the benefit of his knowledge or experience, in connection with some great movement for the betterment of the world. There is a disinclination to criticize anybody's religious views, provided he shows by his acts and life that he is part of the new Ministry of Humanity. Here we have the pivot of the change which is overtaking the forms of religious expression.

210 Men are no longer content to regard this world as a hopeless place of squalor and sin, as intrinsically and incurably wicked, as an abode which cannot be mended and which must, therefore, be despised and forsaken in spirit, even before the time when it has to be forsaken in body. The possible flawlessness of an other-worldly state no longer compensates for the glaring faults of this. This is no sign of the weakening of the spiritual hold on reality. It is a sign of the spiritualization of the values of life. It is a sign that we begin to understand that we *are* spirits here, now, and everywhere, that we see that time in this world and the way we employ it have a profound bearing on eternity. There is no reason, in the name of God or man, why we should be content to let this world remain a place of torment and foolishness, if we have reached a point when we can see the better way. There is a certain type of religious mind which dreads the idea of social reconstruction, on the assumption that we shall not long for heaven if conditions here below are made less hellish.

There is also a type of churchman whose finer sensibilities are sorely tried by the secular occupations of nonconformity in general. If once or twice in

their lives they should stray amongst Congregationalists, Baptists, or Methodists, they come away disgusted at the brutal directness with which social evils are exposed in the light of the word of the Lord. They complain of the general lack of finesse and Latin; the licence of the pulpit has usurped the reverence of the altar. It is perfectly true that statements are sometimes made in nonconformist pulpits which are bald and offensive to the ear of scholarly accomplishment. But the complaint of secularization is singularly inept. Nothing could be more secular in the way of complacent acceptance of the worldly reasons for leaving awkward questions alone than the attitude of this type of critic.

The future life of Christianity is safely vested in the *free* Churches. The freedom will be progressive, and may possibly embrace a vista of unfettered interpretation and application of Christian knowledge which will be as remote from the dogmatism of to-day as is our present attitude from the intolerance which kindled the Inquisition and made possible the night of St. Bartholomew. Religious intolerance has already lost three-fourths of its hold on faith. Catholic will now slaughter Catholic without the stimulus to hostility afforded by heretical opinions. Protestants are not restrained from injuring each other by the common bond of detestation of the adherents to papacy. The decline of intolerance is a direct consequence of the externalization of the religious life. Rationalists constantly mistake this process for the degeneration of religion. They fail to see the simple fact that men can afford to dispense with the paraphernalia of elaborate and artificial aids to the worship of God when they feel His presence within their own souls and unmistakably hear His call to action.

Some will see in the decay of intolerance an indication of the general evaporation of Christian articles of faith, and the possible loss of identity in some new form of religion. There is no danger. No religion can live in opposition to the evolution of the human spirit. It must be sufficiently deep to meet the most exacting need of individual religious experience, and it must be sufficiently broad and elastic to correspond to the ever-changing phenomena of social evolution. Christianity has this depth and this breadth. Two parallel lines of its development are clearly discernible at the present time. One is the transubstantiation of faith in social service; the other is a demand for individualized experience of spiritual realities. It is becoming more and more difficult to believe a thing simply because you are told you ought to believe it, or because your father and grandfather believed it. Authority in matters religious is being superseded by exploration. He who feels with Swinburne that

Save his own soul he has no star,

and he for whom space is peopled with living souls mounting the ladder to the throne of God, share the desire to experience the truth. Mysticism is passing through strange phases of resurrection. Its modern garb is made up of all the hues of the past, and, in addition, contains some up-to-date threads of severely utilitarian composition. The number of those who claim direct experience of spiritual verity as against mere hearsay is greater than ever. The discovery of the soul is attracting students of every description. The powers of suggestion, and the creative possibilities of the subconscious mind, have opened up new fields of religious experiment and adventure. The art of controlling the mind, so as to make it immune against the depredations of evil thought, or fear, or worry, is pursued by crowds of amateur psychologists who delight in the happy results. They are learning to live in tune with the infinite or cultivating optimism with complete success. To the objection that they live in an artificial paradise they reply that thought is the essence of things, and that they are but carrying into practice the oft-repeated belief that we *are* such stuff as dreams are made of.

"Religion," says Professor William James in *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, "in short, is a monumental chapter in the history of human

egoism. The Gods believed in—whether by crude savages or by men disciplined intellectually—agree with each other in recognizing a personal call.” How could it be otherwise? The solitariness of each human soul is the first fact in religious consciousness. Altruism and communion with other souls are perforce attained through concern with the state of the ego. The spiritual egoism which demands pure thought, peace wherein to gather impressions of goodness, beauty, and truth, time for the analysis of psychic law, direct knowledge which is proof against the disease of doubt, is, after all, the most valuable contribution which the individual can make to society. The people who are now greatly concerned with the exact temperature of their own minds are, at any rate, to be congratulated on having made the discovery, which is centuries overdue, that hygiene of the soul is more important than hygiene of the body.

Placid contentment with the religious systems of the past is greatly disturbed by this assertiveness. There is a demand for a new message, couched in terms suited to the mental level of the twentieth century. A message delivered two thousand years ago to a small pastoral people, altogether innocent of the complicated economic, and industrial conditions of our times, must necessarily appear incomplete to minds which can only reproduce the simplicity by an effort of the imagination. Jesus, they maintain, was a Jew who spoke to Jews, and who had to deal with simple fishermen and agriculturists, with Eastern merchants and narrow-minded scribes. He never met great financiers to whose chariots of gold whole populations are chained, or great masters of industry who profitably run a thousand mills where human flesh and bone are ground in the production of wealth. He knew naught, they feel, of the history of philosophy, or the psychology of religion, or the researches of physiology and chemistry. His language, coming to us as it does through the medium of interpreters of a bygone age, and through the simple symbols of less sophisticated minds, has poetic beauty, but lacks our modern comprehensiveness.

There is a feeling that it is unreasonable to believe that God spoke once or twice, thousands of years ago, and that He cannot or will not speak now. Revelation cannot have been final; it must surely be progressive, gradual, fitted to the needs and the receptivity of souls. The written word is not the only word. The living word must be spoken now, and will be spoken with greater effectiveness in the future. Hence the expectation that a new world-teacher will appear, that a master will be born who will gather up the truth and the inspiration of the creeds of the past and present them, together with a new message, suited to the hunger of to-day. Theosophists have lately made the idea of the coming of such a teacher the central hope of social regeneration.

They assume that when the teacher comes all the world will listen and obey. It seems to me that teacher after teacher has uttered the truth—Hermes, Zoroaster, Buddha, Confucius, Orpheus, Jesus—and that the trouble is not lack of teachers but lack of disciples. In the teachings of Jesus Christ, the world has a model wherewith to mould the old order of hate and selfishness into a new rule of love and brotherhood. The model has never been used; no serious and far-reaching attempt has as yet been made to give Christianity a politico-social trial. Why should a new world-teacher be more successful? What guarantee is there that his voice would not be drowned in the general clamour of the truth-mongers of the marketplace? And the tendency of the modern religious consciousness is to seek reality personally, to develop the latent faculties by which experience can be won, and to delve fearlessly into the hidden depth of the soul in search of truth.

The great religions of the past have given the bread of life to countless souls. They have all provided ways and means for our ethical evolution. Religious eclecticism is natural to the cultured mind, which can no longer be held back by any threats of excommunication. The essence of religion, and the

way of salvation, have been found along widely divergent paths and under many names. One thing is certain amidst innumerable uncertainties: the secret of finding God can only be unravelled when we find our own souls.

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