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# THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH PATRIOTISM

VOL. II



*Lord Heathfield.*

*After a painting in the National Gallery by Sir Joshua Reynolds.*

# : THE HISTORY OF : : ENGLISH PATRIOTISM

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# BOOK III

## THE GREAT WAR

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# THE GREAT WAR

## CHAPTER I

### THE PRINCIPLES OF THE REVOLUTION

THE conception of liberty infused life into the dry bones of the eighteenth century; year by year, the impulse had been gaining strength, and after the outbreak of the French Revolution it became the keynote of a period of emotional stress as great as that of the Armada time. The movement in England may be roughly divided into three periods, the first of which sees liberty in its Jacobin simplicity; it is the time of Paine and Priestley, of Fox and Blake. Then comes a period when, by a violent reaction against regicide and despotism, it turns against itself, and joins the forces of reaction; when the Lake school is on the same side as Wellington, and the War of Liberation triumphs in the Metternich system. Then, when the cannon-thunder has died away, and the fever for glory is cold, hunger and misery find themselves face to face with tyranny, and the first cry for freedom is heard again, with a more intense appeal than ever. This is the period of Shelley and Byron.

In order to understand how the Revolution influenced English ideas of patriotism, we must take a glance at the band of thinkers who heralded the new era in France. These men, the so-called *philosophes*, exercised a considerable influence upon English thought during the second half of the eighteenth century, even though they often attracted attention rather as bogeys than as prophets. A quaint instance of the cult of Rousseau is

the pompous virtue of Thomas Day's "Sandford and Merton," perhaps the most exquisite thing ever penned by an unconscious humorist. It was the first of a whole series of similar books, founded upon "Emile."

The views of the *philosophes* with regard to patriotism have been somewhat misunderstood in England. There is a vague notion that the movement was decisively cosmopolitan. Now this is only true, with very grave qualifications. In the case of Condorçet, the love of humanity certainly does triumph over patriotism, but we doubt if this could be said of any other of the greatest among them. We have to remember that they were mostly cold thinkers, and that a low temperature of thought is more favourable to the abstract love of an abstraction than to the hot, unreasoning devotion that will pour out blood as well as ink for the Fatherland.

There is another characteristic of these men that makes it difficult to generalize about them, and that is their own frequent inconsistency. This, paradoxical as it may sound, is far more likely to occur as a defect of cold reasoning than of thought tinged by passion. The most illogical of all works are often those of the pure logicians; because one cannot cut a limb off a living and sensitive body as one can chip the most exquisite statue. Moreover, these French thinkers were too much given to writing down anything that sounded neat, without bothering much about its profundity. They were, for the most part, rather philosophers of the salon than of the schools, and the salons were the domain of woman. The decadence of the French aristocracy had naturally gone along with a great increase of feminine influence, so that thought tended to become superficial and emotion sentimental.

The natural leader of French intellect is thus Voltaire. Brilliant in almost every sphere of thought, supreme in none; a popular scientist, a witty philosopher, a cold poet, a correct dramatist, a conservative revolutionary, the

meanest, the most bitter and the kindliest of mortals; he is the type and human embodiment of that mass of contradictions out of which, as by some strange dialectic, our modern democracy was brought to birth. Now Voltaire has left us his views on patriotism in an article in his "Philosophical Dictionary," and from this example we may form a very fair idea of the point of view of most of his contemporaries. We know, from his other writings, that he looked with contempt upon most of the wars of his time; there is the famous description in "Candide" of the battle in which, after the slaughter of a few thousand men, both kings claimed the victory, and sang the Te Deum. In the correspondence with D'Alembert, the defeats of Louis XV's armies are alluded to with passing contempt.

Voltaire's point of view is plainly, that it is unreasonable to be a patriot, unless you get some equivalent advantage out of your country. "One has a country under a good king, but not under a bad one." At the same time, he hesitates between the patriotic and the cosmopolitan points of view. It is a pity that to be a good patriot one must be the enemy of other men. He ends up with the following strange compromise: "He who wants his country to be neither greater, nor smaller, nor richer, nor poorer, would be the citizen of the universe."

Diderot and the encyclopædists are just as inconclusive. In the article "Nation," written by an inferior member of the group, we find praise for the patriots of antiquity mixed up with Addison's lines about the patriot being one who makes the welfare of mankind his care. Diderot himself is even more perplexing; we find him in one place praising just institutions because they make men love their country; in another, explaining how patriotism is the product of enthusiasm, and therefore doomed to disappear before the advance of reason.

This last sentence gives us a clue by which we may thread the maze of this so-called enlightenment of eighteenth-century France. It is remarkable that a movement, characterized by so much daring and originality of thought, should have produced hardly a single real poem. The *philosophes* are, almost without exception, materialists. The Prose tendency had become absolute, and unrelieved by the strains of a Gray, a Collins, or even of a Goldsmith. The philosophy of Locke had passed over into France, and had there been stripped of all its respectable Whig compromises. Condillac, the leading psychologist of the time, decomposed our most complex and abstract ideas into sensations, and Helvetius, to whom Burke subsequently alludes with withering scorn, applied these doctrines to society. He reduces mind to sensation, and motive to interest; all morality consists, according to him, in calculation of interest. What sort of a state Helvetius evolves out of these principles it is easy to guess. Every sort of sanction and cohesion is utterly lacking. To unite such a community is like tying up quicksilver with a piece of string, to love it is an absurdity. But there is another feature of this psychology that is of the highest importance. Helvetius, and most of his fellow-thinkers, are so averse to any sort of continuity in human affairs, that they almost ignore heredity and tend to make character entirely the result of environment. The mind is a blank sheet on which you may write anything you please. The result of these principles is the enormous importance that is assigned to the lawgiver.

A good legislator is able to make good men. Such is the doctrine that recurs again and again in the writings of these authors. Diderot has a smart article about legislators in the "Encyclopédie" in which he desires them to be like the Emperors of China, and to exhort as well as to command. Helvetius tells us that legislators can produce a virtuous spirit by a judicious distribution

of honours. D'Holbach would have the Government divert the selfish passions of men, to the advantage of society, by a calculated system of rewards and punishments. And that huge and diffuse collection of gossip, Montesquieu's "Esprit des Lois," is really an amplification of this theory, that man is a product of his environment, that is, speaking roughly, the product of climate and laws.

Of course, there is one fatal fallacy in all this theorizing about legislators. Granted that mankind can be made honest by laws, who is going to see to the honesty of the lawgiver? But it is seldom that a logician can be brought to see obvious and glaring objections to his own theory, provided that the theory is consistent within its own limits. The objections were soon to be revealed in practice. The third quarter of the eighteenth century was the period of the "benevolent despots," men who set out to mould the destinies of their countries by legislation. It began to be discovered that the subtlest of theory could not ensure the benevolence of a Catherine, or the competence of a Louis XVI. When, by a lucky chance, the despot happened to be both benevolent and competent, like Joseph II of Austria, he soon found out that the continuity of race and prejudice was not a thing to be done away with in a moment; and thus we find one of the noblest of European sovereigns confessing with his last breath that he had failed in everything he had undertaken.

Along with a material philosophy naturally came a blind hatred of every sort of religion. Voltaire could see easily enough the glaring abuses of the French Church, and any one can sympathize with the cry "Écrasez l'infâme," but Voltaire must needs go on to sneer at Christianity because the French clergy were bad Christians. By far the most thoroughgoing and bitter of the infidels of the eighteenth century was Baron D'Holbach. His "System of Nature" is curiously like Haeckel's

"Riddle of the Universe," and is inspired by the same spirit of dogmatic and uncompromising materialism. He flatly denies the doctrines of a soul and of immortality, and attacks the idea of God in all its phases. This error has been the source of most of the woes and vices of mankind. In all human evil, D'Holbach traces the sinister influence of priestcraft. Kings are only the servants of the people, and if they are false to their trust the duty of obedience ceases. And he states definitely that when men have got rid of their superstitious illusions, they will learn from Nature, to love and serve their country, instead of blindly obeying the tyrants who oppress it.

This hatred of priests colours the idea both of present and of past affairs. Universal histories were then in fashion, and in these the priest generally figures as the villain. The most interesting is that of Condorçet, who is the latest and most cosmopolitan of all the *philosophes*. He believes in the infinite perfectibility of mankind, a doctrine which naturally follows from the elastic psychology of Condillac and Helvetius. Condorçet follows D'Holbach with unswerving fidelity, but his sanguine temperament and the outbreak of the Revolution lead him to push his theories to the wildest dreams of Utopia. When kings and priests have been swept away, all men, even savages, will become free and equal and wise and live happy ever afterwards. War and commercial jealousy will disappear and there will be no more national animosity. Thus Prometheus will be unbound, as Shelley will put it some thirty years later.

The greatest constructive force among all the heralds of the Revolution is Jean Jacques Rousseau. He stands in sharp opposition to the *philosophes*, and, indeed, he managed to quarrel with most of them. He was utterly averse to their sneering cynicism, and threatened to leave the room when he heard somebody deny the existence of God. He loved the fields and the mountains more than

the heated atmosphere of the salons. And in an age of rationalists his thought was always glowing, even passionate. Yet the chief weakness of Rousseau is upon the emotional side. He was too often emotional in the bad sense; his feelings were chaotic and undisciplined; he was apt to mistake the form for the spirit, and rhetoric for spiritual intensity. In fact, we find Rousseau suffering from the same defect in the emotional sphere as we have already noticed in the reasoning of the *philosophes*. He seems to have been in the habit of writing down anything that sounded as if it were inspired, regardless whether it was really inspired or no. He was such an artist as we have already met with in Shakespeare's "Richard II"; a man who moved in an atmosphere of beauty, but who was too unstable to attain to the supreme beauty.

Thus it is not always easy to discover whither Rousseau would lead us. Sometimes we seem to be the mere degenerate offspring of the natural man, the noble savage; but then the eighth chapter of the "Social Contract" is a decisive argument in favour of civilization. However, there is no mistaking Rousseau's dislike for luxury and convention, and his admiration of the more manly and simple kinds of virtue. Among these he includes patriotism, which, of course, gives him a fine opportunity for rhetoric about Rome and Sparta and Geneva. He draws in one place a comparison between Socrates and Cato, decidedly to the advantage of the Roman. Socrates was the wisest of men, but Cato was a god amongst men, and this was because he was a patriot.

But then Rousseau follows Voltaire in postulating that the patriot should derive an equivalent advantage from the State. If men are deprived of their natural rights, he tells us, directly after his eulogy of Cato, the word country can only have a ridiculous or odious significance. And his ideal State is an attempt to make men submit to authority without losing any of their natural rights.

Thus, the citizen must give his assent to every single law, or else be outvoted upon it. His ideal State is a small republic, like that of Greece, where everybody can meet together to look after his rights and to see that his own individual will bears its proper share in the formation of the "general will," the absolute sovereign, and depositary of all rights.

There is a shrewd sense of fact about Rousseau that was ignored by his disciples. Thus he is ready to admit that liberty is not within the reach of all peoples, and that there are as many ideal governments as there are states. Even tyranny may be best for certain kinds of people. And with true poetic insight he points out the terrible dangers that beset the State which tries to change its form of government. Should a war, a famine, or a sedition occur during such a crisis, that State will inevitably be overthrown. Thus we find Rousseau himself predicting the fate which was to overtake his followers.

Condorçet and Rousseau differ, in one important respect, from the encyclopædists. Though the standpoints of the two men were so far apart upon most questions, they were quite agreed that the Rights of Man were definite and inalienable, apart from all question of expediency. In fact, Condorçet severely criticizes the founders of the American Republic, in that their Constitution is a compromise between the different states, and not based upon abstract rights. The French Constitution-framers avoided this error. Each biennial Constitution in 1791, 1793 and 1795 was prefixed by an explicit declaration of these rights. In view of the wild talk sometimes indulged in about the French Revolution being socialistic, it may be interesting to note that, in every one of these, the "sacred and inalienable right of property" is especially safeguarded.

It would have been difficult to predict, from the writings of Rousseau and the *philosophes*, whether the

Revolution would have taken a definitely patriotic turn or not. This question was settled, not by the pen, but by the sword of the kings. The beginning of the Revolution was of a peaceful and domestic character. Napoleon, with his insight into the heart of things, perceived that the cause of the Bourbons was lost with their prestige. The proud nation had never forgotten the disgrace of an army of Frenchmen running from a third of their number of Prussians, nor the defeat of their forces, all over the world, by the English. Louis XVI and Vergennes had, indeed, done something to remedy this by their brilliant intervention during the American War. But there was not very much about this to gratify French national vanity. The troops who had gone to America had won little glory, and had come back with their heads full of republican ideas; the two most brilliant actions towards the end of the war, Rodney's battle in the West Indies, and the repulse of the assault upon Gibraltar, had been victories for the English. The war had immensely aggravated the financial difficulty under which the Government laboured, and the Court was already unpopular with the army by reason of its introduction of Prussian discipline, and by insisting that every officer should be a nobleman, with a noble pedigree of at least four generations. What little prestige France gained in America was lost again in Holland, thanks to William Pitt and the Triple Alliance.

The Assembly, and even the mob of Paris, were, at first, far from being unprovokedly aggressive, even at home. The storming of the Bastille was the result of the King's concentration of troops outside Paris, and the March of the Women to Versailles was the result of the Loyalist dinner at which the National Cockade was torn down. The Assembly started by being entirely pacific as regards other nations. It passed a declaration that it desired neither conquest nor aggression, and refused, in

spite of treaty obligations, to be dragged into a war against England about the question of the Nootka Sound. The figures of the conquered nations around the statue of Louis XIV were removed, and the German princes, whose French estates had suffered some loss of feudal rights, were voted compensation. But the most effective guarantee of peace was the first Constitution. By this, almost all power was taken out of the hands of the executive, and even the right of making war rested with the legislature. In fact, the object of the Constitution-framers might well have been to make the State as harmless as possible for all purposes of aggression.

The real architects of ruin were the aristocrats themselves. The aristocracy had been largely corrupted by the infusion of base blood, and emasculated by a century of impotence and courtiership. The part they played in the Revolution can only be described as disgraceful. They were for the most part neither loyal nor patriotic. Some of them had condescended to play with ideas of reform, and had taken a leading part in the early measures of the Assembly; but as a whole they were neither able to strike a blow for their King nor to serve their country. The men who, under the leadership of the King's brothers, and with the support of the Queen, had intrigued against all reform and had got rid of Turgot, took to their heels at the first sign of danger. But they did worse than this, for they never ceased in their efforts to induce foreign sovereigns to invade France in order to win them back their privileges. They were even so base as to offer French territory to the foreigners as the price of their assistance. Thus the French noblesse proved themselves to have not the faintest conception of patriotism. Nor was their loyalty much greater. The King looked with disfavour upon the first proceedings of the émigrés, and foresaw that they were likely to involve him, too, in ruin, if they attacked France. But they disregarded

him, and in defiance of his express wishes, continued the intrigues, which sealed his doom.

Poor Louis himself was in a terrible dilemma. He would have rejoiced to do his utmost, even at the sacrifice of his prerogatives, for the good of his subjects, but he was weak and unsupported. It was, above all things, necessary to keep himself free from any suspicion of intriguing with his country's enemies; but his flight to Varennes had given the worst possible impression, and his hand was forced by a decree of the legislative Assembly threatening death and confiscation against the émigrés, including his own brothers. This, to his honour, he vetoed. Then, too, however innocent all his intentions, they were sure to be misrepresented by the extreme faction. Marie Antoinette, his evil influence, was in treasonable correspondence with the Emperor. To the average French citizen, the situation must have seemed somewhat as follows: "Foreign powers are bent on coercing France into slavery; the aristocrats are traitors who will destroy their country to retain their privileges; a great foreign army is preparing to march to Paris, and the Court is doing all it dares to help it." Thus the nation was fairly goaded into patriotism, and events followed on each other with fatal precision. The camp was formed at Coblentz, then came the procession of the Black Breeches; the Duke of Brunswick's proclamation was answered by the taking of the Tuileries; the September massacres followed hard upon the fall of Longwy and Verdun, and the first outbreak in La Vendée; and when the combined powers of Europe, and two domestic insurrections, were forcing the Republic to fight, at desperate odds, for her very existence, she endured the Terror, and the rule of the Paris clubs, rather than submit to foreign tyrants. When, at last, the strain was relaxed by the victories on the north-east frontier, the Terror collapsed like a house of cards, and there was no place above the ground for its incorruptible

figurehead. Thus were the principles and the practice of the French Revolution, peaceable at first, and seeking after domestic freedom, at last goaded into madness by fear and indignation, by the treachery of Frenchmen and the insolence of foreigners, and rising into an ecstasy of patriotic fervour, articulate in the sublimity of the "Marseillaise," and the grotesque horror of the "Ça Ira." Out of this medley of heroism and murder was born the doctrine of nationality, that was to exercise such a powerful influence upon the future of Europe.

And yet, on the other side of the Channel, this very cult of nationality was older than the Armada. Shakespeare had voiced it; Milton, Cromwell and Chatham had been its high priests, and the most sublime expression it ever received was in the lines:

> "This England never did, nor never shall
> Lie at the proud foot of a conqueror."

However, the French, in the excitement of their first triumph over foreign tyranny, were more unselfish than this, and issued a decree, offering to support any nation that might be struggling for freedom. This decree was naturally resented by the English Government, so the French explained it away. In the earliest days of the Convention, when it was discovered that vicarious championship of freedom might prove inconveniently expensive, it was decided that the whole expenses of compulsory liberation were to be borne by the liberated, and woe to the nation that refused to shake off its chains! This marks the beginning of the French career of conquest, and the hollowness of such international professions of altruism soon became apparent. The first campaigns of Napoleon, in Italy, were a fine example of the crimes that can be committed in the name of freedom. Plunder was the incentive held out to his troops in his first proclamation, his course was marked by systematic

and pitiless theft, and all was done under the sanction of liberty, equality and fraternity.

Whatever individual philosophers and Constitution-makers may have said or written, the doctrine of nationality is necessarily involved in the principles of the Revolution, and was bound to emerge sooner or later. It is Rousseau, the most ardent and constructive of its precursors, who is most clearly imbued with it. It arises out of the third of the three principles of the republican formula, fraternity. When all the men of one State recognize their common brotherhood, they imply the obligation, recognized even by the most barbarous communities, to stand up for the family honour against aliens, to fight shoulder to shoulder in the common cause, and to recognize an injury done to one member of the family as affecting the whole body. We can also deduce nationality from liberty and equality, since the assertion of liberty on the part of the community becomes patriotism; and when every man has an equal stake in the common weal, he naturally, as Voltaire saw, has a personal stake in its safety and glory.

## CHAPTER II

### THE EVE OF THE STRUGGLE

FRENCH patriotism, which had grown effete, and seemed almost dying, revived in the enchanted cauldron of the Revolution. What ordinary observers imagined would be the death of France, proved to be a resurrection into a new and more abundant life. Never, even under Louis XIV, had she been half so terrible as when she upreared her giant limbs, and faced her banded despoilers, with a wrath as godlike as that of Odysseus when he leapt upon the great threshold of his home, and sped the bitter arrow to the throat of Antinous. If we had been unable to vanquish Louis XVI and Vergennes, what chance could we have against the unchained fury of the Revolution, and the all-conquering genius of Napoleon; when the capitals of Europe were falling one after the other, and its kings were fain to do homage to a Corsican lieutenant of artillery?

To know by what miracle we were able to maintain our unyielding, and ultimately victorious, struggle against such an adversary, we must understand what took place in England in the years following the American War. Our position then might well have seemed desperate. We had lost our colonies, our prestige, and an immense sum of money, involving us in what was, according to the notions of the time, a fabulous debt. Consols touched the fifties. We had not a friend in Europe, and indeed, the

friendship of England was a thing of which no power was particularly desirous. Humiliating as the peace was, we might think ourselves lucky to have got off so easily. France and Spain were still, despite our tardy successes, superior to us at sea; we were in grave danger in India, where Suffren held the seas, and where French troops were ready to co-operate with Hyder Ali. In the West, Jamaica was threatened, and even after Rodney's victory, we had not been able to take the offensive in the West Indies. British ministers, despite the three years' defence, had seriously mooted the advisability of surrendering Gibraltar. At home, if our situation had seemed desperate under the Pelhams, it was yet more alarming as Lord North's long and disastrous tenure of office drew to a close. Corruption and inefficiency had reigned supreme, and the best that could be hoped for was another dominance of the Whig Houses, of whose sway the nation had had enough experience in the past.

At this dreadful crisis, the very nadir of our fortunes, a man was found capable of appreciating the situation and saving it. Men of supreme genius seldom achieve immortality except in their own works; they are wedded to eternity, and their children are not of flesh and blood. But Chatham forms a glorious exception to this rule. He bequeathed to his country a son, so like, and yet so different from himself, who accomplished a work not less than his, and whose life is the history of England. It was as if Providence had heard that despairing cry of Cowper's:

> "Once Chatham saved thee, but who saves thee now?"

and by a wonderful and unmerited act of grace, had sent to England, in the hour of her deepest humiliation, another Pitt, to do his father's work over again, and restore her to the place among nations she had twice forfeited.

For there is surely something of the miraculous in this spectacle of a boy statesman taking his place, by sheer force of character, at the head of affairs, and piloting the ship of state, not with the heedless brilliancy of youth, but with a confidence and circumspection which a lifetime of experience could not have conferred upon another. It is wonderful that a youth should be Prime Minister at twenty-five, but it is more than wonderful that he should have previously refused an honour so dazzling, because he knew that the hour was not ripe. Most wonderful of all is it that the title of this man to rank as a genius, in the sense that we apply the word to his father, is seriously open to dispute. There are those who see in the younger Pitt the paragon of talent, one who triumphed by force of character alone, in default of inspiration. The more we consider the cautious and deliberate methods by which Pitt achieved his triumphs, and especially his inability to rise to the height of the situation created by the French Revolution, the more we shall find this estimate to be borne out by the facts.

It is vain to indulge in the eugenic futility of ticketing off Pitt as being really his mother's child, and a member of the Grenville family. Nothing could be in greater contrast than his sublime ideality, with the cold and dogged ambition of that successful and most unattractive line. On the other hand, never did son bear more striking resemblance to a father than he to whom his country was all in all, and whose proud and conscious rectitude gave him such a hold upon the support of his countrymen. He was all Chatham, except for the divine fire. Edmund Burke, no mean judge, declared after his first speech that he was not a chip of the old block, but the old block itself. But the very brilliancy of Pitt's success was also his most fatal handicap. A man who attains an arduous and supreme post at twenty-five, and holds it into the forties, has naturally little time in which

to develop. The claim of each hour lies heavy upon him, and his schemes must issue from his brain, like Pallas Athene, mature and in full armour. He has not the time to learn, nor, cased in responsibility, has he the suppleness to expand. If Chatham himself had stepped into the place of Walpole, at the time when he was entertaining the Cobham set with his atheistical speculations, he might not have conquered America. He had the good fortune of many reverses, and of hope deferred, he was apprenticed to his greatness for a quarter of a century. So was not his son.

How could the most transcendent genius attain to its meridian under conditions like those which confronted the younger Pitt? He was called to the most fearful task of which it is possible to conceive; to restore the fortunes of his almost perishing country, and this, not by one stroke or two, but by long years of patient effort, and husbanding resources. His office may have given him the mastery of his country, but at the same time it imposed upon him a tyranny as exacting as that of a Legree over his slaves. We know that he was naturally of an engaging and sprightly disposition; when he was on circuit as a barrister, his charm of manner endeared him to his seniors, and his playful wit made him the most popular of clubmen. We know that he could black his face for a romp with children, and that one night he, and two of his Cabinet, yielded to the temptation of galloping through an open toll gate, and got a blunderbuss discharged after them by the keeper. These little indications are important, as showing that the human icicle, which is the popular conception of Pitt, is but a travesty drawn from the outer shell, and that somewhere beneath that chilling exterior a heart beat warm. Perhaps the man who saw deepest was William Blake. In that wild and sombre picture in the Tate Gallery, the form of Pitt appears controlling the demons of Revolution, and the expression upon his

face is sublime, even Christlike, in its strength of innocence. Romney also, a lesser man than Blake, caught an aspect of Pitt when he painted him, not with the austere dignity that the world beheld, but with a tired pathos, almost heartrending in the wistfulness of its appeal.

We must think of Pitt as of a saint, a devotee of a cause to which he bound himself from his youth up. The mainspring, and the overmastering passion, of his career was his love of England. We miss the purely religious ecstasy of his father's later years, which brought him so close in spirit to Law and the Wesleys, but the patriotic fire descended in full measure upon the son. The whole of Pitt's affection was lavished upon his country, to the exclusion of every other object, and this is what has made the world, which little appreciates such motives, regard him as a man naturally cold. Rather should we be inclined to describe him as one of a warm and eager heart, bowed down under an Atlantean weight of responsibility. Slave that he was to his cause, he was bound, from the outset, to weigh every word and every action. The indulgence, the free play of the emotions, which is the right of youth, was forbidden to him; he could not afford to sow wild oats. St. Paul seems to have regarded, as the crown of his trials, the responsibility for all the Churches; and Pitt knew that upon him depended the salvation of his country. In that most illuminating incident of his frolic with the children, we are told how the game was interrupted by the arrival of two ministers. Instantly all was changed, the statesmen were kept waiting till Pitt had changed his complexion from black to white, and then they were ushered into the presence of their frigid and solemn chief, to receive his few imperious instructions.

Pitt resembled his father in his consciousness of his high calling, and, indeed, he acquired this at a much

earlier age. He could not afford to indulge in such reckless attacks, worthy of Prince Rupert, as had infuriated George II, and made Walpole wish to muzzle the terrible cornet of horse. He stepped into the political arena as one born to command, and while still practising as a junior counsel, he refused a subordinate office, as unworthy of his powers. In his maiden speech, he was bold enough to compromise his chances of promotion, by inveighing against the royal system of corruption, which was drawing to a close with Lord North's ministry. Shortly afterwards, in support of a motion by Colonel Barré, with the object of restraining these abuses, the young statesman voices, with pathetic eloquence, his sense of the gravity of the situation, and takes his stand upon the ground of patriotic principle, which, however his methods may have changed, he was never to relinquish. "If this commission is properly constituted, there may still remain some hopes for the prosperity of this country. . . . But if the motion is rejected . . . the freedom of the people and the independence of this House must be buried in the same grave with the power, the opulence, and the glory of the Empire."

Henceforth, one insistent note sounds through Pitt's oratory. The name of his country is ever on his lips, and he hardly makes a speech in which he does not, in one form or another, renew his profession of faith. He is like a man intoxicated with the idea of England, from that brief and dazzling period of his rise, to that last heart-broken cry, "My country, how I leave my country!" He regarded himself as her high priest, and he filled that office with a conscious dignity, but with an intensity of devotion that almost precluded the vice of pride. On resigning his first office of Chancellor of the Exchequer, he expressed himself with an eloquence that bears the stamp of its own sincerity. "You may take from me, Sir, the privileges and emoluments of place, but you

cannot, and you shall not, take from me those habitual and warm regards for the prosperity of Great Britain, which constitute the honour, the happiness, the pride of my life; and which, I trust, death alone can extinguish. And, with this consolation, the loss of power, Sir, and the loss of fortune, though I affect not to despise them, I hope I shall soon be able to forget."

It is needless to multiply the evidences of a patriotism which is revealed in almost every page of Pitt's three volumes of speeches. But to say that Pitt believed himself to be the saviour of his country, and devoted himself to the task, is not necessarily to affirm that his patriotism was perfect at all points, and left nothing to be desired. Perfect love is beyond the reach of any mortal, and a man may give his body to the flames without attaining it even in imperfection. Now that Pitt loved England, with all his heart and mind and soul and strength, loved her as he loved nothing and no one else, is not in any doubt. Yet there is reason to regret that he was called to his task at an age when the greatest mind is still immature, and before his love had time to blossom forth in the fullness of its beauty. There is something austere, and even formal, about his attachment, some lack of mellowness and wisdom. "Her power, her opulence and her glory" were the things he aimed at in the most straightforward manner. That she should triumph in her perpetual struggle with other nations, whether of peace or war, that she should, in one word, be efficient, was the great object that he set before himself. We have met with this conception before; it is the old kingcraft of James I and Bacon, of Clarendon and of Carteret, pursued with a consummate and unprecedented skill. It is the doctrine which was pushed to an extreme in Machiavelli's "Prince."

We do not say that Pitt's notions were restricted, absolutely, within the bounds of this conception. The

greatest of all his speeches, that upon the Slave Trade, would be sufficient refutation of such a charge. But there is no doubt that there was something he might have learnt from his lifelong rival; some failure on his part to respond to, or even to understand, the spiritual forces that were shaping the drama of nations, in which he himself was to play such a prominent part. Macaulay, with his eye to the picturesque, has drawn for ever the contrast between the two halves of Pitt's career, the triumph of his policy before the great war, and his comparative failure to conduct it. But it was not in Macaulay's nature to divine the reason of this contrast. Up to the outbreak of that tremendous struggle, the young statesman had had to deal with the men and system of the eighteenth century. For such opponents as greedy Hertzberg of Prussia, Emperor Joseph, a philosopher at home and a cheat abroad, his pawky successor, Leopold, the disreputable old Tsarina, Vergennes, and Floridablanca, he was more than a match. These persons were one and all exponents of the game of kingcraft, and played it for all it was worth. The shamelessness of eighteenth-century diplomacy is almost inconceivable, and tended, if anything, to become worse as time went on. The partition of Poland, and the efforts of Austria to acquire Bavaria, make a story whose intricacy would puzzle a Dædalus, and whose morality might revolt a thieves' kitchen. Now Pitt understood every move in this game, and could play a straighter hand than the others. With only one exception, his career was a series of triumphs; till he was confronted by a power of which he had no experience, and which defied the rules of kingcraft—then, for a while, he was manifestly out of his element. He played the game in the old way, and calculated according to the old rules. The unchained fury of the Revolution did not fight by the book of arithmetic, and it needed spirit to conquer spirit.

But the patriotism of Pitt was proof against the most tremendous miscalculations. One thing he knew; that the salvation of his country still depended upon him, and it was for him to pilot her, at all hazards, through the storm, and never to submit to a shameful peace. Ruin might stare her in the face, debt might be accumulated by hundreds of millions, but her honour was still dear and untarnished in his hands. He did not live to reap his reward; he sank into the grave appalled and broken-hearted at the failure of his hopes; but it was he who, even after his death, was the soul of England's resistance, and made it unthinkable that she should turn back or yield; it was he who vindicated her cause, once and for all, in that prophetic sentence, "England has saved herself by her exertions, and will save Europe by her example."

So far we have considered Pitt's love for England, in relation to other nations; his desire to place her first and to make her succeed. But there is another department, in which he shines less conspicuously. He has been often described as a great peace Minister, and this is emphatically true, within certain limits. He raised England from being a despised and bankrupt power, to a position as strong in resources and prestige as she had filled before her rupture with her colonies. He made her fit to emerge victoriously from the severest struggle in which she had ever been engaged. To have accomplished this miracle may seem enough to expect from the most consummate statesman; but there were other problems, pressing for solution, of a less obvious nature, but of hardly less importance. The England of Pitt was changing her social system with unprecedented rapidity, and, as many will maintain, changing it for the worse. Upon this social system must England's glory and welfare ultimately depend; and it was all-important that things should be so ordered, that at least the old liberties should be preserved, and that, amid the increase of wealth, some check should

be put on the tendency whereby to him that hath shall be given, and from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. Pitt was by no means blind to the defects in the condition of the people; he started as a parliamentary reformer, and essayed to be a Poor Law reformer; but his attempts were timid and half-hearted, and he did not carry them to a conclusion. He was more energetic about dragooning the people into submission, than zealous for improving their condition by sympathy and constructive legislation. A strong case may, however, be urged in his defence. It is at least plausible to maintain that the more immediate requirements of the time were all that he could fulfil. So great was his task of preserving England's existence, that it might have been worse than folly to add to it that of guaranteeing her future. Continually throughout his career, we see how ready he was to sacrifice the ideally best course for what was practicable. His crushing sense of responsibility kept him from hazardous experiment, and whether it would have been possible for him to have done more with the means at his disposal, is a question upon which it would be presumptuous to dogmatize. It is something, at any rate, to have saved Europe.

Nothing is more remarkable in the history of this time than the success of Pitt, as compared with the failure of Fox. Fox's kind and genial nature forms a pleasing contrast to the unbending austerity of his opponent, and the ready sympathy he evinced with the cause of freedom will stamp him, in the judgment of many, as the greater statesman of the two. All that Pitt lacked, he seemed to possess, and his breadth of outlook frequently enabled him to take an enlightened view of problems to which Pitt's intense concentration of purpose rendered him blind. Fox may have been right or wrong in hailing the capture of the Bastille as the greatest and best event that had ever taken place, but he certainly took a

shrewder estimate of its importance than the man who regarded it as a transitory incident, of no special importance in the march of events.

The country understood, if all historians do not, what was the decisive difference that made the destinies of England safer in the hands of Pitt than in those of Fox. It was a superiority not of intellect, but of character. Fox represented an extreme phase of the Romantic movement. He was an enthusiast in a score of causes, he breathed the atmosphere of liberty, and his humanity was among his most conspicuous traits. But he lacked the self-control, the all-absorbing sense of duty, that graced his rival. He had been brought up to be a rake and a gambler; whereas Pitt's continence had never been questioned even by the bitterest of his assailants, though they had railed at him as the good boy, who was nursed by his dad on a stool. The comfortable doctrine that would make sinners into supermen is not borne out by the facts of history. It stands to reason that the man who is the slave of his passions is unfit to command, and the career of Fox was that of a libertine in politics. He was the prince of debaters, and he did not mind what sort of weapon he picked up, provided he could wound his adversary. He opposed the royal power, as embodied in George III; but when it was a question of his unspeakable son becoming regent, he went beyond the utmost claims of divine right. He once swore that he would oppose any motion whatsoever that might be brought forward by Pitt. On the other hand, Pitt's reliability was as notorious as his rival's unsteadiness. He had no skeleton in his cupboard, and he seldom acted in a manner unworthy of his high calling. He was superbly above the greed of lucre, and, poor man as he was, he rejected the emoluments of two sinecures, in the true spirit of his father. He was ready to resume his practice as a barrister, if the regency had thrown him from power. In

short, he was a man whom the nation could trust, and he justified their confidence.

In the short and stormy period of domestic interregnum that followed the American War, the character of Pitt triumphed decisively over the more showy qualities of Fox. The Whig magnates had at last, under the pressure of adversity, condescended to the methods of popular agitation, and had the country behind them when they took office with a programme of reform. As it was their one chance of retaining office, they displayed no extraordinary virtue in curtailing the royal power of corruption; though their reforming zeal was somewhat discounted by the fact that they themselves took care to grant pensions to their own friends before making these same pensions illegal. The months that followed saw a curiously exact repetition of the events of a century before. The King knew that Fox and his friends were implacably set against him; he regarded Fox himself as the most wicked and unscrupulous of schemers; and he employed all his powers of intrigue to drive him and his friends from office. There was but one way in which the Whigs could have maintained their power. They could have met finesse with honesty, and divine right with patriotism. They could have convinced the country that they stood for purity of administration and the liberty to which Whigs had always yielded a lip homage. Against such a combination, the King, discredited and defeated as he was, must have been powerless.

But it soon became evident that the Whig professions of principle were little better than window-dressing, and that the cause for which they stood was that of the old oligarchy of magnates, which had already brought the country to the verge of ruin under Newcastle. When the Economic Reform motions, which were a necessary plank in the Whig platform, were got through in an amended form, the factiousness of the leaders became

apparent. Fox resigned office because the King refused a preposterous request, that he should give the premiership to one of the most incompetent of the mandarins; and not long afterwards, the whole nation was shocked at the intelligence that Fox cynically proposed to resume office by an alliance with the very man whom he had denounced, with the most passionate eloquence, as having brought his country to shame and disaster, and whom he had even threatened with the fate of Strafford. In all the annals of party politics there is nothing more cynical than this manœuvre, and it is only by a deadness to every moral consideration that it is possible to defend what the general sense of the country regarded as infamous. Fox had struck a blow at his reputation from which he was never to recover; henceforth he was a man not to be trusted.

The King had now the game in his hands, and he played it without mercy. He was dealing, not with the representatives of the nation, but with a discredited faction, and he had only to wait for them to commit themselves beyond the possibility of recovery. Their start had been unfortunate, for they had thrown out Shelburne's ministry by a patently factious motion, accepting the peace and condemning it at the same time. It must also have been evident to Fox that, by his alliance with North, he was postponing indefinitely the realization of those principles of Parliamentary Reform to which he professed allegiance. But his crowning mistake was his attempt to make his India Bill, a defensible measure, in its main outlines, an excuse for introducing the spoils system on a gigantic scale. The bad impression created by the Bill was intensified when it was known, that of the Seven Commissioners to be appointed for the control of our dependencies, four were Foxites, and three, including North's son, Northites; men whose only qualification for the post was their fidelity to their party, and their con-

nection with its leaders. This was the King's opportunity. With a dry humour, he had refused the champions of political purity the privilege of making their friends peers; he had snubbed them publicly by refusing to confirm their gift of a blue ribbon; and now, with admirable boldness, he put forward the whole of his influence to defeat their Bill in the Lords. Then, and not till then, did Pitt consent to take office. The defeated ministers, as if finally determined to discredit themselves and their cause, now put forward all their energies to prevent their constituents from having any voice in the dispute; and Pitt had only to stand to his guns, in the teeth of their factious opposition, to make their ruin a matter of absolute certainty. Even in Parliament, they did not fight like men who believed in their cause; the heterogeneous majority melted away; and when at last the constituencies were called upon to give their decision, the result was not only a defeat, but almost an annihilation, all the more remarkable, as showing how even the old, corrupt electorate could respond, upon occasion, to a wave of moral indignation. Henceforth it was manifest that Pitt, and Pitt alone, was the man who could be trusted to save England.

Nobly was that trust fulfilled! The next decade saw a resurrection almost incredible, when we think to what a pass England had been reduced by the American War. Yet we must not look upon Pitt as a magician, who could make gold out of lead, and who worked his spells without adjusting means to ends. Though he was faced by every apparent disadvantage, there were invisible forces working in his favour, which might restore everything, if he only knew how to avail himself of them. The series of changes was beginning to take effect which was to make England the workshop of the world. Rough and obscure men had discovered the means of spinning twenty threads where one had been spun before, and of calling forth the

buried energy of primeval forests to drive our machinery. We had now arrived at that point of our commercial development at which we could reap full profit from the inventions of such men as Arkwright.

We read in Adam Smith that the division of labour can only take place when there is a sufficiently large market. It does not pay to organize industry upon a grand scale, unless there is a reasonable prospect of selling the product. Now, throughout the eighteenth century, England had been steadily pushing her commerce, in all quarters of the globe. Her naval supremacy, which even the American War had not taken from her, was a factor in her success, and so too was the influence of the moneyed interest upon her government. The endless and wearisome dynastic rivalries of the Continental states diverted their energies into channels in every sense of the word unproductive. The benevolent despots did indeed make efforts to foster native industries, but their efforts were spasmodic, and too obviously artificial to reap any permanent success. British statesmen, on the other hand, when they were not altogether beneath contempt, had ever a keen eye for markets. India was becoming our preserve, and though we lost the government of the United States, it was found that we were still able to attract the greater part of their trade; our African, Turkey and South Sea companies continued their work of tapping various sources of wealth; and the Methuen Treaty with Portugal long remained one of the corner-stones of our policy. At the time of Pitt's accession to power, the tonnage of our shipping had almost exactly doubled, since the coming of the Hanoverian dynasty.

Again, it was a necessary preliminary to a great development of industry that there should be enough capital available to set it going. The eighteenth century had witnessed a steady development of capitalist industry. Even before the invention of machines, the rich man, who

could hold back his stock and study the market, had, as we have seen, a continually increasing advantage upon his less favoured competitor, and this advantage had been steadily fostered by the Government A system of credit had been gradually developing round the Bank of England, and offering money, at reasonable rates of interest, to such as chose to sink it in improving their business. In every respect, then, the time was ripe for an expansion of industry upon an unprecedented scale, and Crompton and Arkwright were only responding to an unexpressed demand for improved facilities of production.

It is beginning to be realized now, that this Industrial Revolution was by no means the blessing it seemed to our fathers, who were apt to make the mistake of judging solely by statistics of production and trade. It is at least as plausible to take the view that it was an unmitigated disaster; a social upheaval attended with infinite misery, altering permanently for the worse the relation between master and man, and marring the countryside with the growth of those hideous overgrown towns, which Cobbett used to describe as "wens." How much there is to be said for this side of the case, we shall see later; but here we would point out that, however bad may have been its ultimate effects, it is hard to see how England could have been saved, if no Industrial Revolution had provided her with the sinews of war. For just at the time when her prospects seemed at their blackest, the change was beginning to take effect; to her old staple industry of weaving, she added those of hardware on a large scale, and, above all, cotton spinning. During Pitt's administration, and before the great war, the amount of raw cotton imported annually was about trebled; the amount of pig-iron manufactured was increasing by geometrical progression, doubling itself in about ten years; and our exports advanced from an official value of some nine millions in 1781, and thirteen

millions in 1784, to twenty-two millions in 1792. These figures speak for themselves.

At the most critical time in the whole of her history, England was thus coming to occupy a position of unique advantage. In no other nation were more than the first stirrings of the change apparent. Three circumstances combined to give England her overwhelming advantage; her coal supply, her security as an island sea power, and the genius of her inventors. She was able to make the world her customer, and to undersell her rivals in their own markets. Moreover, her growing wealth provided her with a rapidly expanding revenue, and made her able to perform feats of borrowing and spending such as would have staggered the imagination of a Walpole, or even a Chatham. Pitt, therefore, was in a more favourable position than might have appeared from the magnitude of our debt, and the slump in Consols. Time was working in his favour, and he had only to wait upon events, and allow the beneficent tendency full scope, in order to reap its profits for the nation.

He proceeded, as was his wont, experimentally, and with infinite caution. Retrenchment and simplification were the keynotes of his policy. The new conditions operating in our favour were putting the old complex mercantile system out of date; English industry was attaining such a position of superiority that complex manipulation was superfluous, and its strength was so great as to make protection more of a clog than a help. But Pitt was no doctrinaire free-trader; he had profound admiration for Adam Smith; but it was not his way to take his policy out of books, he judged each case on its own merits, and he was apt to give the benefit of any doubt against innovation. By a lower and simpler tariff, he put a check on immense leakages in the customs revenue, and by perpetual vigilance, he checked corruption and wastefulness of expenditure. Above all, he

devoted himself steadily to the reduction of the debt. Meanwhile, the industrial revolution was proceeding with giant strides; the taxable capacity of the country was increasing; surpluses were the order of the day, and the funds recovered as if by magic. If Pitt had anticipated the coming of Armageddon, he could not have served the nation better than by thus nursing her resources during these years of grace. Perhaps it may not be extravagant to believe that such men as Pitt have a subconscious intuition of coming peril, though they may not be able to formulate their premonition. In any case, we cannot help supplementing the famous description of him, as "the pilot who weathered the storm," by Longfellow's impressive stanzas:

"The captain up and down the deck
Went striding to and fro;
Now watched the compass at the wheel,
Now lifted up his hand to feel
Which way the wind might blow.

"And now he looked up at the sails
And now upon the deep;
In every fibre of his frame
He felt the storm before it came,
He had no thought of sleep."

His work was perpetually hampered by a factious Opposition, and by the power of vested interests; his own party was not always to be depended upon, and, cautious as he was, he could not carry out his policy to the full. But one masterly stroke he accomplished, whose value he himself hardly appreciated (as far as our evidence goes), and by which, alone, he amply repaid the treacherous advantage taken, by Louis and Vergennes, of our difficulties in America. After arduous negotiations, he concluded a commercial treaty with France, whose main provision was that we should admit French wines at low duties, in exchange for English hardware and textile

fabrics. Such an arrangement, from the French point of view, was an act of madness, worthy of the policy which was driving France into the abyss of bankruptcy. For in the north of France, especially in Normandy, textile fabrics were also being manufactured under the protection of high tariffs. This industry was in no condition to compete with that of England, now in the first vigour of its expansion, and the inevitable result of breaking down the barriers was to flood with cheap English goods the markets hitherto preserved for the French producer. The diary of Arthur Young is full of the complaints that he heard in town after town, of the ruinous effect of the new bargain in killing industry. Even the silk manufacture, with which we could not compete directly, was hard hit by the substitution of English cotton. Distress was particularly acute in the winter of 1788–9, and recent French research has shown how the unemployed from the north were drifting into Paris, and how the mob that stormed the Bastille was largely recruited from these starving and desperate men. This is the probable explanation of the frenzied hate with which Pitt was regarded by the men of the Revolution, a hate which seems quite disproportionate when we remember how reluctantly he entered upon the war. "Pitt's gold" was a sufficient explanation for every ill sans-culotte flesh was heir to, and Pitt himself was voted an enemy to the human race, a mild and humane amendment to a motion authorizing his murder.

But this was not the only blow struck by Pitt at the Bourbon power. If by his commercial policy he ruined the industry of France, by his foreign policy he destroyed the last shreds of her prestige. Under Vergennes, she had made a remarkable recovery, though it was but a last flicker of her monarchist glory. She had humbled her old enemy, and she was on excellent terms with the rest of Europe. On the other hand, England's position was

about as desperate as could be imagined. Burdened with debt, she had not a friend left in Europe. Old Frederick of Prussia, to whom we should most naturally have looked for alliance, had never forgiven the way in which Bute and the King had left him in the lurch, at the end of the Seven Years' War. Austria was the ally of France; Russia had her reasons for being on good terms with Austria; France and Spain were closely linked by the family compact. England had sunk so low that her alliance was hardly deemed worth the seeking, and it was just at this time that France resumed her old policy of dominating the Low Countries. Now this, as we know, was the ancient key of our European position, and by no man was this appreciated more keenly than by Pitt. In this case the blow was aimed directly at England, for France was to combine with Holland to challenge our supremacy in India.

This was the supreme test of Pitt's early statesmanship It does not come within our province to trace the steps by which, without firing a shot, he transformed an apparently hopeless situation into a brilliant diplomatic victory, which wrecked the French party in Holland, restored our prestige in destroying that of our rival, and left us in the bonds of an alliance powerful enough to keep French hands off the Netherlands. Napoleon classes this defeat with Rossbach and the Diamond Necklace affair, as among the causes which paved the way for the Revolution, by discrediting the *Ancien Régime*. The caution by which Pitt's policy was always distinguished was never better displayed than by his refusal to take action, until he was convinced the time was ripe; though his "Fabian" tactics were a sore trial to our impetuous ambassador at The Hague. It is important to observe, in view of subsequent events, how, from the very first, Pitt was in the tradition of Edward III and Elizabeth, in recognizing the paramount importance of the Low Countries to England.

English policy had now taken a step backward, in becoming mainly European. Imperialist sentiment had suffered a check, in the loss of America, that kept it in abeyance for nearly a century, and Pitt was so little moved by dreams of empire as to be blind to the importance of Australia. He did not, however, altogether neglect our colonies; for he was responsible for the division of Canada into two provinces, and he won his last triumph over the Bourbons by his firmness in preserving the west coast of Canada from Spain, in the early and peace-loving days of the National Assembly. Imperialist sentiment was, however, fully awake in respect of India, the importance of which was appreciated also by France, and which was the occasion for some of the most dramatic conflicts that have ever taken place within the walls of Parliament. To go into the rights and wrongs of the Hastings case would require a volume to itself, and it is not probable that posterity will ever come to an agreement as to whether the Governor-General was a tyrant, or a cruelly wronged man. But it affords a proof of how keen an interest was excited in English breasts by anything that concerned India; an interest which was greatly enhanced by the trial itself. If Burke's knowledge of the Orient was not above suspicion in respect of accuracy, he at least created an India, gorgeous with tropic colouring, and rich with venerable associations, for the minds of his countrymen; and it is to him, and his fellow-managers of the impeachment, that we are, in part, indebted for that pride in our Eastern dependency, which renders it unthinkable that England will ever consent to part with it, except at the price of her own existence.

The impeachment is also evidence of the change the Romantic spirit had already wrought in the minds of Englishmen. That the wrongs inflicted in a distant dependency, upon the subjects of an alien race, should have disturbed the complacency of the Walpole régime, is

a thing unthinkable. It was then the highest object of statesmanship to increase the power of the nation, and above all, to put money in her purse; but that we should have used this power for the benefit of mankind would have been scouted as the last absurdity of enthusiasm. But now we have Burke reminding the Lords that our Saviour Himself was in sympathy with the lowest of the people, and thereby made it a firm and ruling principle that their welfare was the end of all government. Nor was Sheridan less emphatic. "The omnipotence of a British Parliament will be demonstrated by extending protection to the helpless and weak in every quarter of the world."

This marks a distinct step forward in the conception of English patriotism. That nations have duties more important than their rights; that empire is less to be regarded as an advantage than as a burden and a heavy responsibility, is a truth which we owe to the Romantic spirit, and which has never ceased to exercise a profound influence upon our thought. It might almost be described as the touchstone of the modern imperialism, by which we may distinguish the true metal from the sham, and its more or less implicit recognition was one of the main sources of our strength in the struggle with Napoleon. It was felt that we were fighting the battle of others; that we stood for struggling peoples against their oppressor, and for the liberty of Europe against a tyrant. It was this consciousness that nerved us to shrink from no effort, and to persevere in the face of every disappointment. We loved England, because upon her victory depended the highest aspirations of mankind.

Important as it is, this attitude does not justify the conduct of the impeachment. If justice is to be the motive of our policy, it is the least that is due to a man who has occupied a position of terrible responsibility, and has, admittedly, performed good work in the face of peril.

No success can condone for tyranny, and the honour as well as the power of British rule has to be maintained; but this is not to be done by reckless or factious invective. The spectacle of Sheridan concluding his peroration by sinking gracefully into the arms of Burke; the attempt to include Sir Philip Francis among the managers of the impeachment; and the unqualified violence of the attack, must appear the more reprehensible when we consider that the charges referred to matters of which the Opposition leaders had no direct experience, and in appraising which the most scrupulous nicety of judgment was required. The lot of a British proconsul is not a happy one, and one of the gravest blots on our party system is the way in which such grave affairs, as those concerning the government of our dependencies, have been treated, not with the awful solemnity proper to a governing race, but with the heedless violence of faction. If Hastings was to be brought to justice, it should not have been by such methods as those of his accusers, and it is pleasing to think that their violence ultimately defeated its own end, and turned their invectives to brilliant set pieces, calculated to dazzle, but not to convince.

Pitt's conduct here, as elsewhere, is distinguished from that of the Opposition by the sense of responsibility which characterized it. Though he made no attempt to vie with the oratory of the managers, he at least did his best to ascertain all the facts, and to judge the case on its merits. He amazed the House by his seemingly inconsistent conduct of acquitting Hastings on one charge, and condemning him on another. It is probable that all the majesty of Burke, and the brilliance of Sheridan, did less harm to the defence than the plain and guarded pronouncement of the young Premier, that Hastings was culpable in the affair of Cheyte Singh.

The contrast which we have already noticed between Pitt and the greatest of his opponents, and which had

ensured his triumph over the coalition, was not at all diminished by the lapse of time. It is too much the fashion to pronounce upon the rivalry of Pitt and Fox, according as our own preconceived opinions happen to coincide with those professed by one or other of the two statesmen. But the question goes deeper. Every impartial person nowadays must admit that Pitt's ideas were in many respects limited, and that the warm heart and quick sympathies of Fox guided him into paths of truth that remained closed to his rival. The vital difference between them was not one of opinion, nor of outlook, but of character. In the reaction against morality, which is the sequel of Victorian strictness, it is apt to be overlooked that a man's private life is not separated from his public career by some system of water-tight compartments, and that one who is the slave of his passions, as a man, is ill-equipped to resist the much graver temptations that assail the statesman.

Fox must always find the readier way to the sympathies of posterity. He possessed every quality that makes a man lovable, he wore his heart upon his sleeve, and so frank and generous was his disposition, that however much men might abhor his principles, it was next to impossible to dislike him personally. A number of little incidents combine to make his figure homely and dear to our imaginations; how, when he was nearly ruined at play, and his friends feared he would commit suicide, he was found serenely buried in his favourite Herodotus; and how, when Burke, in his terrible anger, severed their connection forever, Fox pleaded in a voice broken with tears: "There is no loss of friendship"—in vain! This sweetness of temperament is all the more attractive, in contrast with the chilly reserve of Pitt, who felt, indeed, but seldom allowed other men to be partakers of his emotion, and we are apt to prefer Fox for the same reason that attracts us, in ordinary moments, to the

sunny, smiling Aphrodite of Correggio, rather than the unfathomable tenderness of Leonardo's Virgin of the Rocks; a tenderness that seems of a world remote from ours, and baffles the imagination with its aloofness.

For Pitt, with all his forbidding traits, possessed that one needful thing, which was denied to Fox. He loved his country with the single-minded devotion of a saint, whereas Fox loved her indeed, but with the easy attachment of a libertine. He was possessed of that characteristic weakness of the Romantic spirit, lack of self-control, which renders it impossible to trace any continuous thread of purpose running throughout his career. Pitt was sometimes inconsistent, but with that nobler inconsistency that subordinates every minor consideration to one overmastering devotion to his country. Fox's actions are neither to be explained by devotion to England, nor to Whig principles, nor to liberty, nor to anything else. He fought, in company with Lord North, against going to the country; he wrecked Pitt's scheme for a commercial union with Ireland; he fought the Eden Treaty, though not on the only defensible ground; and worst of all, during the time of our critical negotiations with Russia, the Opposition actually had an agent of their own at St. Petersburg, to hamper our diplomacy. But the worst stain upon the reputation of Fox and his friends was their connection with the Prince of Wales. Their readiness to squander public money on that most undeserving object gave the lie to all their democratic oratory, and their conduct during the King's first madness was nothing less than scandalous. It had been the excuse, and a lame one, for the coalition with North, that it was inspired by an austere zeal for curbing the royal power; but the genuineness of such professions was not above suspicion, when it was discovered that Fox and his friends were ready to throw overboard the principles of the Revolution, and

take their stand upon divine right as against the sovereignty of Parliament.

To talk of Pitt as a perfect statesman, or of his opponents as unscrupulous knaves, would be to use the language of faction. The Opposition could boast a greater leaven of gifted and imaginative minds than the somewhat mediocre following of Pitt; they had visions to which his eyes were closed, and sometimes touched heights of eloquence above the scope of his wings. But their conduct is a conclusive refutation of their claim to be treated as responsible statesmen, and the confidence the country reposed in Pitt was more than justified by events. During these critical years of preparation, neither the big battalions which followed dubiously in the Premier's wake, nor the brilliant party of Carlton House and liberty, could conceivably have been adequate to the task of restoring England's shattered prestige and resources. One man, by strength of character rather than genius, was able to perform the necessary work for the country he loved so dearly, and when the hour of trial came, it was found that he had not worked in vain:

"Unus homo nobis cunctando restituit rem."

## CHAPTER III

### ENGLAND AND THE REVOLUTION

IT may seem strange that the cause of liberty did not make greater headway in England, considering the miserable state into which the mass of the people were drifting. The more wealth England produced, the less of it got into the pockets of the poor. The rapid advance of mechanical invention set up an evil competition between labour and machinery. It became next to impossible for the labourer to obtain for himself an increased proportion of the national dividend, because it was usually cheaper to get a machine to do his work than to raise his wages. He was losing all those small resources that made him independent, and gave him something to fall back upon. The enclosure of the common lands combined with the killing of domestic industry to swallow up his little plot of land. At the same time, the price and value of his provisions were rising, and from the roast beef and plum pudding of old England, the poor man was often reduced to a diet in which meat of any kind figured as a rare luxury. "Good God," cries Fox in 1795, "we are reduced to such a point of misery that . . . not one man in ten is able to earn sufficient bread for himself and his family!" In the same year was started that fatal experiment in parochial socialism, by which the magistrates took upon them to supplement wages out of rates. This so-called "act," which was probably inspired by nothing worse than good-natured

stupidity, like so many upper-class schemes of social reform, had the effect of inflicting a real injury, under the guise of a benefit. It ended in pauperizing about a quarter of the population, and rendering the poor labourer's condition more desperate than ever. He was at the mercy of his master, at the mercy of the overseer, at the mercy of the justices. From being a man of independent rights and means, he was sinking into a condition that denied him even the pretence of freedom.

How was it, then, that the English poor endured, with such wonderful patience, the strain and stress that ensued upon the French Revolution, and turned a deaf ear to every appeal to plant the tree of liberty, and join hands with their brothers across the Channel? The question is one which probably does not admit of a simple answer, but we have already hinted at some of the causes which kept Johnny Raw loyal to King and country, and prevented him from making a bonfire of the squire's mansion. We read of riots in certain agricultural districts, but it is wonderful how few and innocuous they were, especially when we consider how intolerable must have been the hardships the poor had to sustain. If we want to see country life at its worst, we have only to peruse Crabbe's "Village." It may be argued that this case is not normal, as the community in question was demoralized by smuggling, and situated on soil of exceptional barrenness, that Crabbe's art consciously exaggerates the dreariness of life to match that of the scenery—and to-day one would not do well to see Wessex only through the glasses of Mr. Thomas Hardy—but the dry records of statistics show that Crabbe's picture must, in some cases at least, have come not far short of the facts.

In estimating these hardships of the poor, we must make a certain allowance for the personal equation. To judge of the extent of their sufferings by our own nervous valuations, or even by the sensibility of poets like Crabbe,

would be a mistake, though a mistake on the right side. It is extraordinary to what an extent men may become inured to physical ills by force of habit. The instance of the sailors is a case in point. We know how a large proportion of these gallant fellows were torn away from peaceful employments to a life of almost inconceivable hardship, and how discipline was enforced among them by an unsparing use of the cat, atrocious floggings, laid on, not by drummer boys, as in the army, but by lusty boatswains. And yet, when these men mutinied at Spithead, they do not appear to have considered the question of flogging as important enough to figure among their grievances. There is even a kind of schoolboy pride in the Captain of the Odds Bobs song, who, after taking the Frenchman, declares :

> " If you hadn't, you lubbers, I'd have flogged each mother's son."

It is a pathetic, and not unpleasing reflection that the grievances which cause men to revolt are more often of the mind than of the body. It has certainly been the case in England, where our two Revolutions were enacted in times of uncommon material prosperity. In the social order, especially, is it true that there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so. It is here that the difference lies between the English and the French peasant systems, at the end of the eighteenth century. Historians have recently made the discovery that the French peasants were by no means so badly off as some people have imagined, and that Arthur Young, especially, was deceived by their notorious secretive faculty. Against Young's tale of misery is quoted the incident in Rousseau's " Confessions," when Jean Jacques went into the cottage of a peasant, and was entertained upon starvation diet, until his host had satisfied himself that his guest had no official connection—and then away went

the coarse herbs, and a feast was spread which would have made poor Johnny Raw's mouth water. The French peasant was well enough off, in a humble way, but he dared not reveal it, for fear of having his little wealth pounced upon by the tax-collector.

This, much more than the heartrending case of Arthur Young's poor old woman of Rezonville, was big with the possibilities of Revolution. It was not oppression, but insolence, that made these men rise and mutiny against their masters. What inducement had they to do anything else? There was no pretence of fair play, no bond of sympathy between landowner and peasant. The lord of the château was a man they seldom saw, he breathed a different atmosphere from theirs, and regarded them with undisguised contempt as "canaille," a word for which there is fortunately no exact English equivalent. The Government was openly against them. The taxes, which were taken off the shoulders of the rich, were laid on those of the peasant, and in addition to this he was harassed by royal and seigneurial obligations, of working on roads, or silencing frogs, which may not have been physically intolerable, but which were blatantly unreasonable, and humiliating to his pride. All this might have been atoned for, had the monarchy been as it was in the days of Le Roi Soleil, when the French nation rallied so splendidly to the appeal of a king they were proud of, in despite of defeat and destitution. But their Government now gave them nothing to be proud of, it was both ridiculous and unsuccessful. Rossbach had robbed the Bourbons of their prestige, the Diamond Necklace of any divinity that still hedged their line. When the *Ancien Régime* fell, it found few friends. And loyal La Vendée, be it noted, was one of the poorest and most backward parts of France.

When the Revolution began, it is noticeable how every outbreak was provoked and intensified by some outrageous piece of insolence on the part of the governing

class. The first outbreak of actual resistance, the tennis-court oath, was preceded by a characteristic message from the Comte d'Artois, that he wanted the tennis-court, in which the States-General was assembled, for a game. The first candidate for the lamp-post was the minister, who was known to have said that the people might eat grass. The very Bastille was not a grievance, but a symbol; its use as a prison had virtually ceased, but its frowning towers represented everything that was most abhorrent to the souls of free men, a secret and monstrous tyranny. Then, too, on the night before the women had marched to Versailles, the Royalists, drunk with loyalty as well as wine, had torn down the national cockade, and openly avowed their natural hatred of the patriots and all their works:

" Français, pour nous, ah! quel outrage!
Quel transports il doit exciter!
C'est nous qu'on ose méditer
De rendre à l'antique esclavage!"

Though the English yokel had probably little enough to boast of, from a material point of view, the spirit in which he was governed was the very opposite of this. When Arthur Young fell under the suspicion of being a seigneur, he treated the peasants, who were throwing out hints about hanging him, to a little speech, in which he contrasted the advantages of the English country-side with their own condition under their lords. " Gentlemen, we have a great number of taxes in England which you know nothing of in France; but the tiers état, the poor, do not pay them; they are laid on the rich; every window in a man's house pays; but if he has no more than six windows he pays nothing; a Seigneur with a great estate pays the vingtièmes and tailles, but the little proprietor of a garden pays nothing; the rich for their horses, their voitures and their servants, and even the liberty to kill their own partridges, but the poor farmer

nothing of all this, and what is more we have a tax paid by the rich for the relief of the poor . . . our English method seemed much better." So thought the crowd too, who approved of every word, and gave the speaker an ovation. Another contrast which Young notices is the instant celerity with which the least vibration of feeling or alarm is transmitted through England; an effect of the forms and traditions of freedom, as compared with the ignorance and incapacity for combination even of the French nobility, " owing to the old government, no one can doubt." The literary cliques of the capital constitute themselves " the people," the mob burn and plunder in blind ignorance, while as for the loyalists, " they fall without a struggle and die without a blow."

We have no intention of throwing a sentimental halo round the heads of the English gentry. That they had, as a class, grievously wronged the poor, is only too apparent from the history of the eighteenth century. The wrong had been perpetrated clumsily and selfishly, but not cynically or in open defiance of justice, as in the case of exemptions from taxation. The English squire knew how to tyrannize, but he was not a cold and insolent tyrant, Johnny Raw was not " canaille."

We have already observed something of the instinctive sympathy that subsisted between the squires and their dependents. The mere fact that the average English landlord lived for the greater part of the year on his own estate, and that agriculture and field sports formed the main interest of his life, kept him from getting out of touch with his people, or altogether forfeiting their respect. Never had such an interest been taken in the improvement of land, and never had cultivation been so efficient. Arthur Young, a transparently honest man, who devoted his life to the collection of facts about agriculture, is never tired of praising our landlords. It was their zeal for improvement that had been the justifica-

tion for enclosure, and ruinous though this had been in practice, there is evidence that every care was taken to preserve the legal rights of those affected. Nor is it possible to prove any widespread revolt against the enclosures. The brilliant and gifted writer, who has recently thrown such a vivid light upon the iniquities of the system, has worked up his story to a dramatic climax, by describing the agricultural revolt that broke out in 1830, but he has failed to lay due emphasis on the fact that the nucleus of disaffection was just in those districts where enclosure had not taken place, for the reason that there were practically no common lands left in the eighteenth century to enclose.

There was another side of English country life than that depicted in Crabbe's "Village." The kindliness and hospitality with which tradition has invested the squirearchy cannot have been entirely the creation of fiction. In no other country is it possible to find anything to compare with it, and we extract the following from a villainously written jingle of 1821, the reverse of sentimental, which purports to narrate the career of a typical squire:

> "All the villagers met in the servants' large hall,
> And concluded the revels at night with a ball;
> Where with bosoms elated and spirits quite gay,
> Delighted they danced till the first peep of day;
> For the squire ever liked all around him to see
> With broad happy faces, and hearts full of glee."

From the various sidelights that we get on these landowners, we derive the impression that, as a class, they were more in touch with the people than their modern successors. In a book once famous, now forgotten, the "Adventures of Tom and Jerry," written in the 'twenties of the last century, we read how these admired paragons of gilded youth spent half their time in going the round of various low haunts—coffee shops, beer vaults, and the resorts of drunken sailors; accommodating themselves to their

surroundings in a manner quite inconceivable in the youth of to-day. The records of the prize ring tell the same tale of easy familiarity between the professional champions and their patrons, and perhaps the most pleasing of all accounts of country life is that of the Hambledon Cricket Club. The Duke of Dorset, as Nyren relates, sent John Small, batsman and gamekeeper, the present of a violin; whereupon Small, not to be outdone, "like a true and simple-hearted Englishman, returned the compliment by sending his Grace two bats and balls, and also paying the carriage." It is from such incidents that we may realize how it was that the English peasants stuck by their masters, while the French were hunting theirs like wild beasts. "Under our happy Constitution," says Pitt, with evident sincerity, "I believe there is no man of rank or property at this time, so negligent of his duty, and so unacquainted with his interest, as to draw a line of separation between himself and those who are below him in rank, affluence and degree. What nation in the world now exists, or has been known to exist, in which the great and the low are placed at so little distance, or so slightly separated?"

The very cause that hurried the French Revolution to its worst excesses, prevented it from gaining a hold upon Englishmen. Just as Frenchmen were not going to tolerate the interference of foreign despots, so John Bull was not going to have liberty forced upon him by foreigners, least of all by Frenchmen. A century of intermittent war, and a hearty contempt for the half-starved, frog-eating papists, whom Hogarth had drawn for him, had not tended to make his mind a fertile soil for the propagation of Jacobin doctrine. He had a natural suspicion of abstract formulæ and sweeping changes. He had had his own revolution in England, a century ago, and of this respectable performance he was still vastly proud. Had he not constantly twitted the wretched

slaves across the Channel with the fact of his being a free-born Englishman? And was he now going to take lessons in freedom from these very foreigners?

Not only had he a strong belief in the merits of the Constitution, but he had no reason to be dissatisfied with the figure he cut abroad. His heart had been in each of the last two wars, and if he had lost America, his pride had been salved by the victories of Rodney and Elliot. He had at last come to appreciate his King, and when George III recovered from his madness, the country blazed with bonfires, and was wild with rejoicing. His rulers were not men who tore down the Union Jack, and told the poor to eat grass; on the contrary, Westminster Hall resounded with the praises of liberty. Even in local government, the all-powerful justice of the peace came to figure as a good-natured protector, to whom the poor man could appeal for his allowance against a brutal overseer; the weakness of magistrates in this respect being so notorious as to call for special legislation. With all its defects, the oligarchy had deep enough roots in the affections of the people to survive the fearful strain to which it was to be subjected during the next few years.

Nothing could hinder the mental awakening from the Prose Age. The direction of the emotional current might be changed, but its force was only stimulated by the stress of the time. For, indeed, in the second half of the century, events had all been leading up to an outburst of spiritual energy, just as in the times of Elizabeth and Cromwell, England had been successively involved in two national struggles, of a nobler kind than the quarrels of the *Ancien Régime*. The Seven Years' War had stirred the nation to its depths, and whatever had been the merits or issue of the American struggle, at least the bulk of the people had been behind the King in wishing to subdue the colonists, and all had been united against the French, Spanish and Dutch. National pride had been salved by

Rodney and Elliot; if we had been beaten, we had at least been beaten by our own countrymen. And these two wars were but a prelude to the hardest-fought and most glorious struggle in the whole of our history.

The beginning of the Revolution did not excite so much interest in England as might have been expected. The question of the regency was, at that time, absorbing the nation, and men were slow to realize the import of what was taking place. The general opinion was that France would be grievously weakened by her internal dissensions, and this, in the eyes of Englishmen, was an unmixed blessing. Besides, the idea of liberty was in the air, and to see French slaves shaking off their chains awoke a good deal of sympathy. The power of George III had been a source of party contention, and honest Whigs, who had supported the motion that the power of the Crown had increased, was increasing, and ought to be diminished, would not object to see Louis XVI shorn of some of his prerogatives. From this state of complacency they were destined to a thunderous awakening.

Englishmen were ready enough to abjure Revolution principles after they had seen its horrors; but it was for a political seer, himself a champion of liberty, to see these horrors before they happened, and to warn his countrymen of them. This man was Burke.

It is only by the keenest sympathy that we can enter into humble and imperfect communion with one who is beyond doubt the first political thinker of his time. There is much to irritate, and something even to repel about portions of his work. The charge that he gave up to party what was meant for mankind is, unlike most neat sayings, the literal truth as regards too much of his earlier writings. His principles were sublime, but he would not injure his case by pushing them to a conclusion. His charges against Warren Hastings, and his pronouncements in the American War, are a treasure-house of

wisdom, if we accept them as declarations of principle, and do not inquire too closely about their applicability to the facts. Burke is often wont to approach his subject in the mood of an artist, who aims at producing a perfect piece of work, and stamps his own personality upon the landscape or portrait. Unrestrained subjectivity is characteristic of the Romantic movement, of which Burke was in the van.

In his "Reflections on the French Revolution," he came nearest to rising above this weakness. He was no longer a party man, he had broken free from the associations of Carlton House and a too factious Opposition, the land of which he wrote was not separated from his own by weeks or months of travel. That he was in touch with the facts may be seen by his wizard apprehension of coming events, and by his having divined the gravity of the situation and its cure more surely than any other opponent of the Revolution. His book, which first roused England from her attitude of benevolent neutrality, assailed the Revolution with a fervour equal, and a philosophy superior to that of Rousseau himself. And the point of view was characteristically English.

It was worthy of the hard-headed materialism of Buckle to carp at such a prose poem as the "Reflections on the French Revolution." It has become the fashion for the exponents of the New Dogma to treat heretics, not as opponents, but as patients, and of course Buckle, the inaccurate Buckle, who had nothing but praise for Burke, as long as he remained of his own opinion, must needs write him down a madman as soon as he ventured to disagree with it. Some consistent materialists have carried this system to its logical conclusion, by proving genius and madness to be synonymous. But even granting genius to be mad, and Buckle sane, the fact remains that the "Reflections" is not only Burke's masterpiece, but one of the great books of all time. It was written at

a white heat, sometimes with tears streaming down the author's cheeks, and the obstacles at which the hammers of reason had tapped in vain are cleared, almost without effort, by the wings of imagination.

Since the "Republic" of Plato, such a treatise upon human society had surely never been written, and our present books on politics and sociology seem, in comparison, but the blundering exercises of schoolboys. To take one instance alone; for some two hundred years the idea of a social contract had been dominant in political theorizing, for our ancestors had their nostrums of a social contract and a law of nature, which they could mouth as sagely as we talk about evolution. These theorists had always come up against the same threefold difficulty in framing their contract; either they had to break up the cohesion of society altogether, as the theory of Rousseau logically tended to do; or, with Hobbes, to make the contract an irrevocable fiction sanctioning every sort of despotism; or finally, with Locke, to patch up some kind of illogical compromise between the two. Burke, in one paragraph of surpassing eloquence, settles the controversy for ever, by taking both theories, and reconciling them upon a plane to which his predecessors had not dared to soar. "Society," he tells us, "is indeed a contract," but he goes on to show that it is for no vulgar or material ends, but "a partnership in all science, a partnership in all art, a partnership in every virtue, and in all perfection." Then, having invested the contract with a halo of sanctity, he goes on to show how it includes not only the living, but the living, and the dead, and those yet to be born. Then we reach the triumphant conclusion that merges all social contracts "in the great primeval contract of eternal society." The difficulty has now vanished, the contract remains indeed, but all transitory selfishness has gone out of it, and when men have reached such a conception of their country, it is beneath their

dignity to bargain about rights; even duty is no longer a burden, but an ecstasy.

Thus Burke reveals the secret of the noblest patriotism. It is no calculating love that we must give to our country; all that is best in the ancestor-worship of the savage, and the speculations of the civilized philosopher, unite to produce such a patriotism as this. The State is, to the patriot, something awful and mysterious, not to be approached without reverence, and above all not to be tinkered at by every shallow or irreverent enthusiast.

It is no wonder that Burke should be misunderstood by cold thinkers, for, indeed, he may almost be said to have written of politics as Fra Angelico painted angels—on his knees. The distinction that he draws between commercial partnership, and the great partnership of the State, is the key to a nobler and truer political philosophy than that of the "sophisters, economists and calculators." For such men Burke has nothing but contempt, whether they are represented by English deists, or French *philosophes*. They had sought to reform the living State, by the methods of logic and mathematics, but Burke does not even condescend to refute them point by point; in a few burning sentences he annihilates them, as surely as a modern battleship would sink all the fleet that sailed to Troy.

He even allows them to be right within their own limits. By the principles of pure reason, a king is certainly but a man, and a queen but a woman. But it is only a "barbarous philosophy, which is the offspring of cold hearts and muddy understandings," that cannot transcend these limits, and see in the head of the State, not the manager of a big company, but the Lord's anointed. For the State is built upon foundations of religion. "We know, and it is our pride to know, that man is by his constitution a religious animal; that atheism is against, not only our reason, but our instincts; and that it cannot

prevail long." This is why Burke is a supporter of an Established Church. He is not blind to the abuses and superstitions that may impair its purity, but he is ready to tolerate even the worst form of superstition rather than atheism (under which term he obviously includes all that we know nowadays as rationalism).

He is therefore not ashamed to avow himself a believer in the claims of prejudice, as against those of reason. There is (what Bentham and Sydney Smith scornfully denied) a wisdom of the ages, deeper than that of any man. Institutions are things of mysterious growth; they come into being gradually and silently, and we cannot understand all the forces that have been at work. Humility is the gate of wisdom in politics, as well as in religion. And so it comes about that Burke is no friend to the modern mania for submitting everything to discussion. Some things are too sacred to be touched, except upon rare and solemn occasions, and then only with holy reverence.

The means of political salvation are, therefore, ideal and not material. It is not through the forms of politics, but through the spirit behind them, that nations are made or marred. "The decent drapery of life" is not rudely to be torn away. Hence Burke regards chivalry as being one of the great civilizing influences of Europe, and views with horror its disappearance before "this new-conquering empire of light and reason." Closely connected with chivalry is the loyalty we pay to kings. This is a very different thing from the narrow and selfish tenets of a James I or Louis XIV, even when dignified by the courtly eloquence of a Bossuet. Burke had always opposed the encroachments of kingly power, and he was, to the end, unwavering in his support of English Revolution principles. But he saw that if men are to have a king, they must treat him as being something nobler than an upper servant of the State, to be taken on and dismissed at

pleasure. "Fear God, honour the King," is no empty phrase in Burke's mouth.

Only less profound than his reverence for kingship is his reverence for property. He regarded it as almost blasphemous to admit, even for the sake of argument, that ownership might be made to depend upon the good or bad use of property. Parliaments have no right whatever to violate it. He clearly foresees and dreads that it may, at some future time, become the habit of one class in England to regard the other class as their prey.

There is, of course, a philosophy behind these teachings of Burke, and to a certain extent he is in formal agreement with the very men he most opposes. For he believes, like the deists, in a divine harmony of things; but his harmony is not rational, but mystic and spiritual—a thing to be worshipped, not to be analysed. Spiritual imagination, though Burke nowhere specifically formulates such a theory, is the key by which he penetrates to the secrets of society. As he discards pure reason as his means, so does he reject happiness as his goal. What he actually aimed at he would have found it difficult to define, save in some such terms as "every virtue and all perfection." The school of thinkers, who were perpetually harping upon their abstract rights, seemed to him ignoble. Society was not a fortuitous concourse of business men, bargaining for their welfare upon business principles, each seeking to be the equal or superior of his neighbour. From his standpoint, men are like the stones in a great temple, each of which has its special place, nor has the plainest stone of the foundation a right to envy or vie with the exquisitely carved capitals; still less a right to question the wisdom of the architect. The scheme of the universe is infinitely vaster than anything of which we can form an idea, but Burke is convinced that, by reverence and self-sacrifice, we can to some extent divine our part in it, and thus fulfil

the purpose of our being. All of which is to the ignorant a stumbling-block, and to the cold foolishness.

But spiritual insight by no means renders a man hazy and unpractical. The boldness and accuracy of Burke's predictions about the Revolution were almost uncanny. We must remember that when he wrote, he was the only prominent man in England who had the remotest idea how grave was the crisis. Fox saw the triumphant outburst of light and liberty. Pitt saw another move upon the European chessboard. The worst horrors of the Revolution were as yet only dimly foreshadowed, and Burke's own natural bias was towards freedom, and the resistance to oppression. But his prophecy of the breakdown of the Revolution reads almost as if it were an analysis, written in the light of the accomplished fact. He lays an unerring finger upon the weakness of the new Constitution; power would pass into the hands of a corrupt oligarchy; the most reckless and violent members of the Assembly would prevail, by constantly outbidding the others in violence; the scheme of election was framed so as to destroy every vestige of responsibility in the elected; the incompetence of each successive Assembly was assured, by making the members of one ineligible for the next; the paper currency would pave the way to extravagance and financial ruin; terror and bloody tyranny must ensue from a reckless constitutional experiment. Burke saw beyond this to Napoleon; he showed how a crushing military despotism would sooner or later put an end to this tragedy of liberty and pure reason, and how, when such a despot did arrive, he would find everything ready to his hands, thanks to the perverse ingenuity of the artificers of ruin.

In his subsequent "Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs," Burke develops a side of his theory which was implicit already in the "Reflections." This is the worship of the Constitution, which had already afforded

such a fruitful theme for the eloquence of Chatham. Burke approaches that venerable fabric with awful reverence. He does not believe that the ordinary mind is capable of so much as understanding a harmony whose apparent unreasonableness is the result of the subtlest adjustments that Time and the directing hand of Providence could contrive. "The British Constitution may have its advantages pointed out to wise and reflecting minds, but it is of too high an order of excellence to be adapted to those which are common"; and again, "Let us improve it with zeal and with fear. Let us follow our ancestors, men not without a rational, though without an exclusive confidence in themselves; who, by respecting the reason of others, who, by looking backward as well as forward, by the modesty as well as by the energy of their minds, went on, insensibly drawing this constitution nearer and nearer to its perfection by never departing from its fundamental principles, nor introducing any amendment which had not a subsisting root in the laws, constitution, and usages of the Kingdom."

This last passage is of great importance, as showing the ultimate trend of Burke's doctrine, and its place in English thought. He had now, despite the title of his "Appeal," come to embrace the full Tory philosophy, by which we mean not the makeshift conservatism of faction, but the principles of Shakespeare and Hooker, of Coleridge and Beaconsfield. It is unfortunate that Burke's horror of the Revolution drove him to adopt an attitude of resistance to change, which has laid him open to the charge of wishing to retain a Chinese fixity in the order of society, an attitude literally conservative, but by no means Tory. Such a result does not follow from his principles, and is plainly negatived by the passages we have just quoted. It is by a devout study of constitutional principles, and not by a mulish adherence to every accidental or corrupt form, that we are to compass

the supreme end of drawing nearer and nearer to perfection.

Amid those who worshipped the Constitution, as among the early Christians, there was a party of the law, and a party of the spirit. Delolme, a naturalized foreigner, harped upon the string of his countryman Montesquieu, and tried to depict the Constitution as a very cunning arrangement of checks and balances, a good machine. It is natural that professors of this literal fidelity were often totally blind to the reality of the thing they strove to maintain. The spirit of the English Constitution is not to be arrived at by the most careful study of law books and visible forms.

Burke's philosophy avoids this pitfall. He specifically admits the organic elasticity of the Constitution, that its property is to become, and not to stagnate. Only the spirit is constant, "the one remains, the many change and pass." Facile and *a priori* theories, the attempts of latter-day Medeas to cut the living organism to pieces, in order to rejuvenate it in some mad cauldron of revolution, these are the things against which his noblest invectives are directed. Alas, that he allowed the bitterness of conflict, and the memory of old partisan associations, to draw him away from the consequences of his doctrine, to the blind defence of rotten boroughs, to the opposition of reforms which would have restored, and not destroyed the spirit of the Constitution, and to a Whig deification of property, which, though defensible enough if properly understood, tends in practice to a golden-calf worship of its abuses! It was Coleridge who took up Burke's philosophy, and showed how far removed from stagnation the worship of the Constitution could be.

Burke's theories are of all time, but his judgment on facts was all too fallible. His assault upon the French Revolution was masterly, as long as he confined himself to the operations of the revolutionaries; but he was as

demonstrably wrong about the old governments of Europe, as he was demonstrably right about the Jacobins. And here we must draw a much-needed distinction. To disapprove of the old régime is not necessarily to countenance the new. There is a sort of intellectual snobbishness, especially prevalent in this country, which would stifle all criticism of the Jacobins as a blind opposition to "ideas," and which would condone the blood-thirsty gang of Collots, Héberts, Marats, and Barères, through some vague homage to progress. To us it seems that English thought, even in the eighteenth century, has nothing to fear from comparison with the plausible and flashy philosophy of the French Enlightenment, and in any case, this philosophy broke down hopelessly in practice. It gave birth to the preposterous Constitution, which refused to work, and was finally smashed to pieces in the assault upon the Tuileries. Severely practical considerations shaped the course of the Revolution—the baser machinations of wire-pullers, the military genius of men like Carnot, and, ultimately, of Napoleon. The incorruptible exponent of pure theory, the disciple of Rousseau, lived a puppet and died unpitied. Philosophy triumphed, in so far as it triumphed at all, not in the Senate House nor on the battlefield, but in the substitution of a clear-cut Roman Law for the cumbrous barbarity of the eighteenth century. But the horrors of the Place de la Guillotine, and the wrath that shattered the kings, were the result, primarily, of foreign insolence and intolerable aggression. Philosophy had pulled down, necessity built up.

Be that as it may, the upshot of the Revolution was to call into being a spirit so new and formidable as to upset all the calculations of the eighteenth century. Only Burke gauged the situation. He saw, at the outset, that we had to deal, not with a policy, but with a religion, even if, as Burke maintained, it was inspired by the devil and all

his angels. "Atheism by establishment" is his phrase. He was free from the typically modern fallacy, that because something is vast and exceedingly powerful, it must therefore be good. The efficiency of Jacobinism never had a more generous exponent, its morality never a sterner judge. So far as the Jacobins are concerned, though we may dissent from Burke's verdict, we must admit his insight to have been superior to that of his contemporaries.

Unfortunately, he was not able to stop at condemning the Jacobins. He must needs have an Ormuz to his Ahriman, and, by an excess of reaction, he fell into glorification of that which the Revolution superseded. The problem was more complicated than ever he imagined. He would not recognize that the very faults for which he blamed the Jacobins had been the destruction of their enemies. He talked of atheism by establishment, not realizing that atheism had been established, in all but name, in the France of the old régime, that the poor murdered King was one of the few people in the whole of France who thought of taking religion seriously. He appealed to the comity of nations, and ignored the fact that the diplomacy of Europe had for years been one of the foulest games ever played between men; that robbery, murder, treachery, and shame were nothing accounted of among the fraternity of kings. God had been mocked in Notre Dame, long before her aisles were dedicated to Reason, and her side chapels to Lust; mocked by Churchmen who resorted to Voltaire in secret, and persecuted by the light of day in the name of Christ.

The error of Burke was generous, and almost inevitable. He saw, perfectly correctly, that the ordinary methods of statecraft were helpless against this Jacobin fury, this "new conquering empire of light and reason." Only by opposing spirit to spirit, the divine to the Satanic, could Europe purge herself of her disease. He argued from the

assumption of a family of nations. The divine harmony of the universe, in which he believed, did not stop short at the solemn contract between the living, the dead, and the unborn of each state. There is the great primeval contract of eternal society, by which not only individuals but nations have their duties. No state is in entire independence of the rest of the world, nor free to cut herself off from the fellowship of Christian civilization, and constitute herself a nuisance and a danger to her neighbours. Jacobinism, and all that it implies, cannot be confined by frontiers. It must destroy or be destroyed. Therefore the nations of Europe, under their lawful and Christian sovereigns, must combine in a holy crusade to destroy this plague centre.

This would have been the height of wisdom, if only it had been practicable. But Burke had reckoned without his kings. There were the skinflint of Austria, the numskull of Holland, the Don Quixote of Sweden, the harlot and husband-killer of All the Russias, the complacent cuckold of Madrid, the bawdy feather-head of Berlin, and a ragtag and bobtail of minor potentates, possessing neither character nor importance, about as sorry a crew as could conceivably have been scraped together from the off-scourings of the human race. These men had neither the wits to perceive their danger, nor the virtue to combine against it. How could the three, whose swords were reeking with the blood of Poland, reprobate aggression? How could liars and thieves, well acquainted with each other's principles, unite in any common scheme which involved self-sacrifice and mutual trust, and did not hold forth the promise of plunder?

Yet Burke persisted in treating and appealing to these abjects as if they were honourable and righteous men, a band of brothers conscious of the sanctity of their office, and living, as much as Milton himself, in their task-

master's eye. He spoke like a philosopher to fools, and like a prophet to knaves. He urged them to pursue a course whose rejection they and their heirs long had reason to deplore. They must put forth their whole strength to crush the Revolution, and above all, they must make it a war of principle, solemnly abjuring any acquisition of French territory. Burke's military instincts were no less sound than his policy. He would have subordinated every consideration to the attainment of the supreme object of the campaign. He would have had England strike at the heart of France from the West, using loyal La Vendée as a base, and gathering up all the elements of royalism as she advanced towards Paris. It would have been well had this sound and brilliant policy been adopted at the advice of the philosopher, in place of the costly folly of detached expeditions, costing thousands of brave lives, and putting heart into the enemy.

Burke's appeal to his own countrymen was no less weighty than passionate. Like Milton, he was a historian, and his knowledge of the past was extensive enough to enable him to remind his countrymen of the example of their ancestors. He showed with what spirit and cheerfulness the Whig statesmen of the Revolution had sustained the contest against Louis XIV. He maintained, that only once in the last hundred years had we gone to war for the sake of material gain, and that, in the deplorable instance of Jenkins's ear. "The calculation of profit in all such wars is false. On balancing the account of such wars, ten thousand hogsheads of sugar are purchased at ten times their price. The blood of man should never be shed but to redeem the blood of man. It is well shed for our family, for our friends, for our God, for our country, for our kind. The rest is vanity; the rest is crime"

"As to war," he says, "if it be the means of wrong and

violence, it is the sole means of justice among nations. Nothing can banish it from the world" And joined with his belief in war, is a love of the patriotic associations by which "all the little, quiet, righteous war is glorified." "Rivulets that watered a humble, a contracted, but not an unfruitful field, are to be lost in the waste expanse, and the boundless barren ocean of the homicide philanthropy of France." With all his false trust in the kings, Burke appreciated the situation as no one else did. He saw what ought to be done, and it was not his fault that there was found no one capable of doing it. As events literally justified his prediction with regard to France, so, by a more gradual but not less certain process of events, his wisdom was vindicated in Europe. As long as the war was waged from selfish motives and by selfish men, so long France remained invincible. It was only when the peoples themselves rose in their wrath, and shed their blood for "their friends, their God, their country, their kind" that the tide of aggression was stemmed, and rolled back from Moscow to Paris.

This is the standpoint from which we must regard the struggle between France and the nations; it is the thread by which we may unravel the mystery of the drama that began in the Hall of the States-General, and ended on the plateau of Mont St. Jean. Everywhere it is spirit, and not matter nor strategy, that triumphs in the long run. With all the monstrous wickedness that was enacted at Paris, the French were at least fighting, and knew they were fighting, for a holy cause. Traitors and thieves threatened their motherland; the murderers of Poland would have portioned among themselves the sweet fields of France. Slaves, hired mercenaries, were swarming on the frontiers; no fire of patriotism animated their bosoms; no "Marseillaise" lightened their steps as they trudged, under the canes of their officers, to the sack of Paris. They were pieces on a chessboard, pushed hither and thither,

knowing not what they did; and opposed to them was the wrath and frenzy of a nation at bay. It was only the red fires of affliction that kindled, after many years, the white radiance of patriotism. France became the oppressor, hounded to her last fastness by the nations she had violated. The crusade for which Burke thundered in vain was preached from the frozen steppes of the Caspian to the orange groves of Lisbon. Even sluggish Austria became inspired, even Prussia caught the breath of freedom. Against such odds, a Napoleon was as helpless as a Coburg.

England, from the outset, occupies a peculiar and honourable position among the opponents of the Revolution. She, alone, had maintained a comparative freedom from the petrified tyranny of eighteenth-century Europe. How great had been her lapses, how near she came to passing under the domination of a close and corrupt oligarchy, has been shown in the preceding chapters. But the current of national life had never ceased to flow, and since the middle of the century, patriotism was on the increase. In her alone revolutionary France found, from the outset, a foeman worthy of her steel. It was with a true instinct that Napoleon devoted his sternest energies to her destruction, that even when he overran the Continent, it was in the hope of strangling his last and most terrible enemy. It took some years to fan our patriotism, the tradition of centuries, into full blaze, and it was only when we were brought to the verge of ruin that we realized the seriousness of the struggle. Then we braced ourselves to grapple to the death with our old enemy. England's method was that of the bulldog who, having got a grip upon the throat of his opponent, holds on in spite of punishment, and gradually shifts the grip inwards. Burke did not live to see England rise to the height of his ideal, but rise she did, and from her went forth the flame that kindled Europe. But it required the

cannon thunder of Austerlitz, and the chains of Tilsit, to bring Burke's lesson home to the nations. He sank into the grave, bereaved, overwearied, almost in despair; for wisdom did not bring him happiness, and it is the largest heart that feels most keenly the intolerable mystery of human suffering.

It was around Burke's "Reflections" that the controversy about the Revolution raged with the greatest fury. The book had to sustain the fiercest attacks of the champion of liberty. The most erudite and temperate of several counterblasts is that of the Whig Mackintosh. It is without fire or imagination; Mackintosh sneers at Burke's "homilies of moral and religious mysticism, better adapted to the amusement than to the conviction of an incredulous age." From these words we may at once see the whole weakness of Mackintosh's position. He was as incapable of understanding his opponent, as a blind man of proving the existence of colours to one who could see.

He is one of the pioneers of politics, treated as a science. He believes that the passions can be regulated with mathematical precision, and that the principles of government are capable of precise statement, and accurate application. This is what the French Constituents have done, and he believes that they have done it very well. He triumphantly shows, in the most logical manner possible, that Burke's fear of a military despotism is absurd, that the Assembly have "forever precluded both their own despotism, and the usurpation of the army." He has much to say about the mildness and tolerance of revolutionaries, and of course is far too reasonable to have anything to do with chivalry. In fact, he is like the Duke of Galway, who drew up his troops after the most approved models, and was beaten in the most correct manner in the world. He opposed reason and political science to imagination, and turned out to be utterly,

ludicrously in the wrong. He afterwards joined the forces of order.

But a more formidable opponent was the famous "Tom" Paine, who was now anathema in pious circles. With none of the scholarly dialectic of Mackintosh, he makes his appeal to the "plain man," and his weapon is common sense. We have noticed that he is still a name to conjure with among the genial propagandists who preach the dogmas of Haeckel and "Saladin" in Hyde Park, and this because he is one of those who make a special appeal to crowds. All that he writes is transparently honest; he scores his points with a force and precision that would have given him an easy mastery in any debating society; but never does he stray into the higher regions of thought, and it is easy to see why Burke did not condescend to meet him with his own weapons (an omission which naturally aggrieved Paine, who put it down to the consciousness of defeat).

There is no thought of chivalry or courtesy towards a great opponent in "The Age of Reason," and for this Paine is hardly to be blamed. The issues at stake seemed to him so enormous, and Burke's attack so provocative and mischievous, that he regarded him as an enemy with whom no terms were to be kept. He anticipated Buckle's aspersion of madness. All the mysticism and subtlety of Burke's mind were, to him, fog and moonshine; "chivalrous nonsense" is a characteristic expression of his. He would make a clean sweep of royalty, priesthood and aristocracy, and build up society afresh upon the basis of liberty and the rights of man. The continuity of society simply did not exist for him; the wisdom of the ages was noxious prejudice; the most venerable institutions were brought to the bar of individual reason, cross-examined and bullied by the most merciless of prosecuting attorneys, found guilty by a jury of "plain men," and sentenced without reprieve or regret to instant execution.

But Paine, not to be outdone by Burke, also ventured into the dangerous field of prophecy. He did not believe that monarchy and aristocracy would continue for seven years longer in any of the enlightened countries of Europe. He also was a believer in the mildness of the revolutionaries, and accused Burke of having traduced them on this score. He subsequently, to his honour, urged counsels of mildness on the Convention, and for this, but for a miracle of good luck, he would have been guillotined. As it was, he languished for months in prison, because the President of free America would not interfere on behalf of a man who had denied certain religious tenets. His adored Lafayette had long ago fled from a French knife to an Austrian prison.

The third champion of liberty against Burke is Dr. Priestley, whose library was destroyed by the Birmingham mob, and who had to flee to America. His attitude is that of the scientist who has strayed into realms where science is powerless. He answers Burke in a series of letters, temperate and passionless, in which he upholds the supremacy of the people against the pretensions of kings, and harks back to Locke and Somers, a line of argument which afterwards proved terribly effective in the hands of Burke. He treats his opponent with a courtesy which is too bloodless to be angry, and poor Marie Antoinette with the refined brutality of a vivisector. His letters are neither very foolish nor very interesting, his readers probably found him tedious, and events certainly proved him wrong. He commits himself, if possible, more hopelessly than either Mackintosh or Paine in the matter of prophecy. He tries to show, by the analogy of America, that the French Revolution will be a peaceful and orderly affair, and he launches forth into a glowing anticipation of the coming democratic Utopia, in which swords shall be beaten into ploughshares, standing armies abolished, the very idea of distant

possessions ridiculed, and truth establish her reign by her own evidence. That time has not yet arrived.

Before we leave this controversy, it may be interesting to glance at the sermon of Dr. Price, which aroused Burke's bitterest invective. This turns out to be a less terrific affair than might have been supposed. Apart from the flamboyant and offensive peroration, it takes the form of a treatise on the love of our country. This sentiment Dr. Price commends, but in a rather cold fashion. It is not to be exclusive, and it is hedged about by many limitations; we are to understand, by our country, our countrymen; we are not to extol their merits above those of other countries, and we are to eschew all idea of conquest and aggression, though it is our duty to defend our homes and freedom against foreign tyranny. Dr. Price recognizes that the love of our country must come before the love of humanity. But he is inclined to make common cause with Voltaire, in stipulating for some advantage to be derived in return for patriotism, and asks how a Russian, for instance, can be said to have a country. The duties of a patriot consist in disseminating reason, virtue and freedom among his countrymen. Were it not for the "Nunc Dimittis" chanted over a captive king, and the fiery Jacobin defiance to all tyrants, neither Burke nor any other patriot would have found much to arouse his wrath in a treatise which, on the whole, was a moderate and temperate statement of the revolutionary case.

Standing apart from all these controversialists of the hour is the man who represents most fully the spirit of the advanced French thinkers, the father-in-law of Shelley, William Godwin. His was a mind too abstract to be in touch with the facts of this world, and too cold to perceive the things of the spirit. None the less is he interesting for the whole-hearted thoroughness with which he pushes his theories to their most extreme and

absurd consequences. He sets out with a theory of human nature. A man is an infinitely perfectible machine, and would become automatically perfectly happy and virtuous, if he were only well enough informed as to his true interests. The very notion of free will bothers Godwin; he wants to reflect upon the moral affairs of mankind, with "the same tranquillity as we are accustomed to do upon the truths of geometry." Even if free will did exist, we should have to get rid of it as soon as possible.

Upon this basis, Godwin tries to erect a moral calculus in which everything is to be decided by pure logic, and even friendship and love are to be eschewed, except in so far as they can be made matters of calculation. Punishment is to be replaced by a cold-blooded mercy, far more insulting to the criminal. Criminally constructed automatons are to be reasoned out of their crimes by other automatons. Marriage is an unjust monopoly, because it hinders automatic freedom of choice. On the whole, however, the automatons are so well constructed, that the task of the automatic Government is to do as little as possible, and let the automatons work out their own salvation by dialectic; until finally all government will cease in an automatic Utopia, in which all the machinery will work perfectly, and, the principle of perpetual motion having been discovered, each automaton will go grinding on for ever, without the disagreeable necessity of co-operating with other automatons to turn out new machinery.

With all these men, the love of freedom overshadows the love of country. The very word patriot was twisted out of its proper meaning, and in France it came to be almost synonymous with sans-culotte, and with some justification, for there is no doubt that it was on the side of Danton, rather than that of D'Artois, that the balance of patriotism lay. We find Wordsworth, in the "Prelude," telling

us how, on his arrival in Paris, he became a patriot, meaning a republican. On the other hand, we find Coleridge quite definitely praising Lord Stanhope, for being not a patriot, but a friend of the human race.

On the whole, the English protagonists of Revolution principles do not impress us either by their influence or their abilities. There was something alien to our national character in the clear-cut theories and stilted terminology of the Jacobins, and the mere fact of anything being French was a serious drawback to its reception by Englishmen. Hunger and distress were facts of the most undeniable and pressing nature, and these would incline men to any desperate course. It was in the rising industrial centres of the north that Revolution principles made the greatest headway. But it is surprising how inconsiderable this was. There was scant incitement to rebel, and the only bloodshed was perpetrated by loyal mobs. The charges of high treason against the most notorious agitators were not brought home. The great riot, in the course of which the King's coach window was smashed, was probably less due to any abstract love of freedom than to a very concrete dislike of starvation. The patience, and not the wrath of the English poor is the wonder of our history.

At this distance of time, we find it hard to imagine the alarm with which the governing class regarded every symptom of English Jacobin sympathies. The elaborate reports of the secret committees, appointed by both Houses, regarding seditious practices, singularly fail to reveal any ground for panic. The corresponding and constitutional societies seem to have been remarkable for a nervous respectability, that is often characteristic of poor men, who combine for the assertion of their rights. Voting approval of Tom Paine is one of their most characteristic performances; a message of sympathy to the Convention, before the war, perhaps their boldest. In

contrast with such terrible associations as the Jacobins and Cordeliers of Paris, they are as a flock of patient sheep to a pack of starved wolves, and, to our modern eyes, quaint rather than formidable.

If we turn from the agitators to the poets, we shall find much early enthusiasm for Revolution principles, followed, in the most conspicuous instances, by a rapid falling off, and transition to patriotism.

Among the first of the new school was Burns. It was he who took in hand that part of the work of emancipation which Wesley had left untouched. For Wesley had revealed to the common man the sacredness of his soul, but Burns was to teach him the importance of his body as well. Nothing was common or base in his sight, his muse made beautiful even the drunken beggars and their more disreputable womenfolk. There is a curious duality in his nature, which runs through his art. When he is writing in Lowland Scotch, his verse is simple, poignant, and absolutely free from the shackles of eighteenth-century convention. But when he starts to write in English, although we never entirely miss the free brave spirit of the real Burns, the old forms too often resume their sway; similes are forced; the music grows frigid. Burns was not sufficiently educated entirely to throw off the tyranny of educated men.

But in his best verse, the voice of liberty rings out trumpet-clear. Chatham and Burke had gone far in their advocacy of her cause, but Burns carried their teaching a step further. He found his goddess in the haunts of squalor and vice, and when he talked about the people, he meant something very different from anything that the great Commoner could even have imagined. He thought of the actual concrete rogues and trollops who "had been fou for weeks together"; his standpoint was not that of a leader of the people, but one of the people.

How much did this cult of freedom influence Burns's

patriotism? We have here to distinguish between the patriotism of a Scotsman and that of a Briton. Burns was imbued with both one and the other, for he lived at a time when the old exclusive Scottish national feeling was just merging into the larger ideal. And thus we have "Scots wha hae," with its proud defiance of British tyranny. This Scottish patriotism, however, finds its chief expression in a wistful devotion to the cause of Prince Charlie, which, for such an apostle of freedom as Burns, is very remarkable, though he refers to it afterwards as a mere bagatelle. Then, too, he had all that passionate devotion for the soil of his country, with its beauty, its character, and its associations, that we have met already among the Elizabethans, and which we shall find in nearly all the earlier Romantics.

But it is at the crisis of the French Revolution that the character of Burns is most plainly revealed. He was an exciseman at the time and, of course, in the pay of the Government. But he was extremely injudicious in his talk, especially when under the influence of drink. He had already shocked Tory sentiment by proposing the health of Washington as a substitute for that of Pitt. The events that were occurring across the Channel filled him, at first, with ill-concealed joy. The abstract rights of man inspired him, probably, with less enthusiasm than the concrete spectacle of the common people asserting themselves against the practical tyranny of their "superiors." The Jolly Beggars were of the stuff out of which sans-culottes are made. Burns had the temerity to propose the health of the last verse of the last chapter of the last Book of Kings, and when he had captured a smuggling ship, he sent a present of some of her guns to the Convention, which was then on the verge of war with England.

This conduct naturally got him into trouble with his superiors, which led to an amazing volte-face, in the shape

of a letter to his patron Graham. This is very painful reading, and contains a grovelling appeal for protection, with a declaration of the poet's love for the King and Constitution. Burns was dreadfully alarmed, not only for himself but for his family. But that he was not altogether insincere, we have the evidence of his private diary, in which he reiterates his love of the Constitution, and his distrust of republican principles.

Upon the outbreak of the war, however, he was before Southey and Coleridge in rallying to the cause of King and country. He was one of the first to join the Dumfries Volunteers, though owing to his Whig principles the Tories did not cease to mistrust him. But all his loyalty did not make him forget his championship of liberty, and his poem, "Does haughty Gaul invasion threat?" may be taken as typical of his later attitude. His patriotism here is definitely British, and he holds that even if there are defects in our institutions,

> "Never but by British hands
> Shall British wrongs be righted."

The poem concludes with this triumphant harmony of the ideals of liberty and patriotism:

> "Who will not sing 'God save the King'
> Shall hang as high's the steeple,
> But while we sing 'God save the King'
> We'll ne'er forget the people."

The three young Lake poets, Coleridge, Southey and Wordsworth, were all borne along by the new spirit. It was, for them, a season of immaturity; neither Coleridge nor Wordsworth did any of their really great work during this period, and if Southey ever accomplished any great work at all, it was certainly not then. He found expression for his democratic principles in a dull play called "Wat Tyler," and a duller epic called "Joan of Arc." "Wat Tyler" is a play of the type of Schiller's "Robbers," and it is into the mouth of John Ball and of Wat

himself that most of the virtuous sentiments are put. The King, and everybody connected with him, are atrocious tyrants, liars, murderers and cowards, a charitable theory that was orthodox among the apostles of fraternity. The virtuous and cultured peasants are represented, not only as struggling for freedom from the upper class, but loudly objecting to the war with France, because it was not to their interest that Richard should be King of the sister realm. This attitude is common enough among that school of democrats, to whom military and national glory are vain music. In "Joan of Arc," unlike Shakespeare, Southey describes, with positive gusto, the discomfiture of the English; but one is almost tempted to prefer the old Pucelle, with her train of devils and her harridan's pluck, to the respectable and didactic creature of Southey. In the preface we read, "It has been established as a necessary rule for the epic that the subject should be national. To this rule I have acted in direct opposition, and chosen for the subject of my poem the defeat of the English. If there be any readers who can wish success to an unjust cause, because their country was engaged in it, I desire not their approbation."

Coleridge started by being the reverse of a patriot, and we have seen how he expressly disclaimed any such title, preferring to be the friend of humanity. From his "Ode to France" we learn how, upon the outbreak of the war, he actually desired to see the English troops beaten. He and Southey composed a blank-verse play about the fall of Robespierre, soon after the event had taken place, and a concluding, windy oration, delivered by that arch-scoundrel Barère, intimates that now the last tyrant is fallen, everything will go well with France.

Even more enthusiastic than Coleridge was his friend Wordsworth. His deep and austere temperament was not so quickly aroused to revolutionary fervour, but when once the idea had got possession of him, it absorbed his whole

being. His residence in France, during the period of the September massacres, was, indeed, a turning-point in his career; it opened his mind and broadened his sympathies. He had not yet blossomed forth into great poetry, and his most striking production of this period is his prose reply to a sermon of Bishop Watson. This pamphlet reveals Wordsworth in an aspect which is too frequently overlooked. The Cumberland dalesman had imbibed, from his native mountains, something of their awful and pitiless grandeur, he could be the sternest as well as the most gentle of poets. And thus we find him calmly defending the death of Louis XVI, and though the September massacres aroused his horror, they did not turn him from his enthusiasm for liberty. To him, as to Burns, man was a god, and the human mind, if it could once break free from the bonds of privilege and prejudice, would assert its divinity and order all things well. It was this glorious change for which Wordsworth looked, and it was this that made it bliss for him to be alive, and very heaven to be young. For this he was not only ready to sacrifice the lives of individuals, but even the fortunes of his own country. He was "a patriot of the world," and rejoiced in the defeat of our arms. His theories, at this time, were those of the *philosophes*, but his spirit was deeper than theirs, and would carry him further.

Of Landor, it is needless to say much. His republicanism seems to have consisted principally in a blind and childish hatred of any one who was unfortunate enough to be a king. He was less susceptible to the influences of his time, and, indeed, his "Gebir" was published in 1798, when the enthusiasm of the other republican poets was waxing lukewarm. This poem is an ordinary and rather turgid Oriental romance, and, to the unsophisticated reader, its political message is faint indeed.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE TURN OF THE TIDE

FEELING in England was not whole-hearted in support of the war, during its earlier stages. There was, indeed, a widespread indignation that Louis XVI, poor fellow, should be treated in such a shabby way by his subjects, and of course the immense majority of the governing class was united in its horror of the Rights of Man, and the massacre of aristocrats. But to go to war, to put the Bourbons back upon the throne, was another matter, and there were not a few even among the staunchest Tories who would have been content to let France go to the devil in her own way. After all, there was a certain poetic justice in the fact that the aiders and abettors of American rebels should fall into their own pit. There was not yet any general sense of the seriousness of the problem. Burke had done much to open the eyes of his countrymen, but it required something more than books to awaken a whole nation. What reason was there for alarm? Our command of the sea, which the last war had put in jeopardy, was now practically unchallenged; we had the whole of Europe for our allies; our enemy was distracted by Revolution; we could plant our blows when and where we liked. Not in the Seven Years' War, nor in our struggles with Louis XIV, had we appeared to risk so little by an appeal to arms.

No one was more pathetically blind to the vital issues

of the hour than the young Prime Minister. So far he had played the game of kingcraft against kings with masterly skill. He had at the Foreign Office, and very much under his control, the honest and scholarly Grenville, a man whose sleek, expressionless face might have qualified him for the beau-ideal of gentlemanly officialdom, and whose heart, if he had one, was bound up in red tape. There was no chance that this politician could, under any circumstances, rise to statesmanship; while, on the other hand, he was a fairly capable and conscientious head of his department. The hour called for a Chatham or a Cromwell. But the Premier and his Foreign Minister could not understand that anything had occurred out of the ordinary run of European diplomacy. While the sovereigns of the Continent, drawing together warily and with mutual distrust, were issuing their first manifesto against France, Pitt was complacently informing the House that never had there been a better prospect of fifteen years' peace, and proving the sincerity of his words by whittling down our defences.

Without going into the long and obscure story of Pitt's diplomacy, we may say that he played the game in strict accordance with the rules of kingcraft, as he knew and had practised them since his coming into office. The broad lines upon which he acted are perfectly clear. However much he may privately have sympathized with the early ideals of the Revolution, and however much he may have shrunk from its later excesses, he allowed his policy to bear no relation to his sympathies. He did not consider it his business to go to war because the French chose to cut off the heads of their aristocrats, nor, on the other hand, was he prepared to make any allowance for the enthusiasm of a new dawn. His attitude, and Grenville's, was coldly correct, and there is something vastly ludicrous in the spectacle of Grenville offering the French representative a little chair, to signify that he was not a

proper ambassador, and of that representative upsetting his plan by deliberately sitting down in a big one. Grenville muttered something about its being very cold; and all this pettiness and finesse was a prelude to one of the most fearful wars in history!

Pitt, we say, played the game with the most exemplary correctness. The French might commit murder and even regicide, these were self-regarding acts, necessitating some change in diplomatic forms, and little chairs instead of big ones. But they did two things which were plainly intolerable; they offered to help all peoples against their governments, and they opened the navigation of the Scheldt. It is doubtful whether a mere abstract declaration would have goaded Pitt into a war he would have much liked to avoid, especially as the French showed some disposition to put a harmless interpretation upon their words. But the vital issue was that of the Low Countries, and here Pitt might plead that he was acting in accordance with the tradition of centuries, and in direct continuity with his own previous policy. Since the days of Cressy, the key of our European position had been an independent Netherlands. Already during Pitt's tenure of office, this had been threatened by French aggression; already he had, without wasting a British life, triumphantly thwarted these machinations. Now, the same aggression was attempted in a more aggravated form, and to tolerate it would be to stultify not only his own policy, but that of every respectable British statesman.

It is easy to understand the French case. The artifices of treaty, which the greed and intrigue of the eighteenth century had evolved, towards maintaining the balance of power, must have seemed an unmitigated evil to men who aspired to make all things new. To seal up artificially a noble river, to decree that a port which had once been the mart of the world should be prohibited for ever

from peaceful trade, was a flagrant violation of the Rights of Man. All this was nothing to Pitt and Grenville. A treaty was a treaty, and the closing of the Scheldt was a British interest. The French must be stopped at all hazards from getting control of the Low Countries. Pitt acted just as he would have done had a Louis been in the place of the Convention, and it is quite false to say that he went to war to break the Revolution. The enemy had made a move, he made the correct one in reply. That was all.

Nothing could exceed the indignation of Burke, when he learnt that we were to fight over a miserable river. He perceived that if we were to have any chance of winning, the war must be one of principle, of the nature of a crusade. He, alone, did not underestimate its gravity. Pitt, on the other hand, entered upon the struggle, if not with a light heart, at least with no appreciation of its seriousness. It was going to be short, and might lead to some useful acquisitions, in the way of colonies. That it would last for nearly a generation was a possibility that could not have suggested itself to his wildest dreams. When he had once entered upon the struggle, he carried it on as if we were taking part in some new war of the Austrian succession. He did not purge or reform our egregious system of army administration; he did not concentrate our energies in striking a mortal blow, as Burke would have had us do; but carried on the war with the same leisurely methods as if we had to deal with a Marshal Saxe and the gentlemen of the French Guard, instead of a horde of enraged Jacobins. There can be no greater contrast than that between the burning eloquence of Chatham, at the beginning of the Seven Years' War, and the cold and formal oratory of his son at the commencement of this. And a greater contest had begun than that of Minden and Quebec.

It must therefore be acknowledged that we drifted into

this struggle of the Revolution, rather as an unpleasant necessity, than a matter of principle. Burke's pleadings had excited, but not converted the nation. We had no particular affection for our allies, or enthusiasm for our cause, we had not the stimulus of national peril. And so we went to work in a languid and unbusinesslike way, and both in our administration and conduct of the war, muddled along like men who were not wholly set upon victory. But even at this stage, our conduct shone in comparison with that of the allies. The conduct of the kings was without any redeeming feature. They did not even observe the maxim of honour among thieves. Austria and Prussia hated each other worse than the enemy, their forces had to be kept apart, and one allied army was actually afraid to advance, for fear the other should seize the opportunity of cutting off its line of retreat. Russia was steadily embroiling her neighbours in the West, in order to have her own hands free for the murder of Poland. Contrary to the advice, not only of Burke, but of the English Government, it soon became apparent that robbery was also the object of the allies on the side of France, the knowledge of which goaded the French into a frenzy of resistance. Finally, when it became apparent that the war was not going as well as was expected, open treason became the order of the day. The unlovely record of Prussian diplomacy has never been blacker than during that course of greed, of cowardice, and of treachery that came to a deserved close at Jena. The oldest and proudest monarchy of all cynically changed sides, and was the first to enter upon a regicide alliance. Austria, eager to join in the enslavement of Italy, must bear the disgrace of the blackest act, even of those times, for the French envoys at Rastadt were murdered, and their papers seized by Austrian hussars. Seldom, in the whole of history, are we warranted in speaking with such unmitigated disgust as that inspired

by the proceedings of these kings. Their defenders, if such there be, may fairly be challenged to cite one word, or one action, that redounds to the credit of any one of them. Their badness was equalled by their stupidity, and the system for which they stood was too evidently in the last stages of decay. And now they were but fanning into sevenfold heat the fire that was to purge Europe.

Very different was the spirit of the nation they sought to plunder. Goaded into merciless and self-sacrificing energy, knowing that the sacred fields of their country were already portioned out, the French had become well-nigh invincible. "All Europe marches to destroy us," thundered Danton; "we hurl at their feet the head of a king!" Wild and grotesque expedients were seriously canvassed, it was even proposed to have all cannon-balls cast in the shape of the poor king's head. At the centre of affairs, inconspicuous among the gigantic figures that stalked across the stage to the guillotine, worked a silent, impassive officer of engineers, with all the wires in his hands, and the whole resources of France at his command. He it was who evoked from the soil army after army of willing patriots, and, making a consummate use of his interior lines, flung them on the mercenaries of the kings, with bewildering but calculated rapidity. Human life went for nothing, if only this officer might work out his problems freely. The guillotine went on snipping necks, and even the generals themselves knew that the choice lay between death and victory. Nay more, the commander who successfully relieved Dunkirk, and inflicted a humiliating repulse on the allies, was slain for not having done enough. To save France was the business of her officer of engineers, and he had no place for pity among his motives.

To meet this terrible energy, Pitt had only the resources of the conscientious eighteenth-century politician, and a

nation at his back which was not enthusiastic about the war. It is not surprising that our early operations afforded an excellent lesson in how not to fight. The Minister directly responsible for military affairs was the coarse and drunken Dundas, a man whose shrewdness as a party hack was joined to woeful incompetence as an administrator; the commander of our chief army in the field was the mediocre but by no means contemptible Duke of York, whose leadership was invariably crowned with failure, and whose monument is the eyesore of Pall Mall. Our first operation in the field augured ill for our prospect of victory. The one chance of the allies was to use their veteran and greatly superior forces for an immediate advance on Paris. It is ridiculous to maintain, with one modern writer, that the reduction of every frontier fortress was a necessary preliminary. The allies had sufficient troops to mask them, and had not Marlborough been willing to march on Paris, with Lille in his rear, and did not the allies, when they advanced on Paris twenty years later, leave the fortresses of the Rhine, the Elbe and the Vistula to be reduced by the Landwehr?

Nothing would satisfy our statesmen but the diversion of their army from the main object to the needless and irrelevant siege of Dunkirk. The town was an inviting prize; it was a nest of privateers, and had been a special object of English diplomacy since the days of Cromwell. But as part of the main plan for bringing France to her knees, the operation was criminal waste of time, when time was all-important. It was characteristic of the selfish and dilatory policy pursued by the allies, and it had not even the merit of success. Carnot was all the time organizing furiously, and while Coburg dawdled among the frontier fortresses, and York, unsupported by the navy, sat down in front of Dunkirk, the last chances of victory were slipping away. Again, through slackness and want of proper co-operation, we lost a golden oppor-

tunity at Toulon. Had the French fleet been properly destroyed, and a vigilant naval blockade maintained from the first, Napoleon's campaign in Italy would have been crippled, and his descent on Egypt rendered impossible.

The sound and brilliant scheme of Burke, for a stroke in the West of France, was not much approved of by the Government, nor was it altogether abandoned. By a wretched compromise, a number of gallant gentlemen were sent to their deaths, and a driblet of English troops to do nothing in particular at Quiberon. In Holland, the failure of Dunkirk was but the prelude to a chapter of disasters, culminating in the deliberate abandonment of the British by their Austrian allies. Even in this campaign the British troops showed themselves, man for man, fully equal to any that could be brought against them, but the conditions under which they fought precluded success. Finally, Pitt and Dundas allowed themselves to be diverted from the main issue to a selfish and worse than useless war of plunder in the West Indies. Incredible numbers of our troops rotted away to no purpose whatever, innocent victims of a policy that wages war in less than deadly earnest. Finally, Pitt insisted on viewing the struggle through the eyes of a Chancellor of the Exchequer. France must certainly collapse through bankruptcy; Pitt was well enough versed in the science of economics to be certain of that, and he confidently asked the House, " Is it too much to say their resources are nearly at an end ? " Burke, who understood spiritual forces better than he, knew that such a spirit as that of the Revolution could never fail from lack of rascal counters, and pointed out, in glowing phrase, how vain it was to cherish such hopes. But Pitt actually thought that by tinkering at San Domingo, he was doing some vital injury to France herself.

The operations of our fleet were conducted with a

slackness hardly inferior to that of the army. Men of genius were there in plenty, waiting to come to the front, but the time was not yet, nor was there the proper determination to win, either on the flagships or at Whitehall. Our only chance of taking Dunkirk was thrown away by the absence of British ships; the failure to destroy the Toulon fleet, even though the Spaniards were not above the suspicion of bad faith in the matter, was culpable. Admiral Hotham's remark, after letting the French fleet escape him, "We must be contented, we have done very well," is typical of the slack spirit that marred our operations, as it had in the days of Byng and Matthews. Even "the glorious First of June" was what Nelson called a "Lord Howe victory"; the enemy got away; the convoy, which was the British objective, escaped; and the glory of the day was obscured by the conspicuous cowardice of at least one captain. Even Admiral Jervis was too well pleased with what he had done after St. Vincent to renew the action.

As the war dragged on without success, and when some of our allies dropped out of it, the desire for peace became very strong, and Pitt was constrained to meet the growing discontent by a series of high-handed and arbitrary measures. His conduct in this respect follows logically from what we have already seen of his character, and his method of conducting the war. A man of brilliant imaginative insight might have seen that the English republican societies were alien to the disposition of the great mass of the nation. His father would undoubtedly have thrown himself upon the loyalty of the people, and might even have listened to the suggestion of Major Cartwright for a *levée en masse*. But the son, who was equally devoted to his country, had not the instinctive sympathy with his countrymen which had been the strength of Chatham. He could not communicate a fire that did not glow in his own breast, for he was

fighting for expediency, and not for an idea. He acted, as he had acted in embarking upon the war, with frigid correctness. It is easy to see now that he overrated the danger, but the situation was alarming enough in all conscience when a huge meeting could be held in London under the auspices of one of the revolutionary societies, and when a roaring mob surrounded the King's coach threatening his very life. A responsible Minister could afford to run no risks at such a time.

On the other hand, the Opposition that remained with Fox after the defection of Burke and his comrades was far less representative of the general feeling of the country than Pitt. Fox was certainly able to see much that was hidden from his rival. While he reprobated the September massacres and the other atrocities of the Terror, he did not fail to perceive that the kings themselves had goaded France into her irreconcilable attitude. He was also alive to the weakness of our policy as regards both the conduct of the war and the measures of repression at home. He saw that to muddle along as we did, pouring out our treasure in support of selfish and disloyal allies, and the blood of our soldiers in a half-hearted conspiracy to foist a hated régime on France, was something worse than useless. Again, the subversion of the elementary rights of the subject, in order to guard against imaginary or grossly exaggerated dangers, was not only tyrannous, but an insult to the character of the British nation. Finally, whether the war was right or wrong, the administration, which was responsible for the two Dutch fiascos, and the death of forty thousand men in the swamps of San Domingo, was nothing less than criminal.

Fox and Sheridan could plead in support of their policy that they were debating for an idea, which was more than Pitt was fighting for. They were, in fact, typical products of the Romantic movement, and both in principle and practice ardent disciples of liberty. "The progress of

liberty," says Fox, "is like the progress of the stream; it may be kept within its banks; it is sure to fertilize the country through which it runs; but no power can arrest it in its passage; and shortsighted, as well as wicked, must be the heart of the projector who would seek to divert its course." He and Sheridan followed the goddess wherever she could be found and, like true Romantics, were not always apt to distinguish between the true liberty of doing as one ought, and the false liberty of license and caprice. There was an irresponsibility about their ardour which qualified them better for critics than statesmen. Naturally they were enamoured of the Revolution, and like the other English supporters of its doctrines, committed themselves to prophecies no less rash than optimistic. As late as 1792, two years after Burke had predicted, with such fatal accuracy, the course of affairs in France, Fox allowed himself to speak of the ephemeral and unworkable French Constitution as "the most stupendous and glorious edifice of liberty which has been erected on the foundation of human integrity in any age or country," and to declare that the French had erected "a government from which neither insult nor injury could be apprehended by their neighbours."

But if, in this respect, Fox must stand convicted of a gross error of judgment, there was one respect in which he was wiser, and even more patriotic than Burke. He apprehended firmly the principle that nations must be allowed to govern themselves according to their own ideals, and that to force a particular system upon them from the outside was the most infamous of all outrages upon liberty. He recognized the connection, which we have already traced, between democratic principles and nationality. Though he did not attempt to palliate the outrages of the sans-culottes, he saw that the kings of Europe were just as bad, and the horrors perpetrated by the armies of kings at Warsaw and Naples made his

heart bleed as much as the subjugation of Switzerland. He knew that the Bourbons intended, and indeed professed, nothing better than to give back France, in the words of the "Marseillaise," to the ancient slavery. Therefore he considered a war, undertaken in alliance with tyrants, and with such an object, as nothing less than a crime, and foredoomed to failure from the outset. Thus Fox and Sheridan came to be the champions of nationality, not only for England, but for all Europe.

At the same time, it is impossible to acquit them of a recklessness in the advocacy of their principles which might conceivably have led to very serious consequences, and certainly gravely qualifies their claim to be ranked as patriots of a high order. The levity of disposition, the worst side of the Romantic spirit, which had displayed itself too often at Carlton House, and within the walls of Parliament, was too much a part of their nature ever to be thoroughly discarded. Fox spoke the truth when he declared himself ready to oppose practically anything that Pitt brought forward. We must not forget, in comparing the obstinate caution of Pitt with the free invective of his opponents, that the Minister was under a terrible responsibility. It was easy to denounce repressive measures in the abstract, and to scoff at the fears of insurrection; but Pitt, working in darkness and uncertainty, could not afford to risk a mistake that might be fatal. Much of the conduct of the Opposition cannot be reconciled with any high principles whatever. Their abstention from the House, in the time of the most fearful peril England has ever been through, was an act not of patriotism, but of petulance, and they stultified their own conduct by turning up in the House whenever it suited them to do so.

It would be false to talk of either Fox or Sheridan as if, at any time in their careers, they were wholly the friends of every country but their own; for Fox was

always a " big navy " man, and Sheridan, at the height of the Nore mutiny, threw party to the winds, and came splendidly to the support of the Government, in coping with a national peril. But their conduct is not always so pleasant to contemplate. Their abstention from the vote of thanks to Admiral Duncan is an instance both of bad taste and bad citizenship. Fox was not above expressing an indecent joy at his country's misfortunes. At the Peace of Amiens, he expresses himself to Grey thus frankly: " The truth is, I am gone something further in hate to the English Government than perhaps you and the rest of my friends are, and certainly further than can with prudence be avowed. The triumph of the French Government over the English does in fact afford me a degree of pleasure which it is very difficult to disguise." Words which subordinate the national point of view so entirely to party are unworthy of an Englishman, especially when the despotic power of France, under Napoleon, had reached such a pitch that Fox himself could describe it as " truly alarming." When such ignoble sentiments actuated the Leader of the Opposition, sentiments which he himself shrank from avowing, it is evident that, with all his faults, Pitt was the only man fit to lead the nation.

Despite failure, and incompetence worse than failure, this necessity for Pitt became every day more apparent. He might not understand the situation, he might misconceive the object of the war, but the intense love of England, the cult to which he had dedicated himself from his youth up, never flickered for a moment. It might as truly have been said of him, as of the Private of the Buffs,

> "He only knows that not through him
> Shall England come to shame."

It is a truly remarkable thing that despite every failure in the administration of the war, despite the long, dreary

years when we seemed to fight as men beating the air, the figure of Pitt only loomed larger in the eyes of men In France, he was honoured by a hatred accorded to no other among her adversaries; at home, he stood in proud isolation apart from, and above, the other politicians of his day. As the peril intensified, his spirit rose to meet it. At the beginning of the war, his purpose had been vague, and his appeal lukewarm; but when it became apparent that this was no move in the game of kingcraft, but a contest for England's very existence, his purpose became firm, and his voice a rally-call to all his countrymen.

There is something peculiarly felicitous in that comparison of him to a pilot. His speeches are not exuberant or flaming like those of the greatest orators, but reflect the quiet, tight-lipped determination of the experienced man at the wheel, guiding his ship through rocks or ice-fields, and knowing that upon his concentration and incessant vigilance depends the safety of every one on board. We have often noticed, upon the faces of such men, a settled cast of responsibility, the visible imprint of that quality which Carlyle has called silence. In that Carlylese sense, it is not a paradox to say that Pitt's oratory, even in his longest speeches, was very silent. He addressed himself to the practical issue before the House; he went into detail; and when his deeper emotions found an almost involuntary expression, they appealed to his hearers with a strength that only such strength can enkindle. There is, moreover, a certain hardness about this strength of Pitt's. He was no longer the confident boy who had beaten down the Coalition and seemed to have the nation at his feet. Many a disappointment, many a shattered illusion, had been his since that hour of eager and triumphant dawn. He had learnt that the greatness of his conceptions was limited by the pettiness of his following, that though he might ride the nation, he could not always manage it. He had seen his visions of

peace and economy all dissipated by an unforeseeable catastrophe. And the horror of a great loneliness seems to have descended upon him. In that little-regarded portrait in the National Gallery, we may see, what Pitt could never have borne to reveal, the wistful and almost heartbroken appeal of that friendless pilot, who found refuge in the grave at the age of forty-six, an exhausted and shattered man.

He had wavered at first, when the objects of the war seemed uncertain, and our safety assured, and he aroused the bitter scorn of Burke by his compliant attitude to the Directory. But soon it became apparent that the war was not the easy thing he had believed. Perils began to thicken around England as terrible as those which had weakened the energies of France a few years before. Our allies deserted or betrayed us; the first wretched coalition began to fall to pieces. Then the alliance was revived, which had almost brought us to our knees during the last war; Spain and Holland joined the enemy. Next, a flame of rebellion swept from end to end of Ireland, and it only needed a French army to give it every prospect of success. Our fleets were unable to parry the stroke, and only the chance or providence of winds and waves kept such an army from landing. Our credit, which had hitherto enabled us to supply undeserved subsidies to all the kings of Europe, suddenly appeared to be on the verge of collapse—bankruptcy stared us in the face. There was hardly one circumstance to cheer us amid the gloom. Our operations had been almost uniformly unsuccessful, unless we could derive some lukewarm comfort from the scrambling and indecisive victory of the First of June. Discontent was rife. Such distress was known in England as had never been experienced before, and it was lack of bread, and not lack of liberty, that made the crowd mob the royal coach.

To crown all this came the mutiny in our fleets. Our

first line of defence was paralysed in the moment of the gravest peril. The Spithead sailors, even when they had hoisted the red flag at the masthead, never wholly forgot their duty, and they were ready to put to sea, if the French came out of port. The trouble in Jervis's Mediterranean fleet was the work of Irish rebels, for whom a timely application of cat and rope proved an effectual cure. But the mutiny at the Nore was the most serious of all, and there was talk of handing over the fleet to the enemy, so that the Government had to remove the buoys to prevent them getting to sea. In no year of her existence did England come nearer to ruin than in 1797.

Yet Pitt never flinched. He faced the peril with a quiet and unquestioning confidence in the country he adored. He disdained to employ heroics, he took it for granted that England must be worthy of herself. All through that dark year he kept his head and his confidence, and his eloquence became grander, more convincing, because he had now no doubts about the nature of his cause, or its righteousness. Like his father, he was striving to save England. Hear him in April: "I am convinced that the more the state of the country is inquired into, the less ground there is for despondency, or the apprehension of any danger which Englishmen may not meet with the fortitude which belongs to the national character." Towards the end of the year, he is emphatic in his determination not to retire from the struggle, except upon principles consistent with our dignity. "There may be danger," he confesses, "but on the one side there is danger accompanied with honour; on the other side there is danger with indelible shame and disgrace; upon such an alternative Englishmen will not hesitate." And in December, speaking of the Opposition's unwillingness to grant an adequate supply, he told the House that if they refused his demands, "it would be proclaiming to France and to the world, their repentance for having

dared to stand up in defence of their laws, their religion, and of everything that was valuable to them as Englishmen."

It was this that changed the character of the war, and raised England from her half-hearted, Laodicean attitude, to be the example and deliverer of Europe. It was only by passing through these white flames of affliction that she came to realize that "our laws, our religion, everything that was valuable" were at stake. That she came safely through the trial is due, as far as it is due to any one man, to her Prime Minister. Whatever his initial blindness as to the object and meaning of the struggle, the creed which he had always held kept him straight and strong at the hour of crisis. It was no longer a question of crushing out republican principles; England herself stood in peril; England was struggling for her life against aggressive tyranny, and it was imperative upon her to conquer or to die.

As long as it was the object of the war simply to crush French liberty, the great body of Englishmen were not thoroughly roused. But gradually it began to dawn upon us that we were fighting not to crush a free people, but against a proud tyranny; that we were fighting on behalf of liberty, and not only the liberty of England, but that of all Europe. The whole problem of the Napoleonic wars becomes simple, if we bear this dominating fact in mind: victory lay all along, not with brilliant generalship and skilful seamanship, but with patriotism. When a whole people was united in the cause of an idea, no blunders on the part of its leaders, no Schwartzenberg or Kutusoff or Whitelock, could prevent that nation from triumphing in the end, even against Napoleon at the head of half Europe.

The French Revolution witnessed the triumph of an improvised army of patriots against the hired mercenaries of kings. Of course, we must not forget that this army was stiffened by the presence of the old soldiers of the

Monarchy, but these had been deprived of their generals and most of their officers, and the whole military system was thrown out of gear. Besides, it had been proved at Rossbach how useless even the great army of Soubise could be against a third of their number of Prussians. But the Revolution had instilled a new spirit into the troops, and, as the guillotine shore away the incompetent and the demagogues, great leaders sprang up everywhere, Hoche and Moreau and Marceau. The spirit of the nation triumphed, as spirit always will, over economic considerations. By all the laws of the study, France ought to have been beaten twenty times over, but there was that in the nation which made it impossible for her to brook defeat, and neither reckless finance, nor civil war, nor an undisciplined navy, nor an improvised army, could make the least difference, one way or another, to the final result.

Now happened exactly what Burke had foreseen. When a nation has destroyed its institutions, and is struggling for its life, the army becomes the most important part of it, and the leader of the army is bound, sooner or later, to lead the nation. What had been a struggle for existence became one for dominion. Every repulse of the invaders had whetted the thirst for glory, and encouraged the French to believe themselves invincible. The despots had dared to violate French liberty; they would now be paid back in their own coin, and a regenerate France might become the mistress of the world. The lust for glory, always latent in the French character, was roused to fever-heat; and liberty, the cult of the Jacobins and the Terror, was gradually forced into the background. It was soon found that liberty, though an excellent thing for France, did not suit other nations so well, as Italy and Switzerland were to discover to their cost. There arose a young general of transcendent genius, whose career was a series of dazzling victories. No

wonder that the nation was swept along the tide of victory, and forgot the theories of her philosophers! Of course, the change was not accomplished without difficulty; the reaction of Fructidor was a rally to the cause of Jacobinism; but the defeats sustained by France in Napoleon's absence, and the reports of his victories in Egypt, precipitated the inevitable, and the seal was set on the new régime by the "crowning mercy" of Marengo. The Empire followed as a matter of course, and what Marengo was to the Consulate, Austerlitz was to the Empire.

As long as he was only face to face with the troops of the old régime, Napoleon marched from victory to victory. The stars in their courses fought against the kings. Historians have remarked that Napoleon *ought* to have been beaten again and again. He *was* beaten at Marengo, until the Austrian general went to bed. Even after his victory at Austerlitz, he was strategically in a hopeless position, with one hundred and thirty thousand Prussians on his communications, waiting for the word to strike, a word which never came. But, somehow, nothing seemed to go quite right with the allies. When they did get beaten, they collapsed; prisoners were taken by the thousand; great fortresses, like Magdeburg, threw open their gates to a handful of troops. The Austrians and Prussians were not cowards, but they did not fight like men who meant to win, they were fighting for pay, against men who were fighting for a cause, and so they were beaten. In short, France was a nation, her enemies were kingdoms.

In Great Britain alone, France found the enemy worthy of her steel. Even in the first years of the war, the British troops showed themselves at least equal to the French, and though they were wretchedly led, and often outmanœuvred, they were not fairly and squarely beaten in any considerable pitched battle, except when they were

shamefully left in the lurch by their Austrian allies. As for the fleet, the mischief was not that the French beat us, but that we did not beat the French enough. The traditions of patriotism and of hatred to France were too deeply fixed in the consciousness of the nation to be eradicated, and we have seen that the worst effects of the Prose Age had tainted the upper class, rather than the mass of the people. Most of our mishaps, in the early stages of the war, were due to incompetent leadership, rather than to any shortcomings on the part of the men.

We are thus confronted with much the same situation as at the time of the Armada. England was not fairly roused until she was goaded into greatness by imminent peril; as long as the war was one merely of conquest, the quickening fire of patriotism was lacking. It was the growing power of Napoleon that was to give us the Nelson touch and the sonnets of Wordsworth. The danger was not so dramatic as that of Medina's seven miles of galleons; it was the culminating product of the mutinies of our fleets, the failure of our armies, the defeat of our allies, the terrible distress, the breakdown of our finance, and the danger to our shores. And just as the Armada period marks the beginning of a great outburst of literary glory, so the dark hours of 1796 and 1797 were the prelude to the noonday of the Romantic movement; for Blake, like Burke and Chatterton, is a product of the first emotional revival. And what these first dangers had begun, was finally accomplished by the Boulogne flotilla, and the long period of suspense, while the Grand Army lay within striking distance of our shores.

It was late in 1797 that the young lions of the Tory Party started the "Anti-Jacobin," which was to take in hand the work that Burke had begun, and definitely to organize patriotic sentiment against France and French principles. This was no ordinary party venture; such men as Pitt and Canning were among its contributors, and

even in its funniest satires there is a note of savage intensity; the war is war to the knife, and quarter is neither asked nor given. From a literary point of view, the practice of the contributors was to hark back to the traditions of the Prose Age; but, whether they willed it or no, they tended, in the long run, to open the door for the new poetry, which was to render the classical tradition obsolete.

The purpose of the "Anti-Jacobin" is announced in the prospectus. It is to be eminently patriotic; the authors are not ashamed frankly to avow their prejudice in favour of their country, and of her institutions, and here we may trace the influence of Burke. From him, too, derives their hatred of the metaphysic and cold reasoning that had inspired the *philosophes*.

> "Reason, Philosophy, fiddledum diddledum,
> Peace and Fraternity, higgledy, piggledy,
> Higgledy piggledy, fiddledum diddledum."

Merciless fun is made of the pretensions of rhyming scientists, of the type of Erasmus Darwin, and of all the plausible systems of universal progress that were so dear to the hearts of men like Condorçet. The French mind naturally prefers clearness of generalization, and tends to ignore anything that conflicts with a neat theory, and the satire of the "Anti-Jacobin" represents the revolt of the English mind against its antithesis. There is nothing good-natured about this satire. It is intended to hurt and to kill, its contempt is as scathing as the invective of Burke. It is, above all things, an organ of gentlefolk, of educated men, whose intellect was as much revolted by facile generalization as their feelings by the slaughter of an aristocracy.

But what ennobles the "Anti-Jacobin," and lifts it above any merely class controversy, is the rally-call it sounds to the nation. What it loathes above all other vices of the English Jacobin is his treachery to his own

country, and here he differs from his French comrade, who at least desires the aggrandizement of France. The effect of a French invasion is prophesied in one poem, the plunder, the rape and the murder that will inevitably ensue upon the triumph of the Jacobins, despite their high-falutin speeches. Indeed the hypocrisy of republican sentiment is again and again exposed, whether in the person of the "friend of humanity," who refuses sixpence to the needy knife-grinder, or in those of the philosophers and sentimental women who find, in the new morality, a ready excuse for the gratification of their lusts. The native kindliness, that probably was the salvation of our governing class, is thus a motive of the "Anti-Jacobin"; the philanthropic agitator is not only a shallow, but also a shabby fellow. All the essentially English hatred of shams and humbug is enlisted on the side of patriotism, against French principles. Every number contained tabulated lists of the lies, misrepresentations and mistakes of various apostles of freedom. Sometimes the satirical note is dropped, and we have more or less stirring appeals to arms:

> "Let France in savage accents sing
> Her bloody Revolution;
> We love our Country, prize our King,
> Adore our Constitution."

But lyric poetry is not the strong point of the "Anti-Jacobin." It is essentially a destructive organ, and it is in attack and satire that its great qualities are displayed. And herein lies its greatest blemish.

For though deriving many of its principles from Burke, it lacked his creative imagination; its patriotism was intense and sincere, but it was too often red-hot rather than white-hot. It was imbued with much of the supercilious spirit of our public schools and universities, which condemns indiscriminately every kind of passionate enthusiasm. The lofty spirit of Canning was sometimes

able to soar beyond these limits, but the "Anti-Jacobins" also included men like Gifford, who was afterwards dragged from his retirement to become the editor of the "Quarterly Review." The attacks were brutal, and never thought of allowing for any redeeming trait in the victim. It is with somewhat of a shock that we find, classed among "all creeping creatures, venomous and low," such names as "Coleridge, Southey, Lloyd, and Lamb and Co.," and that we find Goethe himself singled out as the object of the keenest and most successful satire. But there is this that distinguishes the "Anti-Jacobin" from the Keats-killing quarterlies and Blackwoods. The "Anti-Jacobin" stood, in a time of intense peril, for a great cause; its authors never forgot, even in their bitterest hate, that they were fighting for their country, and all that their country held most dear, her ancient institutions, her venerable religion, against the attacks of violent and wicked men, to whom nothing was sacred. The "Quarterly" and "Blackwood" of twenty years later were the organs of a selfish class, and an effete literary tradition.

The "Anti-Jacobin" accomplished one feat of political insight which gives the lie to the doctrine that only posterity is fit to judge the causes of events. The French, it is observed, had hitherto had to deal with unworthy opponents, and had depended for success even more upon the defects of the enemy than upon their own merits. "But they had now" (the author is speaking of the abortive expedition of Colonel Tate) "to contend with Britons! men attached to their country, and resolute in its defence. The consequence was inevitable." This is a perfect estimate of the situation, and by bearing it in mind we shall be able to thread the maze of the Napoleonic tragedy.

The last number of the "Anti-Jacobin" was the greatest. It contained Canning's poem on "The New Morality,"

in which all the hatred of Jacobins and their ways found expression in one tremendous philippic. It is this poem that contains the memorable description of the cosmopolitan enthusiast :

> " A steady patriot of the world alone,
> The friend of every country but his own."

There is also the denunciation of the philanthropy (the French and not the English brand) by virtue of which

> " Each pert Adept disowns a Briton's part,
> And plucks the name of England from his heart " ;

and the poem concludes by an appeal which is, in other words, that of Shakespeare :

> " Guard we but our own hearts : with constant view
> To antient morals, antient manners true."

The rise of Napoleon was watched in England with intense interest. From the first he figured as a criminal adventurer and an unmitigated scoundrel, in fact, the "Boney" of popular English tradition. All his crimes, real and imaginary, were held up to execration by pen and pencil. He had murdered Desaix, instigated treacherous massacres, poisoned his own troops, in short, he was a fiend incarnate. The name of Napoleon carries with it some glamour of greatness to the most irreconcilable of modern minds, but we must remember that to the men of those times he was a Corsican cut-throat, citizen Bonaparte, the tool of Barras and the friend of Augustin Robespierre. Nor did satire spare Josephine, her charms and her virtue were alike the object of attack, and one caricature even shows her dancing stark naked before Barras. Refinement and chivalry were not the most conspicuous traits of the English satirists.

Whether or no Buonaparte was as black as he was painted, he certainly lost no time in declaring his hostility to England. This, the mainspring of his career, is

also the burden of his tragedy. He was great enough to see what was the real bar to his ambition, and he knew that to conquer England was to conquer the world. The name of Pitt was a bogey in France even in the days of the Terror, and " Pitt's gold " was the ready explanation of any sinister event, even in domestic politics. Certainly Pitt's efforts were unremitting, though too often misdirected, and his agents were distributed all over Europe, ready to detect and foment anti-French feeling. The problem, as regarded the Continental monarchies, was comparatively simple for France ; their armies were, in the long run, no match for hers, and their frontiers lay open to invasion. But the sea power, the wealth, and the persistent enmity of England, were a perpetual menace to French ambition, and, above all, the English were the only soldiers that the French could not beat on even terms. Whether he actually said it or no, Napoleon's bitter exclamation, " It has been the same since Cressy," was the simple truth.

The two great English manœuvres, of fighting in line on land, and of breaking the line at sea, were no chance caprices of tactics, but a decisive mark of superiority. The manœuvre of breaking the line was well known before Rodney's day ; the French admiral whom he defeated had even thought out a parry to it. But yet, though it was adopted again and again by the English, with brilliant success, we do not find the French learning the lesson. The fact is that, in order to break the line, the attacking fleet had to expose its foremost ships to the combined fire of a greatly superior force, and to the risk of being annihilated before the other ships could get up. Only the superior fighting force could afford to take such risks. In land war, the practice of meeting attack with thin lines of infantry was one that required the utmost steadiness and discipline, as well as bravery, on the part of the troops, and demanded far higher military qualities than

did the massive columns of the French. The line was no tactical panacea discovered by the English. It had been universal in the eighteenth century, and in the Revolutionary wars the Prussians and Austrians had tried it, and been soundly beaten. It was only the English soldier who had the iron nerve necessary to oppose the huge columns with but two thin, steadfast lines. "Such a gallant line," says Napier of the 7th and 23rd at Albuera, "arising from amid the smoke and rapidly separating itself from the confused and broken multitude, startled the enemy's heavy masses . . . they closed on their terrible enemies, and then was seen with what a majesty the British soldier fights. . . . No sudden burst of undisciplined valour, no nervous enthusiasm weakened the stability of their order; their flashing eyes were bent on the dark columns in front, their measured tread shook the ground, their dreadful volleys swept away the head of every formation; their deafening shouts overpowered the dissonant cries that broke from all parts of the tumultuous crowd, as foot by foot, and with a horrid carnage, it was driven by the incessant vigour of the attack to the farthest edge of the hill." This British testimony is borne out by the account of the French general Bugeaud, recently quoted by Professor Oman. A French column is attacking an English line, who await them in motionless silence. Even at a thousand yards the assailants begin to lose their nerve; the quick step becomes a run; the ranks melt into one another; cries are heard; the men begin to fire as they run; the young soldiers, especially, are impressed by that silence of their adversaries. The English line, like a long brick wall, "seemed to take no notice of the storm which was about to break upon it. . . . Our ardour was growing cold. The moral influence (irresistible in war) of a calm which *seems* undisturbed (even if it be not really so), as opposed to a disorder which intoxicates itself with vain noise, weighed on our

souls. At this moment of painful expectation the English made a quarter turn—their muskets were going up to the 'ready.' An indefinable sensation stopped many of our men dead, they halted and began a wavering fire. The enemy's return, delivered with simultaneous precision, absolutely blasted us. Decimated by it, we reeled together, trying to recover our equilibrium. Then three formidable hurrahs terminated the long silence of our adversaries. At the third they were upon us, pressing us into disorderly retreat." So great and so indisputable was the moral superiority of the British soldier, which alone enabled him to meet attack in line. Homer has depicted precisely the same contrast, between the silence of the Greeks and the noisiness of the Trojans. The merits of the two systems were first tested in 1806, when an English regiment, in line, defeated one of the crack regiments of the French army, in column. And yet the French never succeeded in adapting themselves to the methods of their enemies. At Waterloo, the 52nd, an old Peninsula regiment, made havoc of the Imperial Guard itself, and marched victoriously, and in perfect order, right across the field of battle. "They came on," said Wellington of the Grand Army, "in the old way, and we beat them in the old way."

Napoleon was sharply reminded of the reality of the English menace during his Egyptian expedition. This he had intended as a blow at our power; he was to have commanded the Republican army for the invasion of England, but he saw that this plan was not feasible, and there was another way of attacking us that gave greater promise of success. Oriental conquest always had an attraction for Napoleon, and he dreamed of striking a blow at our Indian Empire. But the hand of England was upon him; Nelson annihilated his fleet; Sir Sidney Smith drove him from Acre; and, after he had escaped to France, Abercromby disposed of the rest of his army.

It was the victory of the Nile that first awoke England to a true sense of the part she had to play. Danger is the great stimulant to energy, but there must be something of hope, something of triumph, to kindle the pure flame of national spirit. The Battle of the Nile was a triumph of which England might well be proud. Scarcely ever had a naval victory been so complete. Its results were commensurate with its brilliancy. Napoleon was a prisoner in Egypt; England commanded the Mediterranean; the Second Coalition was called into being. More important still, the French sailors and admirals had learnt to be afraid of us; even the great fleet of Bruix, which might have retrieved the situation for France, was content to get back into port, after having managed to avoid the enemy for three months. So thoroughly had the French found their masters, that in the battle of the Basque Roads a French ship of the line struck to an English brig; and such was the spirit that Nelson had infused into the conduct of affairs, that in 1805 Sir Robert Calder was actually censured because he had only captured two ships of a superior fleet, and let the rest run away to Cadiz, without renewing the action.

The Nile was the turning-point of the war. The army, which had as yet had scarcely a gleam of success, and now sustained a second humiliating reverse in Holland, at last was crowned with victory in Egypt. A formidable attempt to combine the North against us was shattered, by another glorious victory at Copenhagen. The French navy and commerce had been swept from the seas, and the supremacy of British sea power was absolute. Ireland, whose semi-independence had proved a thorn in the side of England, was united to her by questionable, but necessary means. The pilot, who had guided the ship of State into safe waters, left the wheel for a while to the wretched "doctor" and his incompetent Ministry. And then came the breathing space of the Peace of Amiens.

This Peace represents a genuine attempt on the part of England to let bygones be bygones, and live at peace with our neighbours, without troubling about their domestic politics. Only a short time before, Grenville had replied to Napoleon's overtures by an official and officious sermon, calling upon France to restore the Bourbons. But in the negotiations of Amiens, we broke decisively with Burke's policy of forcing an alien régime on France. We ceased to trouble ourselves about the divine right of the Bourbons. We went on the assumption that the cup of French ambition was now full, that the First Consul, who had attained a pinnacle of glory beyond the dreams of Louis XIV, might well be content to consolidate his power at home and leave other nations alone. We displayed an extreme moderation, handing back our conquests, even the valuable Cape of Good Hope, with reckless complaisance, and asking nothing in return. On one point, our statesmanship displayed culpable shortsightedness. No provision was made for the Netherlands, the key of our European position. None the less, a peace was concluded on honourable terms, and the nation went mad with joy.

This respite of Amiens is a landmark in the spiritual history of the struggle. We had broken once and for all with the idea of a war to crush a free people in the name of divine right. As long as this was the case, we were fighting on the wrong lines, and we could not command success. A new conception of our cause had been gaining upon us, ever since the year of extreme peril; after the breathing space it became dominant. For it was soon apparent that we were face to face with a tyranny that left us no choice but to resist or be slaves. Napoleon meant to put us out altogether from the politics of the Continent, while his ambition grew with each fresh acquisition. He again turned greedy eyes upon Egypt, and his agents were busy countermining our influence there.

Egypt, as nobody knew better than the First Consul, was the most important stage on the road to India, and this being the case, it would have been madness for us, treaty or no treaty, to have let go Malta. Worst of all, it was too evident that Holland itself was destined to be made a French province, and that what we had fought and intrigued against for centuries was now about to become an accomplished fact. War, and that for our life, was thus inevitable. The precise means by which it came about is a matter for the diplomatic historian.

Here we may content ourselves with observing the change in the realm of ideas. Now, at last, England was in the full stream of the Romantic movement; now, at last, she stood for an idea, and that idea was liberty. Her first object was to save herself, her second to save Europe, from a tyrant. For tyrant Napoleon was to her. We need not enter upon the fascinating and unsolved problem of his character; we are writing of England, and of Napoleon as he affected England. From our point of view, he had stepped into the place of Louis XIV and Philip of Spain. His ambition compassed the domination of the world, an alien and intolerable tyranny. With every fresh acquisition of strength to our enemy, the merely dynastic and selfish aims with which we had commenced the war receded into the background. The war became a Holy War.

Thus it was that the whole might of the Romantic spirit came to be enlisted on our side. At first this had not been so. Many of the greatest figures of romance had found their love of liberty pulling against their love of England. Only Burke had been whole-hearted for the war, and it was not on Burke's principles that the war was to be fought to a finish. In those early years, the nation had been voiceless, save for Burke's philippics, and one or two songs of Burns. As in the early days of Elizabeth, we had fought on sadly in the dark. But

now liberty and patriotism were no longer out of tune; a tyranny more grinding than that of the Bourbons threatened us from Paris, a spirit as fierce as the "Marscillaise" rose to meet it. One by one the waverers came to rally round the flag, and there was no more talk of sympathy with the French, no more fear of Corresponding Societies and their like. England was fighting in all the pride of a good cause, and it was the nation itself, and not the calculation of politicians, that inspired the struggle.

The crisis of 1797–8 is memorable in the realm of literature, as well as that of action. It saw Wordsworth and Coleridge come to the maturity of their genius, and the year of the Nile was also signalized by the appearance of the not less memorable "Lyrical Ballads." The second and greatest period of English romance had set in, and England began to sing. Both poets, though retaining all their enthusiasm for liberty, had shed their illusions about the French Revolution, and no longer desired to see our troops beaten. Poor "Spy Nosy," who kept a watch on them on behalf of a suspicious Government, might have spared his pains. Even Fox was coming nearer to his old opponents, for it was no longer possible to denounce resistance to France in the name of liberty. But for the stoutness of the old King, Pitt and Fox would have served their country as members of the same administration.

## CHAPTER V

### TRIUMPH AND ISOLATION

NAPOLEON'S conduct at the opening of the war displayed a notable similarity to that of Louis XIV a century before. Louis had driven all England into opposition by his seizure of the Barrier towns, and his recognition of the Pretender. Equally high-handed, and even less politic, was Napoleon's imprisonment of all King George's subjects who happened to be in France. This cruel and unprovoked outrage, for Napoleon's pretext was of the flimsiest, was enough to show that there was no safety from this man, save by blood and iron. It had the effect of uniting men of every shade of opinion in the common cause. The debate on the declaration of war was a memorable one. Pitt's speech, by a sad mischance, is lost for ever, but many of his hearers thought it his greatest effort, and we can imagine with what steadfast resolution the devoted patriot inspired his hearers. Of Fox's speech we know more, though not all, and on this we can certainly pronounce that the champion of liberty was never heard to better advantage.

The closing days of Fox's career are those upon which his countrymen can look back with most satisfaction. While Sheridan was declining into a pitiable state of maudlin sentiment, the character of Fox took on a firmness and nobility that had been too sadly lacking in the days of the Coalition and Warren Hastings. His con-

tribution to this memorable debate breathes the loftiest patriotic idealism. He opposed Ministers, not because they went to war, but because, in his opinion, they went to war in a wrong spirit, as a matter of policy, and not as a crusade. He would have flung Malta to the winds, and made light of Egypt; he preferred the strength of a pure cause to all the advantages of expert kingcraft. Opponent of the Bourbons as he had always been, he would have resisted, to the death, the impudent demand for the expulsion of that unfortunate family from our shores. If we must draw the sword, it should be on behalf of the enslaved Switzers and Dutchmen, and not for the advantage of a naval base at Valetta. In this conception of patriotism, he touches a level to which even Pitt did not attain. The ideal of a mighty nation, *sans peur et sans reproche*, millions of men uniting to form one champion of the oppressed all over the world, and casting aside all thought even of collective self-interest, is one of which few patriots have dared to dream. Such a nation would be irresistible.

And yet, during the terrible years that were to ensue upon Fox's speech, England came nearer to attaining this ideal than any nation before or since. Seldom has war been carried on with so little prospect of selfish aggrandizement. It was precisely in her disinterestedness that her strength lay among the greedy and intriguing kings of the Continent. It is remarkable to what an extent, after the death of her two greatest statesmen, the war passes out of the hands of statesmen. With the exception of Canning and Castlereagh, they are a shadowy and unimpressive group, with whose views and intrigues we need not concern ourselves. They do not impress their personalities upon the conflict, but are carried along with it. It is as if the soul of England, that life of untold multitudes and many ages, had become articulate and purposeful; as if the great symbolic conflict for the de-

liverance of Spain, and the deliverance of Europe, had passed out of the control of any mortal will of three-score years and ten, and God Himself were guiding the destinies of His people.

Napoleon had now to cast about for other means of overthrowing his arch-enemy. He reverted to the plan of the Directory, and prepared to strike a great blow at England's heart. There can be small doubt that he had every intention of putting this threat into execution; such infinite labour and minuteness of detail do not point to a blind. Nelson, who sacrificed brave lives in an almost hopeless attempt to destroy some of the Boulogne flotilla, does not seem to have thought so either. The failure of Nelson's attempt may help us to understand the failure of Napoleon.

Both men were gifted with supreme creative genius; both were forced, by circumstances, to attempt the impossible. Napoleon had not to consider how immense were the odds against him, he was positively compelled to remove England from his path, or consent to the limitation of his personality, by falling short of world-conquest, a paltry ambition, but one which dominated him. There are some wills that must expand or break; any risk was preferable to self-denial, and Napoleon might trust to his elaborate and masterly scheme of naval strategy, or to the chapter of accidents, to give him temporary command of the Channel. The rest he and the Grand Army could do for themselves.

This was a mistake. The Grand Army, even if it had managed to enter London, would have been defeated. Mere strategy and tactics are not everything in war; though Napoleon would have found a Moore as well as a York ready to receive him. But a nation, fired with the spirit which was then abroad in England, could not by any possibility have been conquered. The recruits who broke Ney at Waterloo would have broken Murat

in Kent; one can imagine a series of hard-fought, murderous battles, the English, outmanœuvred but not outfought, forced back, perhaps, step by step, until, the command of the Channel having been regained, the force of the attack spent itself in vain against the line of the North Downs, one of the most perfect defensive positions imaginable. It was impossible, as Napoleon was to find later, for military skill to juggle away with moral fitness. In all his really decisive victories, at Rivoli, Marengo, Austerlitz, Jena, Friedland, he had an overwhelming superiority in this essential element of victory, which made his manœuvres accomplish exactly what he intended, and was able to change a defeat into rout or surrender. He would not have had this advantage in Kent.

Pitt lived to see the clouds of invasion scattered, and then the strain proved too much for him, and that fragile body could no longer house its guest. Like Burke, he died miserable, but dauntless. There has been some credence attached to a story that he prophesied the final overthrow of Napoleon through the principle of nationality, and actually predicted the Peninsular War. Even if the authority were less flimsy, the story could by no possibility be true. Pitt was the priest of his country, but he was not her seer. We know, only too well, the state of his mind at the last. He had staked all his hopes on the Third Coalition; the news of Ulm he had refused to believe; the news of Austerlitz broke him. Yet, had he known it, his policy was even then driving Napoleon to ruin. By destroying his sea power, and blockading his coasts, he was forcing the Emperor further and further eastwards, even unto Moscow. It was necessary that the armies of the kings should be shattered, in order that the armies of the nations might come into being. The Coalition had served its purpose, but Pitt knew it not. In his last agony he was heard to ejaculate, "How I

leave my country!" It is not on this earth that the hero must look for his reward; and yet what could Pitt have asked for, more than the ultimate salvation of his country, even though he did not see it with mortal eyes?

If it was Pitt who gave his country iron, it was Nelson who gave her fire. He was, like William Blake, one of those divine children who never grow old, and like Sir Francis Drake, he embodied the best tendencies of his time in a spirit of buoyant patriotism that sacrificed body and soul to England with as little thought as most men give to the pursuit of their own interests. And with all his downright simplicity, no greater exponent of the art of war has ever existed. There is hardly a single action of his that does not stamp him as a man of supreme genius; even his failures were splendid. And although his mind was employed upon colossal and dazzling schemes of victory, he was equally a master of the minutest detail. His great victories are hardly less remarkable than the unremitting patience with which, in face of enormous difficulties, he maintained the blockade of Toulon.

Nelson is the supreme product, in the realm of action, of the English Romantic spirit. Even in his faults he embodies it. Though he held it part of his creed to obey orders, he was not only the most troublesome of subordinates, but he was apt to be under the control of his own emotions. Lady Hamilton found a way of pandering to the weakest side of his nature, and his conduct at Naples, when under her wizardry, has left an indelible stain upon his memory. This weakness was what struck Wellington when the two men came into momentary contact, and he was inclined to look on Nelson as a sentimental declaimer. Yet Nelson's faults fade into insignificance in the light of a genius which is not unworthy of comparison with that of Napoleon himself. Never was hero so manifestly inspired, or so

capable of inspiring others. And never did virtue go forth from a sweeter soul.

He idealized his subordinates, and by this means made them ideal officers. He had that fundamental trust in man's nature which sees in every human form the chrysalis of an angel, and has the power, by faith, to bring that angel to birth. This is the noblest phase of that worship of humanity which is of the essence of romance. Never was man more splendidly backed by his subordinates, never did man more richly merit their loyalty. In this respect at any rate he was greater than Napoleon, who made it his policy to degrade his marshals, instead of inspiring them, who was grudging in his appreciation of their services, and played them off against each other. And so their dissensions largely contributed to his downfall, and in the Peninsula they were seldom capable of combining against Wellington. In the hour of their master's direst need they forsook him. But under no circumstances would Troubridge, or Hardy, or Collingwood have deserted Nelson.

We have heard it said of him, by the most brilliant of journalistic cynics, that his genius, instead of producing intellectual keenness and scrupulousness, produced mere delirium. Would to God that all Englishmen suffered from such delirium, a delirium for which no problem was too vast, no detail too intricate! The child who wanted to be kissed on his deathbed, and who could pour out all his passionate craving for sympathy and love at the feet of Lady Hamilton, was the conqueror whose death many Frenchmen considered to be a good set-off for the final disaster of Trafalgar. Let no one think to take refuge in a sneer against the obligation that such lives as Nelson's put upon us, to greatness of soul and devotion to England.

Nelson's naval genius is a subject that may well exercise the admiration and ingenuity of strategists, but to understand the spirit that inspired him, there is no

need to dive curiously into obscure records. When he wrote "Down, down, down with the French!" it was in no narrow and ungenerous spirit—for he was the most chivalrous of opponents—but by way of expressing his utter devotion for his cause. All is summed up in his last prayer: "May the great God, whom I worship, grant to my country, and for the benefit of Europe in general, a great and glorious victory; and may no misconduct in any one tarnish it; and may humanity after victory be the predominant feature in the British fleet!" Well might he say, with the mists of death closing upon him, "Thank God, I have done my duty!"

Nelson was the greatest among the most remarkable band of seamen the world has ever seen. The Romantic spirit had unmistakably penetrated the navy, and England produced a type of sailor of quite another stamp than the burly and unemotional sea-dogs of Anson's day. Many of them were devoutly religious, fervent Scotch Calvinists like Duncan, or with the somewhat unctuous piety of Gambier. Nowhere is the influence of the Wesleyan revival more apparent. Again, we have the other type of Romantic temperament, in the radiant and uncontrolled brilliancy of men like Cochrane and Sir Sidney Smith, the Hotspurs of the service, men who wrought miracles, but were just lacking in that stability of temperament which is the last essential of heroism. Some divine infection was abroad in the navy of Nelson's day; there is a perfect galaxy of character, men whose very names breathe the atmosphere of romance, Troubridge, Blackwood, Collingwood, Hardy, Riou. There were giants on the sea in those days.

Whatever may have been the case before the Peace of Amiens, there is no doubt that the Boulogne flotilla rallied the country, almost as one man, to her defence. The causes that had divided her at the beginning of the struggle were now removed. It was no longer a war

against republican principles, even when they took the repulsive form of Jacobinism. The new Emperor did everything he could to crush the system that he had once supported, and there is no greater enemy to democracy than a parvenu royalty. Pitt and Fox had begun to draw together, and even Fox found, at last, that Napoleon, for whom he had always evinced much sympathy, was an irreconcilable enemy to freedom. It was his firmness in the negotiations with Napoleon that, despite all his mistakes and lukewarmness, has earned for Fox the right to be numbered among those men of whom England may be proud. In the words of that thoroughgoing patriot, Sir Walter Scott :

> " Partial feeling cast aside,
> Record that Fox a Briton died !
> When Europe crouched to France's yoke,
> When Austria bent, and Prussia broke,
> And the firm Russian's purpose brave
> Was bartered by a timorous slave—
> E'en then dishonour's peace he spurned,
> The sullied olive branch returned,
> Stood for his country's glory fast,
> And nailed her colours to the mast."

It seemed to Wordsworth, when, among his native mountains, he was hourly expecting the news of Fox's dissolution, as if a power were passing from the earth, ebbing back to the God from Whom it had flowed. When even Fox came to deserve such praise, there were few of those stout apostles of liberty, who had formerly opposed Pitt and the war, who did not also stand whole-heartedly in the cause of England. After the coronation in Notre Dame, and after Tilsit, the cause of England, and that of freedom, were one.

Coleridge's " Ode to Liberty " is valuable, not only as one of the greatest odes in the language, but also as a most important historical document, illustrative of the change that was taking place in the minds of a great many of his countrymen, and showing how those who rallied round

the flag did not thereby forego their worship of Liberty, but only raised it to a higher plane. Coleridge was never an extreme Jacobin, he had always loved peace and feared God, and the gentleness of his writing in "The Watchman" is in sharp contrast with the fierce diatribes of genuine sans-culottes. But he had adored the goddess whom he saw riding upon the clouds, and whose breath swayed the mountain pines; and this made him an ardent supporter of France. As long as she was really fighting against oppression, he was ready to excuse even the direst horrors, and to pray for the defeat of English arms. But when Liberty gave place to glory, France began to stamp out the independence of free Switzerland, and a new truth dawned upon the mind of Coleridge. The Liberty that he had sought was external, she must reign in the hearts of men before she could find expression in political institutions.

> "The sensual and the dark rebel in vain,
> Slaves by their own compulsion."

This Coleridge must also have realized from the ill-success of his "Watchman." The paper started with a cry, like Goethe's, for light, but the editor was soon to find that the public had but little interest in the patient pursuit of knowledge, and the paper was a failure. For a time, Coleridge was driven back to winds and waves for the realization of his ideal.

But this was not for long. In 1798, the year after the publication of the ode, we find him blossoming forth definitely as a patriot. It was in the April of that year, and there were threats of an invasion.

> "Stand we forth,
> Render them back on the insulted ocean!"

he cries, and speaks of the "divine and most beauteous island" which had been his only temple.

> "There lives nor form nor feeling in my soul,
> Unborrowed from my country."

The patriotism of Coleridge is based, not only upon his worship of Liberty, but also upon his hatred of atheism, and the attachment to the soil, which is characteristic alike of Elizabethans and of Romantics. We can see how easily the nature-worship of the ode passes into the affectionate solicitude, lest any foot of the dear soil of England should be violated by the tread of an invader. Drawing-room culture tends to be cosmopolitan, but the white cliffs of Dover, and the lone grandeur of the Cumbrian Mountains are, and, please God, always shall be, the free heritage of Englishmen. This Coleridge realized, and Wordsworth was never more inspired than when he was giving it expression. Wordsworth could not remain a Jacobin. He, who had desired the defeat of English troops, was, less than ten years later, in the very front rank of English patriots. His conception of freedom, like that of Coleridge, had become deeper and more spiritual, and he no longer sought the salvation of mankind by abusing kings and noblemen. Besides, the conduct of France had taught him how little the Revolution had really accomplished, even for political liberty:

"Scorn and contempt forbid me to proceed,"

he writes of the excesses of the Terror, when the more moderate spirits had been silenced, and the new movement was at the mercy of criminals and zealots. But he had clung, against hope, to the tottering cause, until he perceived too plainly that France stood, not for freedom, but for tyranny. If the subjugation of Switzerland had fired the wrath of Coleridge, even greater must have been its effect upon the lonely mountain-child of England. His sonnet on this liberticide is worthy to stand beside Milton's "Massacre in Piedmont." The vast, solitary things, types of the infinite, the mountains and the ocean, were, to Wordsworth, the "chosen music" of Liberty. And there is agony in the cry that

"Not a torrent murmurs heard by thee."

If the mountains are lost to her, then must Liberty seek her last refuge in her ocean-girt fastness of the North, and thus Wordsworth falls into line with Pitt and Nelson, and the cause of England becomes, in his eyes too, the cause of Liberty.

The Puritan austerity, which had not shrunk from justifying the death of a king, did not condescend to any sentimental horror of war for a just cause. In a note to his "Thanksgiving Ode" for the final overthrow of Napoleon, Wordsworth expressly denies that he is violating the principles, either of patriotism or of philosophy, by encouraging a martial spirit. "Every man deserving the name of Briton," he proudly exclaims, "adds his voice to the chorus which extols the exploits of his countrymen." He loves his country with a passion such as few lovers have lavished, even for an hour, upon their mistress. With Wordsworth the love of an English maiden and love of England are inseparably blended.

> "Thy mornings showed, thy nights concealed,
> The bowers where Lucy played,
> And thine, too, was the last green field
> That Lucy's eyes surveyed."

The same little poem tells us with what yearning affection, after travelling among "unknown men," he set his foot once again upon English soil.

It was when he was at Calais, during the transient interval of peace, that he wrote that glorious sonnet:

> "Fair star of evening, Splendour of the West,
> Star of my Country! . . ."

which expresses the very ecstasy of love for "the dear, dear land," for which men like Wordsworth and Shakespeare and Nelson do not scorn to live and die.

Such love is too pure to condescend to flattery. Wordsworth is driven to the verge of distraction at the prospect of his countrymen neglecting their great mission for the sake of luxury; like Blake, he invokes the shade of Milton to

arouse her, and when he discovers his fears to be unworthy, and England "a bulwark for the cause of men," was he to be blamed, he asks, that he once

> "Felt for thee as a lover or a child?"

He hardly ever mentions England without coupling her with Liberty, and reminding her of her task of delivering Europe from chains. "It is not to be thought of," he cries, that "the flood of British Freedom" should perish,

> "We must be free or die, who speak the tongue
> That Shakespeare spake; the faith and morals hold
> Which Milton held—In everything we are sprung
> From Earth's first blood, have titles manifold."

He contrasts our great ancestors (characteristically singling out for mention the Puritan friends of Milton), with the lack of such spirits in France, which has brought forth nothing but "perpetual emptiness," "equally a lack of books and men"; and he marvels how one of the meanest of mankind has been able to sway, not only France, but the world.

It was the prospect of this man presuming to threaten English liberty that roused Wordsworth to the height of his genius, in an appeal to his countrymen, of all parties and all creeds, to unite in her defence. Simple and impassioned as these few sonnets are, they contain a sounder political philosophy than has ever found its way into text-books. He sees that a great cause defies finance and arithmetic, he already predicts the inevitable doom of the man who bases his statesmanship on the theory that Providence fights on the side of money-bags, or of big battalions. "These times strike monied worldlings with dismay," he exults in his scorn; but sound, healthy children of God know better, and perceive

> "That virtue and the faculties within
> Are vital,—and that riches are akin
> To fear, to change, to cowardice and death."

Wordsworth was right, even from the commercial point of view; England never made a better investment than in the gold she poured recklessly forth in the cause of European freedom. The poet laughs at "the arithmetic of babes." Numbers, discipline and valour cannot withstand the shock of a great people, fighting in the cause of God for liberty and right.

He is not blind to the faults of his countrymen. There is a sonnet written, probably, in 1803, which strikes a note of stern reproof; even now, he says, if anything good were destined for Greece, Egypt, India, or Africa, England would step between to prevent it; and yet, in spite of all, the world's best hopes are all with her! Very different is the ringing trumpet-call to the men of Kent, the "vanguard of Liberty," to hurl back the invader.

> "No parleying now. In Britain is one breath,
> We all are with you now from shore to shore,
> Ye men of Kent, 'tis victory or death!"

Confidently he writes of the defeat of the invaders, as if it had already happened, and as if they had drifted like snow before the blast of heaven. The disasters which had broken the steely nerve of Pitt, only served to exhilarate Wordsworth. He holds him like a dastard, who does not exult, at the prospect of our being the last who dare to face the foe, thrown back upon our own resources, the sole champions of honour and freedom in a servile Europe.

"In order to be men," writes Coleridge a year or two later, "we must be patriots," and, in the pages of the "Friend," he denounces the cosmopolitanism of his revolutionary days. The true friends of mankind, he maintains, have been patriots in the first instance, and the indispensable condition of patriotism is national independence.

But there were many lesser men than the Lake poets, who were ready to give voice, more or less crudely, to the

tempestuous patriotism evoked by the threat of invasion. Mr. John Ashton has given us, in his "English Caricature and Satire on Napoleon I," an interesting account of the squibs and pamphlets, which probably achieved greater popularity than any of Wordsworth's sonnets. Primitive as most of them are, they are of a more healthy brand than the average music-hall product of our own times.

"Let him come and be d——d, thus roared out John Bull,
With my crabstick assured I will fracture his skull,"

or:

"His [the King's] subjects are ready, all loyal and steady,
To hurl this dam'd pest to the Devil,"

or:

"Yet still he boldly brags, with consequence full cramm'd,
On England's happy island his legions he will land,
But it's O in my heart, if he does, may I be d——d,"

or:

"The Gallic fleet approaches nigh, boys,
Now some must conquer, some must die, boys,
But this appals not you or me,
For still our watchword it shall be
Britons strike home, revenge your country's wrongs!"

or to quote the lines of that very inferior poetess Mrs. Iliff:

"Let Buonaparte his legions boast,
We tremble not with coward fears,
Our tars shall keep the sea, our coast
Be guarded by our volunteers."

The prevailing note is one of jolly defiance to little "Boney" and his skinny Frenchmen, a defiance which has in it little of real venom, and often takes the form of good-humoured patronage of the wretched foreigners who have reason for coveting the roast beef of honest John Bull. This worthy has now changed his character; he is no longer, as in good Queen Anne's days, a shrewd cloth-merchant, but a well-fed, jolly, stupid, south-country yokel, "Johnny Bull" in fact. "Ha, my little Boney,"

he cries, in one of Gillray's cartoons, holding up the unfortunate Emperor's head upon a pitchfork, "what dost think of Johnny Bull now? Plunder old England! Hay? Make French slaves of us all, hay?—ravish all our wives and daughters, hay?—O Lord, help that silly head!—to think that Johnny Bull would ever suffer those lanthorn jaws to become King of England's Roast Beef and Plum-pudding!"

At other times, we have an enormous King George, peering down in amused astonishment upon a very diminutive and intensely truculent "Boney"; or a French frog parting from his anatomy, in a vain attempt to blow himself up to the size of an English ox. Then we have lurid pictures, as in Prince Charlie's time, of the capture of London and the excesses perpetrated by the captors, pictures which were probably rather calculated to arouse ridicule than terror. Jolly Jack tars vie with jolly yokels in patriotic sentiment, and the nation, from the highest to the lowest class, was thrilled with the determination to make short work of the invader, and confidence in its ability to do so. This patriotism was not of words alone, for between three and four hundred thousand volunteers were enrolled, and a *levée en masse* authorized in case of a landing.

Indeed, despite the actual misery that, we know, prevailed among the English peasantry at this time, the roast beef and plum pudding note is still as loud as ever in patriotic poetry. In the great collection of invasion squibs and pamphlets, recently given to the world by Messrs. Wheeler and Broadley, we have the following specimen, written as early as 1801, and purporting to be a translation of a French manifesto: "Brave Frenchmen! could you but see the interior of these invaluable towns and happy dwellings, you would find there . . . every desirable comfort of life, even among the lowest classes of the people (I mean compared with your own

wretched hovels)." Alas, it was this very "Johnny Bull" to whom a contemporary philanthropist could seriously recommend the advantages of sleeping with cattle, lest he should die for lack of warmth!

Foremost among those who fanned this ardour of defiance was Gillray, the caricaturist. For many years, his pencil had helped in no small degree to direct popular opinion. He united the genius of an artist with the acumen of a journalist politician, and his works are particularly helpful in enabling us to understand the political atmosphere of the time. Compare them for a moment with those of our accomplished contemporary, Sir Francis Gould. The first thing that strikes us is the venomous brutality of the Georgian, as compared with the gentle humour of the modern satirist. We can imagine Mr. Balfour and Mr. Chamberlain enjoying a hearty laugh over the rabbits and foxes which body forth their real or imaginary foibles. But we can hardly imagine the Lord Jersey laughing at seeing himself carrying the Prince of Wales pickaback to her ladyship's bed, nor any friend of Fox at the prospect of his leader on his deathbed, bibulously refusing the Roman Sacraments on the ground that he would not be deprived of the privilege of partaking of the cup. And yet Sir Francis is more of a party man than Gillray. We never find the "Westminster Gazette" pouring ridicule upon the Radical leaders, and yet Gillray, the Tory and patriot, spares not Pitt, nor even royalty. The King candidly confessed that he could not understand what Gillray's cartoons meant, and if he had, we can imagine his feelings on seeing his virtuous queen figuring as Sin, in a state of hideous nudity, with Pitt standing by as the Devil. For the Opposition no insinuation was too foul, no attack too merciless. Neither the marriage-bed nor the death-bed was sacred, Gillray's enemies were liars, traitors, lechers, cuckolds and brute beasts, and their female relations no

better than they should be. If this was the attitude he adopted towards his own countrymen, foreigners could scarcely expect more gentle treatment. Napoleon's sisters appear less than decently clad (a not unintelligible jibe in the case of the fair Pauline), and Josephine herself dancing stark naked before a bestial Barras. The difference between Gillray and our modern cartoonists is to be explained, less by the increased reasonableness and humanity of our days, than by the deadly earnestness of his. Modern men, whose nerves are too jaded either to love or to hate well, cannot understand how it was that men could have taken politics seriously enough really to have detested their opponents. If we are Conservatives, we think we are pursuing the only rational Liberalism; if we call ourselves Liberal, it is only because we are more truly conservative than the Conservatives; in any case our opponents, apart from the trifling fact that they are ruining the country, are really the best of fellows. But with Canning and Gillray, political controversy was war to the knife, and quarter was neither asked nor given. Only when the cause was gone, the lions gave place to serpents, and fanaticism to bigotry. Toleration is virtue in an age of littleness.

Among those who added to the lustre of the time, we must not forget those direct and noble spirits, who, though they did not attain to the supreme excellence of Wordsworth, or the subtle beauty of Coleridge, are yet numbered with the immortals of English Literature. Such men were Scott, Campbell and Southey. There is little in their work that calls for elaborate analysis, but much that can be a joy for all time. These men (except Southey, in his first and least brilliant phase) were patriots to the core; all expressed their feelings in simple and direct words, capable of being understood by the people. The fervour of Southey's Jacobinism is eclipsed by the violence with which he threw himself into the

contest with Napoleon. His poem about the Russian campaign is pitched in a strain of brutal raillery; his ode of 1814 is an impassioned and savage appeal to France and all Europe to take vengeance on the Emperor. The crime that seems to shock the ex-Jacobin most is the shooting of a Bourbon prince.

The two Scotsmen, Campbell and Scott, are both important, as showing the reconciliation that was being effected between Scotland and England. Jacobitism, except as a mere sentiment, had perished with the English hatred of Scotsmen, that had burned so fiercely in the days of Lord Bute. Campbell talks of the union of the thistle, the shamrock and the rose; and Scott, though a devoted admirer of the history and heroes of Scotland, is yet a staunch British patriot, and a Tory. Names like Duncan and Abercromby were in the mouth of every Englishman, and the Highland regiments speedily proved themselves worthy of the best traditions of our army. Campbell indeed came under suspicion, his papers were seized for proof of sedition, but the searchers were rewarded by discovering a manuscript copy of "Ye mariners of England," a decisive proof of patriotism, if ever there was one. Campbell was, indeed, a devoted apostle of freedom, especially that of the oppressed Poles, in whose cause he remained firm till his dying day. But this only served to enkindle his patriotism. In a vigorous but clumsy contribution to the huge mass of invasion literature, he appeals to his "fellow freemen" not to be enslaved by a foreign tyrant. And his heroes are men like Nelson, Moore, and "the gallant, good Riou."

Scott, Tory though he was, was yet a lover of freedom. That name was sacred now to the best men of both parties, and it was for freedom that the English squires and noblemen supported the struggle that finally broke Napoleon. Thus such a man as Scott could be at once

a Tory and a keen sympathizer with every one who fought for freedom, were he Englishman, were he Scotsman. In his famous lines,

> " Breathes there a man with soul so dead,
> Who never to himself hath said,
> This is my own, my native land—"

he is referring to the love of a Highlander for Scotland, but his own patriotism is not Scottish but British; a patriotism straightforward, tolerant, and joyous, that can mourn for the clans of Culloden and yet support King George III; that can oppose the policy of Fox and yet record with pride that he died a Briton. Scott, like his own Lord Howard, was a generous foe, and it gives him real pleasure to describe how, as brothers meet in a foreign land, the Border foemen fraternize together during a truce. He is always at his best when describing a patriot, and there are few nobler pictures than that of Lord Marmion, even in his death agony, trying to serve his country.

In his nature descriptions, he helped to plant a love of the soil, not of Scotland alone, but of Britain; for there are few Englishmen who read of Scott's mountains and heaths who do not regard them as being, in a sense, their own inheritance. We hardly think, now, of Bannockburn as an English defeat, or of Culloden as an English victory. We love Robert the Bruce and we hate Cumberland the Butcher, and if Scotsmen and Englishmen occasionally do pass criticisms upon each other, it is the good-natured chaff of brothers, and not the bitter taunt of enemies; the last Scottish survivor of Culloden even received a handsome pension from William IV—and for such a state of things we have to thank writers like Scott, almost as much as soldiers like Abercromby.

After Trafalgar, the struggle between England and Napoleon enters upon another phase. The immediate peril to our shores was past, but Napoleon never for a

moment relaxed his fixed purpose of crushing England, and the struggle was recognized, by both sides, to be one of life or death. But it is now England that assumes the offensive, and it is France that is struggling for life in the grip of an implacable foe. England had saved herself by her exertions, she was now to save Europe by her example.

Napoleon, with all his military genius, had but little insight into the ultimate forces of history. He was a materialist at heart, and made the fatal mistake of thinking that victory went to the general who could command the biggest battalions. Of spiritual forces he was contemptuous or ignorant, and it was these very forces that were to crush him at last. One of his chief measures, on getting the reins of power into his hands, was to ruin the magnificent army of the Revolution, in which he put his trust. He put quantity before quality, and at last managed to put in the field nearly a million men of divers nations. But these were of a very different stamp from the ragged hosts of the Revolution; they were even ceasing to be the glory-intoxicated Frenchmen of Marengo and Austerlitz. They were still brave; they were for the most part dazzled by his genius; but they were becoming not patriots, but professional soldiers, such men as the troops of Brunswick and Alvinzi. In the highest commands the decay was greatest. The marshals, who had risen from the ranks by their merit, were not patriots, but able professional men playing for their own hands. Many of them were sick of fighting, and wanted to enjoy their dignities; they were jealous of each other, and it was seldom that one marshal would unselfishly co-operate with another. They shirked responsibility, and their operations in command of large forces were often lacking in energy, and even in intelligence. To this state had they been reduced by the Emperor himself; partly by his harsh and rigid centralization of authority; partly by too lavish

rewards, which made gain and not duty their object; and partly by jealousy deliberately fomented. The great heart of France was at last beginning to beat faintly. The lust of glory had been glutted, and the strain was beginning to tell. Dogged, impregnable England hung upon her flank, and until England gave in, there could be no rest for France. English ships blockaded her coasts; English money was at the disposal of every enemy; English armies were ready to give support to every rising; and, most important of all, the spirit for which England stood was beginning to infect other nations. Napoleon had led a people to the conquest of kings, he was now to lead mercenaries to struggle with peoples. In neither case could the issue be in doubt.

The weakness of France had been pointed out by Wordsworth during the Boulogne invasion time; it was her lack of ideas, "equally a want of books and men." The last of the poets, André Chénier, had lost his head during the Revolution; the painters, of whom David was the most famous, had neither the delicacy of the courtiers nor the imagination of the Romantics; philosophy was in the hands of men who, with unconscious irony, were called idéologues, who held that to think is to feel, and who pinned their faith to a cold and grovelling materialism, the heritage of the encyclopædists. True, another and nobler spirit was beginning to arise, but this was in direct opposition to revolutionary and even to imperial tendencies; Chateaubriand was calling men from the shifting sands of materialism to the eternal rock of the Catholic Church; De Maistre was sounding the trumpet of royalism and reaction in St. Petersburg; Sénancour was heralding, in plaintive strains, the Orientalism that was to become so conspicuous a feature of the new century; Mme. de Staël was opening the eyes of Frenchmen to the glories of other literatures. But the Empire was sterile; perhaps the chief figure in the literary,

as well as the political sphere was the Emperor himself, some of whose bulletins and proclamations, notably the one before Austerlitz, are the masterpieces of their kind. He had risen to power upon the ideas of the Revolution, and when these grew cold, the enormous structure was doomed, and the mere lust of glory was powerless to foil such an enemy as patriotic, great-souled England.

Only those who can understand spiritual forces can make any sense out of the last acts of the Napoleonic tragedy. By all calculation of probabilities, it would seem as if the Empire was secure after Tilsit. The little officer, whose genius had triumphed again and again against overwhelming odds, now at last controlled the whole resources of an Empire, beside which the wildest dreams of Louis XIV paled into insignificance. Again and again he had shattered or annihilated the finest armies of the Continent; even the army of the great Frederick had scarcely been able to last for a week against him. With every victory his resources had increased, and those of his enemies had grown weaker. They were not even united against him; Russia was his ally, Spain his vassal, Prussia his slave. Only England remained to confront him with a pride and determination equal to his own.

Blind as he was to the forces that were to destroy him, the Emperor at least realized, that until he had ruined England all his former work was done in vain, and that amidst all his glory, it was really he, and not England, that was struggling for life. His measures for our overthrow are not those of a confident victor, but those of a desperate gamester, who realizes that he must risk everything to stave off an almost inevitable catastrophe.

Why was he not content to rest after Tilsit? Was not a greater Empire than that of Charlemagne enough for the artillery lieutenant of Ajaccio? But the throne of Europe was as vain as the bed of Damocles while the naked sword of England was poised above it. So the whole

energies of the conqueror were now to be devoted to the removal, at any cost, of this constant menace, even if it were to lead to fresh wars and vaster labours than before. He would unite the Continent against England; he would crush her by weight of numbers; the whole of his genius should be employed to outwit the staid gentlemen who muddled along in London. This task, at least, could have seemed no hard one to the organizer of victory. More glaring inefficiency than characterized the plans of the English Ministry after Trafalgar, it would be hard to imagine. In Egypt, in South America, in the Dardanelles, in the Baltic, failure trod upon the heels of mismanagement. Our very allies turned against us; "I hate the English as much as you do," said Alexander at Tilsit. And yet nothing could damp the spirit of these islanders; even Fox had rejected Napoleon's overtures; Canning treated them as a good joke. One circumstance was ominous of the future course of the war. A French army was routed in Sicily by an equal number of British troops, with as much ease as the French had routed the Prussians. This was a new experience for the French, but one that was to be by no means isolated.

The need for supreme genius was not so great as it had been in the days of Nelson and Pitt. The spirit of England was raised to such an exalted pitch that even mediocrity could not baulk it of victory. Such Premiers as Grenville, Portland, Perceval and Liverpool; such rulers as the old King and the Regent; such generals as Chatham, York, Burrard and Dalrymple; such admirals as Duckworth and Gambier might well be supposed capable of compassing the ruin of any nation, especially that of an isolated power, struggling against nearly the whole of Europe led by Napoleon. But neither genius on one side, nor incompetence on the other, could change the issue.

The isolation of England coincides with the temporary

rise to power of a statesman worthy to bear the mantle of Pitt. We have already had to do with Canning as the brilliant opponent of Jacobin ideas, we now find him paralysing, by a master-stroke of genius, one of Napoleon's most comprehensive plans for our destruction, a gigantic naval combination, by which the fleets of France, Russia, Denmark, Spain and Portugal were to avenge the ruin of Trafalgar. Before the Emperor even realized that his plans were suspected, an English expedition had swooped down upon the key of his position, and his dream of conquest had vanished in the smoke of Copenhagen. Even this did not exhaust the naval ambitions of Napoleon, but his plans were becoming more and more shadowy, and at last, when one of his squadrons did break out, even the criminal incompetence of the British admiral could not prevent its defeat, at the hands of the English frigates and light craft. Cochrane had more trouble in evading the commands of his own admiral than in defeating his opponent. The French navy was useless because it was demoralized.

All that remained for Napoleon was to strangle his opponent by the Continental system. But this was to challenge a struggle of endurance, in which the advantage was on the side of England, with her rising manufactures and her immense resources. It was putting a strain upon Napoleon, too great for him to bear. In order to enforce his blockade, he had to goad the whole Continent into madness; to embark upon reckless annexations, including that of the Duchy of Oldenburg, which mortally offended the Duke's kinsman, Alexander; and to make demands upon his allies, which finally led him to Moscow.

While the spirit of France was one of reckless materialism driving headlong to destruction, that of England was instinct with the confidence of victory, and the sense of her high mission. Even such different men as Wordsworth and Canning are at one in this respect. Canning

stands head and shoulders above the other English statesmen of his time. He represents Toryism at its best, just as the egregious "doctor" and the brutal Ellenborough represent it at its worst. He is the spiritual heir, alike of Pitt, and of Burke in his last and noblest phase. The besetting sin of the Tories was a tendency to put their class before their country, to fall back upon a dull and selfish resistance to ideas, and it has been the strength of the English landed gentry that they are, as a class, capable of rising above such pettiness. There was no selfishness and bigotry about Canning; from the very first he had been a man of profound and generous ideas; he had hated Jacobinism and he had loved the soul of England. But he had also the defects of his class, of the Eton and Oxford man, in a certain haughty contempt for emotional display, and an intolerance, that did not always stop short of cruelty, for those whose standpoint differed from his own. He did not scruple to be associated with the "Quarterly Review," and there is no reason to suppose that such methods as those of Keats-killing Croker met with his disapproval.

He stood for the Constitution, as interpreted by Montesquieu and Blackstone. The French Revolution had immensely strengthened the reverence with which Englishmen regarded the system that ensured them a measure of freedom, while avoiding the excesses of Jacobinism; there was often a tendency to make the present state of things a fetish, and blindly to oppose change of any kind. Canning, however, regarded the Constitution as fundamentally unchangeable in principle, but elastic in detail. Against anything that threatened radical change, he set his face like flint; he did not even go as far as his master Pitt, in the matter of parliamentary reform. But the Constitution, in his view, was made for England, and not England for the Constitution; and thus he succeeded in holding to Conservative principles, with-

out the selfishness of the class advocate, or any opposition to the idea of liberty. In fact he loved liberty as much as he loved order, and he considered the two to be inseparable.

It cannot be too strongly emphasized that the Tory Ministries of the war were, both in theory and practice, friends of liberty, as they understood it, and this in spite of all the selfishness of the extremists. Their attitude towards the slave trade is a proof of this tendency. Fox had forced the question into the sphere of legislative achievement, but the Tories took up and loyally continued his work, and were ready to make very real and splendid sacrifices, in order to induce foreign powers to follow in their footsteps; they were ready, for instance, to give up Trinidad, and actually did forfeit much of the influence over Spanish policy that they had earned in the Peninsular War. One of the few noble features, amid all the petty intrigue of the Vienna Congress, was the firm stand of England against the slave trade.

The French Revolution had made the Tories nervous, and they were ready to scent Jacobinism, not only in the disturbances of starving and ignorant men, but in any proposal whatever to reform or change the existing state of things. Unlike Canning, many of them were incapable of drawing any distinction between changes that were, or were not, fundamental. But, with very few exceptions, they were far from being unkindly or hard-hearted, and would have been perfectly incapable of a systematic attempt to destroy the liberties of their countrymen. Metternich, a man who really did hold such ideas, thought that he had made a convert of Castlereagh; but this shows that Metternich was as incapable of understanding Castlereagh, as Napoleon had been of understanding Metternich. Both Castlereagh and Wellington, those Tories of the Tories, proved to be provokingly deaf to the wisest charming of the great

reactionary, who could only explain their conduct by attributing it to their cunning in hoodwinking the people at home. It is to the credit of England that she has been singularly free from that spirit which makes

> " the Tribunes beard the high,
> And the high grind down the low,"

the insolence which made Greek oligarchs swear to hate the people, and which does not shrink from Brunswick invasions, or September massacres. It is easy nowadays to see the futility of repressive measures taken by men who really believed they were fighting the demon of Revolution; to quarrel with a Poor Law system whose fault lay not in its brutality, but in its foolish generosity; or to pour invective upon an attempt to maintain British agriculture even at the cost of crushing taxes on food. Generally it was the heads, and not the hearts, of the Tories that were at fault.

And after all, these were the only men to whom our high mission of saving Europe could safely be confided. The Whigs, and especially Fox, had been more patriotic in office than in opposition, but their heart was not in the struggle, like that of the Tory aristocracy. The semi-Whig Ministry failed in almost everything it undertook; our resources were frittered away, and our armies discomfited in petty expeditions. It failed to act up to the high ideal of its lost leader, who was great enough to have flung himself into a war for liberty. The fault of the Whigs was not that they were not patriotic, but that their patriotism was of such a complacent order, and was only too glad if it could find any plausible excuse for giving up the struggle, or for throwing cold water upon our efforts. It was for this reason that Wellington dreaded a Whig Ministry more than a French invasion.

The Laodicean attitude of the Whigs can be nowhere better studied than in the " Edinburgh Review " of April, 1807, upon " The Dangers of the Country." It is

one of the most studiously fair and reasonable articles of which it is possible to conceive, and one of the most mischievous. The writer freely admits the supreme importance of safeguarding England against invasion; he admits the implacable hatred and determination of the Emperor; he is alive to the dangers of concluding peace. And yet, after carefully balancing all the pros and cons, he comes to the conclusion that this is just what we ought to do, since the main objects of the war, those of restoring the Bourbons, of reducing France to her ancient limits, and of retrieving the losses of our allies, "may now fairly be given up as desperate and unattainable." Unfortunately for all this fine reasoning, and very fortunately for Europe, we did not give up.

Very different is an article that appears two years later in the "Quarterly," and is written by Canning himself. Here, in proud words that scorn logic-chopping prudence, he appeals to England, nay, to all Europe, to support Austria in her revolt against the tyrant. For the reasonable nonsense of the "Edinburgh" he substitutes the glowing insight of the true statesman, and sums up the situation in an estimate of which almost every word has been justified by history. He sees that the power of Napoleon is founded less upon his own merits than upon the dissensions and weaknesses of his opponents; that what is needed for his final ruin is a protracted struggle, and above all a national struggle. Napoleon has hitherto managed to gull his enemies with the idea that he made war on the palace, but spared the cottage; but the cottager has now learnt, from bitter experience, that Napoleonic rule means for him tyranny and death. Now cottage and palace must unite in one common cause.

It is essential that there shall be no suggestion of giving in. "In any case let us hope till events compel us to despair." "The cause at issue is not between France and Austria; but between Buonaparte and all mankind.

In such a cause surely we are warranted to hope." It is to sentiments like these, addressed "not only to the Austrian nation but to all Europe: to every man who has a country and a heart," that England owed her deliverance and Europe her deliverer; it is to men such as Pitt and Canning, men whom no odds could daunt, whom neither the weariness of waiting, nor the bitterness of misfortune could turn aside, that we owe the stewardship of empire that God has committed into the trust of their descendants.

Canning's speeches reveal the fixity of idealism that inspired him throughout the war. In his maiden speech, in 1794, advocating a subsidy to the King of Sardinia, he holds up to scorn the calculating prudence that would settle the destinies of nations by a tradesman's balance of profit and loss. We are fighting to save Europe, as well as for our own preservation; we are opposed not only to French armies, but to French principles; as a great nation, it behoves us to conduct our affairs greatly. So early does he realize the high cause in which we ought to fight. Speaking four years later against a peace, he hurls this reproach at one of his opponents, "Is his understanding and is his heart still impenetrable to the sense and meaning of the deliverance of Europe?" At the end of the Peace of Amiens, he reminds Parliament that there can be no turning back from our mission; selfish isolation and ignoble peace are far more dangerous than any war. "A country circumstanced as this is cannot safely abjure a dignified policy, and abdicate its rank among nations." Every nation, he says, when Foreign Secretary in 1808, that opposes "the common enemy of all nations" has an ally in Great Britain. And a year later he asks whether we are to submit to the tyranny of Buonaparte as if it were a divine infliction. After the peace of 1814 he said to his constituents, "Gentlemen, for twenty years that I have sat in Parliament, I have

been an advocate of the war. You knew this when you did me the honour to choose me as your representative. I then told you I was an advocate of the war because I was a lover of peace; but of a peace that should be the fruit of honourable exertion, a peace that should be worth preserving, and should be likely to endure," and he refers to England as "that nation whose firmness and perseverance have humbled France and rescued Europe." This is the spirit of Pitt, but the disciple saw plainly where Pitt had struggled in the dark, or, at best, caught the prospect from some Pisgah height of his dying imagination.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE LIBERATION OF EUROPE

WE have now come to the time when the ideas that were animating the English nation, though fully articulate only in her greatest men, had at last begun to infect the nations of the Continent. The people of Germany, of Spain, and of Russia did not borrow the idea of liberty and resistance from England; but her example and assistance were ever at hand, to nourish the first sparks, and to fan them into flame. But for England's help, awakening Spain must have shared the fate of awakening Austria, and Napoleon would have had a reinforcement of three hundred thousand of his best veterans to dispose of, on the Vistula in 1812, or on the Elbe in 1813. The struggle between triumphant force and awakening spirit would have been indefinitely prolonged. Conquered Napoleon must have been, because he had, in a more profound sense than that of pious moralists, rebelled against the will of God, but at what frightful cost one shudders to contemplate. Perhaps Europe would, like Samson, have been crushed in the hour of her own deliverance.

It was in Spain, among Continental nations, that Napoleon first encountered that baffling, intangible force which had hitherto been the property of England alone. We can imagine him feeling somewhat of the horror of a patient who has long suffered from a deadly complaint in one of his limbs, and marks some morning how it has begun to infect his body. Perhaps he had this idea in mind when he spoke of the Spanish ulcer.

There was really no Spanish nation. When the armies of Spain took the field, cowardice, incompetence and bad faith were the order of the day; they were the despair, and almost the ruin of Wellington; they were to Napoleon as driftwood before the storm. We must look for the soul of Spaniards, not in the nation itself, but in a number of small communities; and the fewer the defenders, the greater the spirit that inspired them. With their heritage of tradition, with their old monarchy, with their bond of empire, they proved themselves in the hour of need even less capable of combination than the jarring cities of Hellas against the Persians. The old antipathies between the provinces have never to this day been bridged over. The bond that united the Spaniards was largely one of religion, the world-faith of Rome, whose nature is rather super-national than national. Besides which, there was a heritage of prejudice and contempt for foreigners, the darker side of patriotism, that made it intolerable for Spaniards to give their allegiance to a Corsican upstart, or be held down by a garrison of Frenchmen. As long as it was merely a question of the Spanish monarchy being the tool of Napoleon, there was no particular grievance; the foreign policy of the whole nation aroused but a languid interest in the breast of the individual Castilian and Catalan; but when the unspeakable Joseph was palpably enthroned as his liege lord, and an insolent soldiery at his very doors, the insult was too great to be borne. Resentment blazed forth, not in the ardour of great armies, but in the resistance of towns like Saragossa, and of guerillas who, unable to stand the shock of a pitched battle, were yet capable of cutting off supplies, and of keeping masses of good troops engaged in the heartbreaking task of fighting shadows.

The unaided resistance of such a people, however prolonged it might have been, could never have been crowned with final victory. The Spaniards were incap-

able of combining to follow up a success, and it was possible to concentrate masses of troops to crush any unit, without fear of substantial hindrance from the others. To drive the French out of Spain, it needed the army not of a province, but of a nation ; an army animated by a spirit equal to that of Saragossa, and led by a genius such as Spain could not have supplied, since the days of Cortez and Alva. Such an army was the British, such a leader was Wellington

It was the enslavement of Spain, and of her little cousin Portugal, that moved England to strike her first great blow upon the Continent in the cause of freedom. At the outset she met with a qualified success, for though her troops utterly defeated the French army, two foolish old generals were instrumental in concluding the disgraceful Convention of Cintra, which threw away many of the fruits of victory. The feeling of dissatisfaction in the country was voiced by Wordsworth, in one of his greatest and most sustained prose pieces.

This pamphlet supplies us with the evidence of a keen and honest observer, regarding the mind of the English people. The army which fought at Vimeiro went forth, we are told, with the prayers and blessings of their countrymen. There were few fathers of families who had not lingering regrets that they were left behind. It was a service that appealed to " all that was human in the heart of the nation." Since the subjugation of Switzerland, though not till then, the heart of the people had been in the war, and they were determined to carry it through to the end. Wordsworth has nothing but respect for those good men who urge peace and prudence, but he confounds their reasoning by a remark, instinct with the quiet sagacity that is his peculiar gift : " There are promptings of wisdom from the penetralia of human nature, which a people can hear, though the wisest of their practical statesmen be deaf towards them." The

spirit of England during the period of waiting, and of the triumph of our enemies abroad, he describes as "a deliberate and preparatory fortitude—a sedate and stern melancholy, which had no sunshine and was only exhilarated by the lightnings of imagination." But all this was changed by the call from the Peninsula, "the contest assumed the dignity which it is not in the power of anything but hope to bestow," and England and Spain, the enemies of the past, like two ancient heroes, flung down their weapons and were reconciled in the field, allies henceforth in a glorious cause. All of which forms a profound estimate of the history of the times.

Wordsworth then goes on to cite a number of Spanish and Portuguese proclamations proving that there, too, the war is being waged by the people themselves. One of these, from Oviedo, runs, "Spain, with the energies of Liberty, has to contend with France debilitated by slavery. . . . A whole people is more powerful than disciplined armies." But Wordsworth is inclined to rate too highly the spirit of the juntas, which disgraced themselves by petty quarrels, and utter incompetence in the field. It was the Spanish people, and not their leaders, or even their armies, that acquitted themselves nobly. Their love for the English was, at the best, lukewarm. They had more natural sympathy with the French, and it was only the excesses of tyranny that drove them into the arms of England. As Wellington was to find to his cost, they were worse than useless as allies in the field. There is one other blemish in Wordsworth's pamphlet, and this is owing to his lack of detailed information. He includes Wellington in the same condemnation with Burrard and Dalrymple.

But when he soars into the domain of the universal, he is most himself, and "The Convention of Cintra" is one of the few political works in our language worthy to be mentioned in the same breath with the "Reflections

on the French Revolution." It reflects little credit on posterity that political treatises so immeasurably inferior as those of Locke and Hume should be the theme of every sciolist, while "The Convention of Cintra" has fallen into neglect and oblivion. It is the English counterpart to Fichte's "Address to the German People," at once a crusade and a philosophy. We are borne on the wings of a faultless rhetoric to a region whither the "men of affairs," who see but the surface of politics, cannot soar. Indeed the ordinary politician is, according to Wordsworth, almost necessarily blind, because he is more or less the slave of official routine, and because his training unfits him for understanding the real will of a people, which has nothing in common with the shifts and phrases of diplomatists. The politician, even when he is Emperor of half Europe, is inclined to put matter before spirit, to treat nations as if they were pieces on a chessboard, and in this lies the fatal weakness of Napoleon.

"When the people speaks loudly, it is from being strongly possessed either by the Godhead or the Demon." Just as Burke had shown how hard it is to bring an indictment against a whole nation, so does Wordsworth show the impossibility of riveting chains upon any people that is determined to be free. We had tried to do this in America, and we had failed, because while we had trusted to arms and gold, the Americans had relied upon the intangible, and therefore invincible, stay of a pure cause. It is the same with Spain, once sinking to decay amid corruption and indolence, now purged and strengthened by suffering, and determined to be free. And it is for free England to come to her assistance, not grudgingly nor counting the cost, but with the determination that, come what may, liberty and justice shall, by the will of God, prevail. Against such a purpose, Napoleon and all his armies have no might at all, for despotism is but

weakness, and in dead matter there is no might. Above all, we must fight strength with ideas; for it is the noblest cause, and not the biggest battalions, that wins in the long run. And we must look to it that the glamour of experimental philosophy, the details of agriculture, of commerce, of manufactures, are not allowed to dim the splendours of imagination. "Not by bread alone is the life of man sustained, but by the fruits of the spirit, by joy and love and noble pride and patience and self-support and gratitude to God. For these blessings to exist, a nation must be free, these are at once the sanction and the consecration of perfect patriotism." And so Wordsworth is able to address this reproof to his countrymen:

"O sorrow! O misery for England, the land of liberty and courage and peace; the Land trustworthy and long approved; the central orb to which as to a fountain the nations of the earth ought to repair and in their golden urns draw light! O sorrow and shame for our country; for the grass which is upon her fields and the dust which is in her graves;—for her good men who now look upon the day;—and her long train of defenders, her Alfred, her Sidneys, and her Milton, whose voice yet speaketh for our reproach, and whose actions survive in memory to confound us, or to redeem."

The High Priest of Liberty, for such we may justly style Wordsworth, follows every turn of the struggle, and the voice that had been lifted on behalf of England, during the threat of invasion, is now as eloquent in expressing the sympathy of England for every struggling nation in Europe. The lesson is that of the Greek playwrights, of the Hebrew prophets, that mere brute force is helpless against a cause that reposes upon the will of God. Perhaps the grandest of all the Spanish series of sonnets is the one beginning,

"The power of armies is a visible thing,"

in which the power of the struggling patriots is compared to the great forces of nature, the strong winds, and the welling spring that finds

> " In every nook a lip that it may cheer."

A sense of the awful solemnity of the struggle is ever present with Wordsworth, and raises his work to a sustained level, but little lower than that of " The Massacre in Piedmont." The two sonnets that he composed while he was engaged upon " The Convention of Cintra " breathe a similar strain. No English poet has ever been more conscious of the God Whose ways are in the sea, and Whose paths are in the great waters, and it is a sense of that omnipotence which enables true men to scorn the utmost power of puppets like Napoleon. Thus Wordsworth is able to drop his pen and listen to the prophecy of the midnight wind,

> " Which, while it makes the heart with terror shrink,
> Tells also of bright calms that shall succeed."

One thinks of that other midnight storm, tearing up the trees of Longwood, and sweeping onward far and wide over the moaning Atlantic, upon which the soul of the fallen Emperor went forth, breathing " Tête d'armée," to render its account before the Lord of Hosts.

But a greater enemy than Spain was to confront Napoleon. The deep, thoughtful soul of Germany, so long divided against itself, and lost, as it were, in its own dreams, was beginning to stir. Here, also, the fires of suffering were purging away the dross of ages. All through the eighteenth century there had been a great shaking, as of the coming together of the dry bones that were to stand one day upon their feet, the mighty armies of Leipzig and Sedan. At the end of the Thirty Years' War, Germany had touched the depths of her humiliation; divided, impoverished, honeycombed with petty tyrannies, without a literature, without a leader, her case

might well have driven any solitary patriot to despair. Her literary ideal was to imitate the smooth periods of Racine, and in Racine's language. But though sundered by innumerable frontiers, there was yet a spiritual bond that bound German to German, in spite of human law; and it was this vague feeling of a common nationality that found expression in the revival of the old ancestral legends, and in the Teutonic religious fervour of Gellert's Hymns and Klopstock's Messias, of Handel's Oratorios and Bach's Passion Music.

Some of the feeling of impotent hopelessness was dispelled by the rise of a hero upon German soil, and by the expansion of the old Mark of Brandenburg into a military power capable of resisting the combined forces of the Continent. If Rossbach was the death-knell of the Bourbons, it was to Germany a promise and a rally-call. Not to speak of the inferior poets, who chanted dithyrambs in honour of Frederick, we have evidence of this from the work of Lessing himself, in Major von Tellheim, the staunch, tender-hearted veteran who must fight for a cause, but who scorns to shed blood for money alone.

In theory, Lessing is a cosmopolitan, and in his greatest drama, "Nathan the Wise," he scorns the antipathies of Jew and Christian and Saracen, and points to the humanity common to them all, as the only thing that counts. And yet we find him wrestling with Voltaire and the French literary despotism, looking, in fact, to a literature that shall be German and unashamed; we find him in admiration of such a character as Tellheim. He was like his own Germany, an individualist feeling after patriotism, and hampered by the chains of his time.

This is true, also, of the philosopher-historian Herder, the essence of whose teaching is that men are not, as the French philosopher had supposed, a concourse of political atoms, capable of being arranged in neat pat-

terns by the legislator, but members of a community, who have inherited the form, the traditions, and the civilization of their tribesmen or countrymen. His "Philosophy of the History of Man" is a much greater book in every respect, save in its style, than its French counterpart "L'esprit des lois," and in contrast with the brilliant gossip of the Frenchman stands the comprehensive thoroughness of the German, though in his case philosophy is free from the taint of materialism. Herder is one of those men who can see things in perspective and yet worship them; a great book or poem becomes all the greater in his eyes, because he knows the circumstances under which it was produced, and the medium through which it is expressed. And yet, though his philosophy would naturally lead him to the conclusions of Edmund Burke, the circumstances of his time keep him from blossoming forth into a fervent patriotism. Man is not made for the State, he tells us; the natural ends of individuals are to be preferred to the artificial ends of the community. The hero he considers to be of an inferior type, and he disapproves of the military spirit. And yet nobody is more keenly conscious of the attachment of all peoples to the country of their birth, and of the essential unity and continuity of nations.

The influence of England was even more powerful in Germany than in France; for while the French had naturally gravitated towards the bloodless theories of Locke and Bacon, the Germans went for inspiration to Shakespeare and Milton, and their influence was everywhere for freedom, against the tyranny of French classicism. But individualism, sometimes of a lawless, sometimes of a mystical character, was abroad everywhere, and the whole "Sturm und Drang" movement of the 'sixties and 'seventies may be taken as the vague sense of an awakening national life, that was, as yet, unable to find

expression. It did at least voice a feeling of hatred and revolt against the bishops and princelings, who were hindering German unity; it did at least snap the bonds of Racine and Boileau. Individualism was a necessary step upon the road to patriotism, for what patriotism could a German have? The Holy Roman Empire was a synonym for disunion; and how could a man be patriotic for the mercenary little states that supplied food for powder in America, and grovelled to any foreign tyrant? Before the higher unity could be attained, it was necessary to shake off these petty trammels, and if Kant and Goethe and Lessing might not be citizens of a German Empire, they at least belonged to the same city of the soul.

Thus we find the two great political philosophers of this time, Kant and Humboldt, both staunch individualists. The position of Kant is of especial importance, for not only are his works the cornerstone of modern philosophy, but he is, as it were, the Moses who led German thought out of the bondage of French shallowness and French materialism, to the very edge of the promised land of German idealism. His "Critique of Pure Reason" shatters, at a blow, the showy rationalism of Hume and Condillac. The mere intellect is pulled down from the supreme pedestal to which the *philosophes* had exalted it; it can merely look upon a forever unknowable reality, through the coloured glasses of space and time; with ultimate problems, such as those of God and eternity, it is incompetent to deal, and can only involve itself in contradiction. It is to the heart, the moral consciousness, that God speaks; and it is not with the rational, but with the practical side of our being that we apprehend reality. We feel God's presence, even when we are unable to argue about it.

Having thus shaken to its foundations the materialism that was at the basis of eighteenth-century cosmo-

politan theory, we might expect Kant to have advanced along the same lines as Shakespeare and Burke before him, as Kleist and Fichte after him. But it was not for the lonely philosopher of Königsberg to share the feelings of the Englishman and the Athenian. He had, indeed, a conception of the State, but it was sternly individual. Every man was to be secure in the exercise of his freedom; but freedom for Kant meant not license, but duty. He was one of those who believed that, though the will of individual men was free, the affairs of humanity, taken in the mass, were predestined. The logical consequence is that we must make the individual the goal of all our efforts, for it is only in the sphere of freedom that human effort can be of the least avail. The natural effect of such teaching is to exalt the man at the expense of the State, and to depress patriotism. On the other hand, Kant held that a republic was the best form for the State to take, and thus he was indirectly the opponent of German disunion. He even dreamed of federating his republics, with the object of securing a world-peace; though he expressly stipulated that this should not be a world-state, but a federation of free republics. Despite his theory of collective predestination, he holds that the dictates of eternal justice should override the expediency of diplomatists; "Seek ye first," he says, "the Kingdom of pure practical reason and its righteousness, and the aim of your endeavour, the blessing of eternal peace, will be added unto you."

Thus an attentive observer of the eighteenth century might have perceived that Germany, so long fettered and helpless, had begun to seethe with new life; the dry bones had come together, flesh and blood had covered them, they waited but for the breath of heaven. And this was poured into them during the agony of conquest. The Prussian force that fought at Jena was not a national army, but the ill-paid, ill-led, over-drilled mercenaries

of the King of Prussia, and their defeat by the French nation was one of the most shameful in history. The only man to sustain the honour of the great Frederick was the staunch old patriot Blücher.

Napoleon's conduct towards Germany was that of a madman, or an atheist. His God was force, and he behaved with the brutal insolence of the Force that nailed down Prometheus. Everything that could be done to goad a proud people into fury, he was careful to do. He violated neutral territory; shot an innocent bookseller for no crime; insulted the King of Prussia in his dispatches, and the Queen in his bulletins; annexed whatever land suited him; quartered his troops permanently on German soil; limited her armies, and even forced them into his service; exiled her greatest statesman; shot the heroes Schill and Hofer; allowed his armies to live on the country; and, in fact, goaded the already prepared spirit of Germany into a fury that was to sweep the last French army across the Rhine, never to return. Meanwhile, he was doing everything he could to engineer German unity, by smashing to pieces the old empire, a constitution almost as fatal as that of Poland, and dealing the centrifugal state system a blow from which not even the influence of Metternich could restore it.

In thought and life alike, the change was as startling as it was profound. A new spirit of German nationality arose, transcending and supplanting the old Kantian individualism. The prophet of the new spirit was Kant's successor, the philosopher-idealist Fichte. In a series of lectures, previous to the great catastrophe, he had indeed pleaded for the merging of individual interests in the service of the State, but in spite of this, he could look with scorn upon ideas of patriotism. He heaps contempt on the "earth-born men, who recognize their Fatherland in the soil, the rivers, the mountains"; the "sunlike spirit" will pick and choose the state that happens to be

the most cultured, " will wing its way wherever there is light and liberty." In which cosmopolitan frame of mind, Fichte contemplates with serenity the destinies of humanity.

Very different was that mind a few years later, when Prussia lay under an iron heel, when the terrible Davoust lorded it over Berlin, and the least protest might mean death. Then, at a time when Hegel, like an owl startled from his noonday slumbers, could only blink at Napoleon in the streets of Jena, and see a fine manifestation of the world-spirit; when Goethe and Wieland were smirching their honour at Erfurt, by receiving the cross of honour from the tyrant; then it was that the beauty and greatness of Fichte's soul stood revealed. His " Addresses to the German People," for which, by some miracle, he escaped shooting, were the trumpet-call of a new age. They were no ordinary appeal to arms; the Germany of which he dreamed was to prevail not by armies alone, but by culture and education. Not only was a man to live and die for his country, but, through this very service, he was to attain the highest perfection of which he was capable. And yet this was not to be a sacrifice, but an ecstasy; the object of education was not to compel, but to train the will, to see that the citizen should not even desire to shirk his duty. And not only was a nation to be free and powerful, but also beautiful and wise, even as Athens of old. Fichte's nation is not, however, any petty German state; it is Germany herself, the land of Arminius and Barbarossa and Luther, to which he makes his appeal, in the name of her forefathers, in the name of her posterity, in the name of the whole human race, in the name of truth, of justice, and of freedom. If Germany falls, the whole of mankind falls with her. We hear in this terrific call to arms, not only the prophecy of liberation from Napoleon, but also that of the modern Pan-German ideal, only Fichte's is a Pan-Germanism

more enlightened and humane than that of its modern exponents. His conception of the State is but an expansion of the idea of Burke, "a partnership in all art, a partnership in all science, in every virtue and in all perfection."

Schiller had worked his way from individualism to patriotism, even before the catastrophe. Just as he had been a revolutionist before the Revolution, so he was a patriot before Jena, which, indeed, he never lived to mourn. After the turbulent republican enthusiasm of his first three plays, the heritage of the "Sturm und Drang," he gives us the ideal hero of his youthful period, the Marquis of Posa, the "citizen of the world," the friend of humanity, who confounds Philip II by an exposition of eighteenth-century French philosophy. The middle period, that of the Wallenstein trilogy, shows Schiller in transition to a larger ideal. Wallenstein is the tragedy of a mercenary, of the great leader who has no country, but fights for his own hand. This is no fault of Wallenstein's, but of his time and circumstances, and it is the explanation of his downfall. He is the lonely superman, whose power is built upon the shifting sands of selfishness and treachery, and whose God is his will. He suffers, in his isolation, from the same strange burden of the inevitable that was afterwards to weigh down Napoleon. "Russia must fulfil her destiny," had been the Emperor's words upon plunging into the war of 1812, just as Wallenstein, having no cause to bind him to the earth, stretched forth unavailing hands towards the silent stars for guidance.

In two of the last three plays (and the "Bride of Messina" is rather an experiment in technique than a stage upon the main road of Schiller's development) we have a definite and constructive ideal of patriotism. The date of "The Maid of Orleans" is 1801, that of "William Tell" 1804. The Napoleonic tragedy had begun to develop, tyranny and military ambition had begun their

work upon German-speaking people, and the sensitive genius of Schiller was quick to respond. The "Maid of Orleans" is a disinterested enthusiast in the cause of a people who are unworthy of her. Here the lesson is taught that the true patriot must give up everything, even love, to the cause. A moment's hesitation is as fatal to the maid as the shearing of his locks to Samson. For his last tragedy Schiller takes those mountaineers whose wrongs had already moved the righteous indignation of Wordsworth and Coleridge. William Tell is the hero of a race that cannot brook the fetters of a tyrant; the play represents the defeat of blind force by an idea. The honest peasants who meet in their folkmoot among the mountains are not, by habit or choice, fighting men, but they cannot conceive of their country's slavery, and just for this reason they cannot be slaves. Tell is a patriotic hero, more homely and more convincing than Joanna; he was to come to life again in Hofer, and as the peasants of Switzerland had gloriously conquered, so the peasants of the Tyrol were gloriously to fail.

But, unlike Schiller's, the bulk of German patriotism needed the fires of defeat to call it into action. This is the case with Kleist, almost the only great literary man who was a native-born Prussian. He had, in the days before Jena, thrown up his commission in the Prussian army, and wandered into paths of lawlessness, even to the extent of contemplating service with the French. But in the time of humiliation he rises, by degrees, to the very height of patriotism. From Michael Kohlhaas, which is a vindication of every man's right to individual justice, he passes into the patriotic fervour, now raised to its highest and fiercest pitch, of his anti-Napoleonic catechism, and the tragedy of Arminius, the first liberator of Germany. But his greatest work, one of the noblest in all literature, is the "Prince von Homburg." This hero starts as an individualist, a Hotspur fighting for his

own hand and for his own honour in the army of the Great Elector. By a brilliant charge in defiance of orders, he drives the Swedes from their position at Fehrbellin before the Great Elector has had time to complete his plans for their annihilation. By this means he wins the hand of a princess and becomes the darling of the army—but a court-martial sentences him to be shot, and the stern, kindly old Elector confirms the sentence. Then all the Prince's flashy individualism breaks down, he sees his own grave, and whines and grovels for mercy. Princess Nathalie, whose hand he has even offered to renounce, goes to plead with her father, the Elector. "My child," says the old soldier, "do you know what we in the camp call the Fatherland?" Prince Homburg, he assures her, would agree with the justness of his sentence, and poor Nathalie is silent. Instantly the Elector changes his ground, he writes a pardon, which the Prince is to sign if he thinks the sentence unfair. This calls up all that is noble in the Prince's nature, and despite Nathalie's passionate entreaties, he refuses to sign. "I cannot act dishonourably to one who has acted so honourably to me." He now recognizes that duty comes before self, and voluntarily resigns himself to death, even quelling a mutiny among the troops, who have risen in his favour. It is only in presence of the firing party that the Elector reprieves him, and Nathalie places the hero's wreath upon his brows; after which he resumes his command against the Swedes, purified from the taint of self, and devoted to the service of the Fatherland. All that is best in the Prussian character and in the House of Hohenzollern, all that has made Prussia the leader of Germany, finds expression in this play.

Nor were these ideas of poets and philosophers to be lost in dreams. What Fichte and Kleist said, Stein and Scharnhorst did. The patriots of Germany rallied, as by a common instinct, round Prussia; for scarcely one of the

men who regenerated Prussia was a Prussian. Fichte's proposals were put into course of fulfilment. The duty of every man, without exception, to serve the State was recognized; the University of Berlin was formed under the auspices of Fichte himself; the machinery of government was reformed; the life of the towns was quickened; and, lastly, a blow was dealt at Prussian Junkerdom, by the abolition of serfdom, of the privileges of the squires and nobles, of the disabilities of burgher and peasant. In England the landed interest had, on the whole, been our salvation; in Prussia it called for unceremonious and drastic reform at the hands of true patriots. For the love of country is the affair of no party and no interest; these exist for the Fatherland and not the Fatherland for them. If we look back with gratitude to our Tory Ministers and gentlemen of the Napoleonic period, it is not in any spirit of flunkeydom, but because history forces us to recognize that, in spite of much prejudice and many blunders, these men did, on the whole, the duty that England had a right to expect from them; because Tory doggedness was, at that time, a nobler and better thing than Whig calculation. And there was between the Prussian and English landed gentry the difference between a privileged caste and a class that lived as much for as by the people.

The first effort of the German nation to cope with the tyrant was that of Austria. Stadion, the Stein of Austria, had undertaken the herculean task of bringing ideas of freedom and nationality into touch with the Hapsburg Government. A Landwehr was formed, the army reorganized, and the word Fatherland was heard among the Austrian troops. These were men of a different order from the hirelings of Mack; they were fighting for their homes and country; and they were commanded by a young, beloved leader, who knew well how to appeal to national sentiment. "The liberty of Europe," says the

Archduke Charles in his proclamation, "has taken refuge under your banners. Your victories will loosen its fetters, and your German brethren, yet in the enemy's ranks, long for their deliverance." A notable utterance from the lips of a Hapsburg Archduke. The Cabinet at Vienna did not even hesitate to enter into correspondence with German malcontents, and to foment rebellion in the Tyrol. The official Paris "Moniteur" complains that the Austrian princes have adopted the revolutionary system, and are plotting an insurrection all over Europe.

Napoleon was in Spain when the news reached him. He had designed to make short work of the scanty and ill-led Spanish armies, and indeed he had driven them everywhere in headlong rout before him. He was just about to end matters by a triumphant march to Lisbon, when his arch-enemy, England, in the shape of Sir John Moore's little army, flung herself upon his communications. Instantly the whole campaign was changed, and the Emperor, fired by the rage with which he always regarded England, hurled his choicest troops, with lightning rapidity, on the little army, which, with an address equal to his own, just slipped out of his clutches. His stroke at Spanish liberty had therefore failed, and by means of England. So he hurried off to crush the liberties of Austria.

England had now the opportunity of following up her success in Spain by a second and more brilliant stroke in Germany. Had she had a Marlborough, or even a Moore, to make a dash, with a sufficient force, upon the communications of the Grand Army, Napoleon might never have recovered from the repulse of Aspern. Germany was ripe for awakening, and the position of Napoleon on the Isle of Lobau, hundreds of miles from his base, with the Archduke Charles on his front, and England and Prussia on his rear, would have been desperate. But owing to the almost incredible stupidity of the

English statesmen and leaders, the opportunity was frittered away in the marshes of Walcheren. Truly, it was by doggedness rather than brilliance that England saved Europe.

As it was, the war brought Napoleon within an inch of ruin. He had routed Austrian armies before, and he must have fancied that his task was going to be comparatively easy. His manœuvring power was more brilliant than ever; he easily broke the Archduke's long line, beat him soundly at Eckmuhl, and marched in triumph to Vienna. But the Archduke's army, instead of losing morale, arrived in full strength to dispute his passage of the Danube, and after two days' desperate fighting actually drove him back to the island of Lobau. Here, for a few weeks, his position was critical, but England dawdled and Germany did not rise. Napoleon put forth the whole of his immense organizing and manœuvring power, and after outwitting the Archduke, did at last manage to drive him from the heights of Wagram. But this was far inferior to his other victories; for hours the issue was in doubt, and when at last it was decided, the Austrians fell back, not routed nor disheartened, but in perfect order, and only feebly pursued by their exhausted enemy. Napoleon had conquered, but he had escaped disaster by the skin of his teeth. The triumphs over the kings were past; he was now to meet the enemy in Europe who had already baffled him in England, a united people. The lesson was further emphasized in the Tyrol, where Frenchmen and Bavarians were again and again conquered by a handful of heroic peasants like those of Tell, and where only overwhelming numbers finally succeeded in stamping out resistance. Even the measure of success enjoyed by Schill and his few devoted followers, was symptomatic of the turn things were taking.

England had failed to end the war at a blow, but none the less surely was she bleeding Napoleon to death. One

fatal injury she was inflicting upon his cause by accentuating the very weakness that marred his vast empire. The armies that she kept wearing down in the Peninsula were, for the most part, the picked soldiers of France, the men to whom the glamour of empire and the lust of glory were most likely to appeal. The Grand Army thus became more and more heterogeneous, and less national, just as the spirit of nationality was pervading the ranks of its opponents. The army that marched to Vienna contained a large proportion of German troops, and these, though no cowards, did not show themselves equal either to their foreign allies or to their German opponents. At the height of Napoleon's first triumphs the Bavarians sustained a reverse at Neustadt; and an army commanded by Eugene, consisting mainly of Italians, got well beaten in the south. After Wagram occurred a curious incident —Bernadotte, who commanded the Saxons, had issued a boastful proclamation, which brought upon him a severe reprimand from Napoleon, who attributed the victory entirely to the French troops, and said that the Saxons had given way before anybody else. The big battalions were proving broken reeds in the hand of the tyrant.

Meanwhile Napoleon continued to see England as the cause of his misfortunes, and in his efforts to get rid of this constant menace, he went to extremes that made it necessary for him to fight or to humiliate the whole of the Continent. "Pitt's gold" had been the bugbear of the early revolutionists, and English gold and English influence were still the bugbear of the Emperor. At the famous interview at Dresden, his last and bitterest taunt was, "Tell me, Metternich, how much has England given you to take part against me?"

It was his enmity for England that lured him to the catastrophe upon the plains of Russia. He quarrelled with the Tsar over the Continental system, which was weighing on Russia, besides having mortally offended

him by dispossessing his uncle, the Duke of Oldenburg, in order to enforce the system more strictly. He had now to encounter a patriotism of a nature more mysterious than that of Germany, or even of Spain. The Russian people have always been an enigma. When much has been expected of them, as in the Japanese, the Crimean wars, and even during their last Turkish campaign, they have signally failed to maintain their reputation; but yet the three greatest warrior princes of modern times have been overwhelmed with hideous, and in two cases, fatal disaster in combat with them.

The melancholy, childlike disposition of the Slav has only become articulate in the nineteenth century, and it is fortunate that the greatest of Russian writers has left us the prose epic of that supreme crisis in Russia's fate, the war of 1812. We refer, of course, to the third and fourth volumes of Tolstoy's "War and Peace." Not, indeed, that it would be safe to accept everything in this book as infallible, for Tolstoy, despite his theories, writes as a Russian patriot, with a very markedly pro-Russian bias, but because it does present us with that Slav character, very strange to the Western temperament, which made the march to Moscow, in the words of one of Napoleon's recent biographers, as futile as "a sword-slash through a pond."

There is something in the Russian of those vast, mournful, featureless plains that swallowed up the Grand Army of the West. He has not the abounding joy of life, the will to power, that is the characteristic of Western peoples; his strength lies in a certain sad patience, an invincible passivity. Thus we find his greatest literary genius unable to understand masterpieces of European art, and expressing his ignorance with the simplicity of a child. To Tolstoy, the passion of Lear is fatuous and offensive, and the whole tragedy an unintelligible string of nonsense; Falstaff is only a coarse and disgusting old

drunkard; Hamlet a fog. So, too, the instinct of those Russians who objected to the conscription was not to rise and mutiny, but passively to let themselves be tortured and punished for refusing to serve. And now, though a few years ago all the prophets expected a revolution and the end of Tsardom, the forces of reaction have triumphed, because the great bulk of the people are strangers to the impatience of tyranny that creates revolutions.

Thus we may expect to find that the strength of the Russian army has, with a very few exceptions (the campaign of Suwarrow being the most important), lain in the defensive when opposed to disciplined troops. For dogged obstinacy no men have ever surpassed them, and no disaster makes any appreciable difference to their morale. It was well said that in naval war one must close with a Frenchman but outmanœuvre a Russian. Their most brilliant feats of arms have been on the defensive: Pultowa, Kunersdorf, Eylau, Borodino, Sevastopol, Port Arthur. On the other hand, offensive tactics have seldom succeeded with them; they failed conspicuously at Austerlitz, at Silistria, at Inkermann, at Plevna, at Telissu, at the Sha Ho. The Russians are in this, as in most respects, the exact opposite of the French, whose strength lies in attack. The last war supplied abundant confirmation of this trait. Despite the self-sacrifice and dash of the Japanese, despite their infinitely superior organization for war, they were never able to win a decisive victory on land; at Liao Yang, at Mukden, the Russians stood up to be slaughtered as they had at Borodino, and after days of carnage grimly fell back upon another position. It is doubtful whether the Japanese could have made another such effort as that of Mukden.

Napoleon's invasion was calculated to call out all that was most formidable in the Russian temperament. Of this both he, and the foreigners who influenced the move-

ments of his enemies, were profoundly ignorant. In dealing with the theoretical German strategy of Phull, Napoleon was in his own element; in dealing with the Russian nation he was helpless. He was at the head of the largest and worst army he had ever commanded. Only one-half of it consisted of Frenchmen, and it included Prussians, who hated him, and Austrians, who had an understanding with the enemy. His marshals were, for the most part, sick of the whole affair; Berthier and Rapp admitted this to Napoleon, Murat even blurted it out to Alexander's envoy. Besides which Napoleon wantonly threw away a golden opportunity of enlisting national sentiment on his own side by refusing to enfranchise Poland. He was blinded by his worship of big battalions, and incapable of appreciating the force of ideas; he had by this time come to regard himself as the protagonist of legitimacy, and every expression of nationality as being tainted with revolutionary principles.

He rushed headlong upon the disaster that his enemies knew not how to prepare for him. He outmanœuvred Phull easily enough, but his lumbering army was incapable of profiting from the advantage, and the Russians got away. And so, forcing the foe back, and losing enormously at every day's march, he fared across the vast plains. At length the Russians, now commanded by a countryman of their own, turned and faced him. It was a victory of the type of Eylau; after one of the bloodiest battles in history, the Russians went on retreating and the Emperor found himself stranded with a mere remnant of the Grand Army in a deserted Moscow. Alexander, like a true Russian, would not negotiate while any Frenchman remained on his soil, and so Napoleon had to retreat; he found the Russians entrenched on the line he had chosen, and had to take the old, devastated route. All the while, when the French army was going

to pieces amid the horrors of a Russian winter, the army of Kutusoff trudged along beside it, patiently shepherding it out of Russia, seldom and feebly attempting the offensive, letting it perish of its own accord. Truly might Alexander have said, with Elizabeth, "He blew with His winds, and they were scattered."

Southey and Wordsworth each commemorated the retreat after his own fashion. Southey, whose humour had never been his strongest point, made it the subject of a rhymed joke, brutal to its half-million of victims and tedious to its readers, punning on the names of the Russian generals, and finding merriment where a spirit less shallow could only have felt awe at the stroke of God, and pity for the misery of His creatures. No such levity disgraced the pronouncements of Wordsworth. He saw, in that fatal winter, the same power that had overwhelmed Busiris beneath the Red Sea, and now spread above the mightiest host that ever defied God:

> "A soundless waste, a trackless vacancy."

Napoleon, however, congratulated himself that he had lost so few Frenchmen in comparison with his hordes of foreigners, remarked that from the sublime to the ridiculous there was but a step, and boasted to Metternich that he did not care about the lives of a million men.

And now, at last, Germany was aroused to action. Wordsworth had predicted her deliverance as early as 1807, in his sonnet commencing,

> "High deeds, O Germans, are to come from you,"

and anticipating the time when

> "The mighty Germany,
> She of the Danube and the Northern Sea,"

should remember the name of Arminius, and, like him, shake off the fetters of empire—the same idea which had

animated Kleist's "Hermannschlact." Nobly did Wordsworth honour her heroes, Schiller and Hofer, and bitterly did he denounce the traitor princes who made alliance with the conqueror. Meanwhile the German muse had not been silent; Korner and Arndt, who sang of "the God that made the iron grow," were the chief of a band of patriot poets. The Romantic school, which was in its heyday, was joining in the work of liberation, both directly and also indirectly, by shattering the soulless reasoning of the eighteenth century, by harking back to the days of German faith and chivalry, of the Hohenstaufen and of the Gothic cathedrals. Tieck and Wackenroder were doing the same work in Germany as Chateaubriand in France, and all these men were of one mind as regarded Napoleon. A dim consciousness of the new idealism must have haunted the Emperor, for, like Canute of old, he even condescended to lecture against it at Erfurt.

One figure, the greatest of all, is conspicuously absent from the ranks of the patriots. It must always be a matter of regret that such a man as Goethe so strangely failed to rise to the solemnity of a situation that was appreciated by lesser men; that he should have paid court to Napoleon, and, mournful to relate, should have stooped to utter that cowardly and contemptible sneer, "Rattle your chains, the man is too strong for you."

The faintness of Goethe's patriotism may be attributed (as indeed it was by the poet himself) to his sixty years. His point of view was that of an earlier age, the individualism of the revolutionary period, and he was too old to make a fresh start now. But there is another reason why Goethe was incapable of becoming a patriot, and this was owing to a definite and serious limitation of his genius. He seems to have been incapable of giving a practical assent to his own theory, "How can a man come to know himself? Never by thinking, but by doing." Goethe's most famous characters are all

thinkers rather than doers. He had little conception of heroism.

Werther is a love-sick suicide; Meister, an unpractical, irresolute youth in search of experience; Tasso, a creature without self-control; Clavigo, a cowardly plotter; Fernando, a sentimental bigamist. Where Goethe has to draw a leader and a man of action, he breaks down hopelessly; Egmont is a talker and a theorist, and even Alva cannot resist the pleasure of an argument before arresting him; Goetz von Berlichingen allows himself to be over-persuaded into leading an insurrection that he is powerless to control. Finally we have Faust, the greatest of Goethe's irresolute creations. We have only to contrast him with Marlowe's Faustus, who despaired of the futility of his learning because it brought him no power, and who sold his soul for power; or with Gounod's Faust, who frankly sought for youth and enjoyment, and boldly summoned the devil to procure it for him. Goethe's Faust, all through the stupendous soliloquy of the first scene, is tormented by an abstract, intellectual passion, the thirst for knowledge for its own sake, and the hopelessness of ever obtaining it. In his study, in Martha's garden, on the Brocken, in the prison, he is the victim and not the master of his fate. Even Mephistopheles has not enough will-power to be a devil, one of the "bold, denying spirits"; he is pure rational negation, a perfect, soulless intellect, who is unable to take even himself seriously.

Both Faust and Goethe are capable of giving a theoretical assent to the text that all things have their beginning, not in word, or thought, or even power, but in action. And this is the truth at which Faust at last arrives in his second old age:

> "He only gains his freedom and existence,
> Who daily conquers them anew."

And he finds his ideal happiness, not in supreme know-

ledge, or even supreme beauty, but in the proud consciousness that he can

"Stand on free soil amid a people free."

But this noble enthusiasm, which would have brought Goethe into line with Fichte and Stein and Blücher, seldom appears as an informing principle either of his art or of his life. In conversations with Eckermann, and previously with Luden, he was apologetic for his lukewarmness. He was too old to take an active part in the struggle; it was not his business to write war songs like Korner; he could best serve his country by serving mankind as a man of letters; he could not hate a great nation, like the French—as if hatred had anything to do with a great man's love for his country. And yet he loved the Germans and wished them well, and Germans loved him, and even begged him to bless their banners; though perhaps there was no heart in the regiment that besought his benediction so cold in the struggle as that of the Zeus of Weimar.

For just where he strove to be universal was Goethe most limited. As in his dealings with women, so in his relation to the great mother of all Germans, he could never forget himself and his own development; he was a stranger to the strength and beauty that come to men who can sink themselves wholly in a cause. He could not forget himself like Shakespeare, and enter the Kingdom of Art as a little child.

But not even a Goethe could damp the ardour that fired Germany in 1813. The whole of Prussia was seething with the desire to avenge her humiliation, and Prussia infected Germany. Even the stiff old monarchist Yorck mutinied against the Emperor and his own King, and withdrew his contingent from the French alliance; the very ladies sent their ornaments to be exchanged for iron favours, bearing the inscription, "I gave gold for iron"; a great army sprang into being out of the ashes of Jena.

The iron had entered into the soul of Germany; in a terrific simile one of her poets cried:

> "God that made the iron grow,
> Never willed a slave to see,
> Therefore to the arm of man
> Buckler, sword and shield gave He,
> To wage the feud till death,"

and the swan song of the young ill-fated Korner was addressed to his sword. "Come, lads," cried Blücher at the Katzbach, "let's give them a good old Prussian thrashing!" Ever since Lübeck the veteran hussar had been in the habit of relieving his feelings by hewing and slashing at a figure of Napoleon.

Against such armies as were now opposed to him, the military genius of Napoleon went for nothing. At Lutzen, and again at Bautzen, the allies were forced out of their positions, but the position was all that Napoleon was able to gain. In vain did he urge cavalry and artillery to the pursuit after Bautzen; "Not a gun," he cried, "not a prisoner! These people will not leave me so much as a nail."

The campaign of Saxony and the Elbe, in 1813, was a supreme contest of military skill against the new patriotism of nations. Napoleon, at the very height of his genius, was fighting, in a chosen position, against such leaders as Schwartzenberg, Bernadotte, and the council of kings. He failed, not because his combinations were any less brilliant than before, but because his army was hopelessly inferior in morale. When, by consummate tactical skill, and the helplessness of Schwartzenberg, he gained his last great victory under the walls of Dresden, instead of destroying the allies, he merely lost an army corps among the Bohemian mountains, and the allies arrived at Prague laden with the spoils of Vandamme; but the overthrow of Macdonald on the Katzbach, of Oudinot at Grossbeeren, of Napoleon himself at Leipzig, was crushing and decisive. Napoleon had thought, like

the professional soldier he was, that it would be an easy matter to brush the raw Prussian levies from his path to Berlin. But despite the feebleness of Bernadotte, the new regiments of Bülow fell with butt and bayonet on the heterogeneous troops opposed to them, and routed two successive armies. After every disaster the French troops melted away, and their German allies went over to the enemy, sometimes in the heat of battle. Napoleon could not adapt himself to the new situation; he conceived of great schemes that would have sufficed to annihilate Mack or Brunswick, but which now resulted in his leaving tens of thousands of veterans shut up in the fortresses of the Elbe and Vistula, and in his being crushed at Leipzig between the anvil of Schwartzenberg and the hammer of Blücher.

Meanwhile the exertions of England had not slackened. She had freed the hands of Russia by negotiating peace with Sweden and Turkey; she tied the hands of France by keeping her best troops in Spain. For the Peninsula armies consisted for the most part of seasoned French veterans, and the drafts from the Peninsula were, with the guard, the most valuable element in the Emperor's hastily raised armies in Germany. And yet these very veterans, commanded by the best and most scientific of the marshals, Masséna, Marmont and Soult, were beaten again and again, and were never able to win an important victory over the English, whom they outnumbered. If the spirit of the Germans was one of almost desperate determination not to be slaves, that of the English was one of good-humoured and unquestioning confidence, bred of many successes, the "whack, fal-de-lal" of Scott's dragoons, or as a later writer expressed it:

> "The colonel so gaily prancing, boys,
> Has a wonderful trick of advancing, boys!
> When he shouts out so large,
> 'Fix bayonets and charge!'
> He sets all the Frenchmen a-dancing, boys!"

There is a Gargantuan felicity in the Highland general's address to his men, "Come on, ye rascals! come on, ye fighting villains!" These men did not need heroics to spur them to the congenial task of thrashing Frenchmen. From Wellington down to the youngest drummer-boy there was no doubt as to who were the better men. With his Peninsula troops Wellington thought he could have won Waterloo in a couple of hours, and when asked whether Murat could have broken his squares, he replied that twenty Murats could not have done so. "Adieu, Portugal!" he cried, on commencing the 1813 campaign, the most fatal of all to France, for the news of Vittoria arrived during the armistice of Pleswitz, and drove wavering Austria into the arms of the allies.

During the last phase of the war, the two dominating personalities on the English side were the Anglo-Irishmen, Wellington and Castlereagh. The time of supreme peril was past, and once the Peninsular War was fairly started, we were fighting a winning battle all the time. What was required was no longer the heroic brilliancy of a Nelson, so much as the sheer persistency of the bulldog that has fastened his grip in an opponent's throat, and in spite of all punishment, gradually shifts it inwards towards the artery. Thus Canning falls into the background after the duel, but Castlereagh comes back to the front, and Britain is justified of all her children. He was one of those men who are certain to be cruelly misunderstood by Englishmen, for his character had the purity and coldness of ice, and he did not escape calumny. Able, brave, industrious, sincere, exquisitely courteous, he was none the less devoid of sympathy, and hence no slander was too vile, no lampoon too brutal for him.

> "I met murder on the way,
> He had a mask like Castlereagh,"

wrote the apostle of love and gentleness, and Byron's insult to his dead body is too blackguardly for repetition. There is no place for the stoic in the hearts of Englishmen, and as it was with William of Orange, so it was with poor Castlereagh, who never did a dishonourable act, whose views were more tolerant than those of the majority of his colleagues, and who worked himself to the most tragic of deaths in the service of his country. And his work during the war, at the War Office, at the Foreign Office, on the bullion committee, was invaluable. He was always for a strong offensive; he would have intervened decisively in the campaign of 1806, he would have struck a mortal blow at Napoleon in Holland if his colleagues and Lord Chatham had supported him properly in the Walcheren Expedition; he was indefatigable in the prosecution of the Peninsular War, and he showed equal loyalty and insight in his steady support of Wellington, at a time when Whigs hated him, and even Tories had not learnt to value him. The Creevey Papers are sufficient evidence of the hatred with which the Whigs regarded Wellington during the Peninsular War, and it is not pleasant to read how the party which had abstained from thanking Admiral Duncan a dozen years before would, had they dared, have opposed the vote of thanks for Talavera, but slunk away ignominiously when they found this to be unpopular. There was even talk of impeaching Wellington.

Wellington himself was far from possessing the icy temperament of Castlereagh. Iron-hard he was indeed, but though he was often the object of popular disfavour, though he even had the windows of Apsley House broken, the English nation honoured and loved him at heart, and this not only because of his great military reputation. His soldierly honesty, his sportsmanship, and his keen sense of humour were qualities that endeared him both to his troops and to the ordinary civilian. We cannot imagine Castlereagh interlarding his conversation with

"damns," we cannot imagine the Duke expressing his sentiments with the grandiloquent bumbling of Castlereagh. There is a story that during the Queen's trial, Wellington's horse was stopped by the mob, who demanded that he should cry, "God save the Queen." "God save the Queen," replied the Duke, "and may all your wives be like her!" Castlereagh, under the same circumstances, would have been coldly disgusted. That Wellington was a man of deep feeling, there can be no doubt; he is reported to have wept after Badajoz; it is certain that he wept after Waterloo; but he had that peculiar shyness, or hatred of shams, that made him distrust and shrink from any emotional display. This quality, so rare in great Englishmen, he shares with Walpole, but he had none of Walpole's cynicism. He was, in the noblest sense, a gentleman, a man without a price, whose actions were determined by causes other than selfish calculation. What he exacted from himself he expected from others, and he did so as a matter of course, not counting it a great thing that men should sacrifice their lives and interests to their duty, and hence, perhaps, his harshness to his subordinates, and even his apparent indifference as to the fate of Marshal Ney. "Tell him to die where he stands," was his curt message to a general who asked for reinforcements. "He ought to be damned glad the country has kept him so long," he said of an officer who was bewailing his long, meritorious, unrewarded services. "Don't be a damned fool, sir!" was his reply to a too effusive compliment.

It was therefore not inappropriate that the chief English actor in the last stage of the struggle should have been such a man as Wellington. The upstart, jarring marshals, the troops that lived on the country and sufferings of every nation they passed through, without restraint from their officers, and their master who defied God and man, were ill-fitted to cope with the

quiet and steady moral force of the Duke. He was the least showy of leaders, and though he was never defeated in battle, he executed no less than three retreats rather than risk the safety of his cause in the pursuit of glory. If he never obtained to the brilliancy of the Marengo and Ulm campaigns, he would never have perpetrated the folly of Moscow and the Elbe fortresses. Lord Roberts, no mean judge, places him, from a military standpoint, in a class at least equal to that of Napoleon, on account of his coolness of judgment, the first requisite of a commander; and for sheer brilliancy of conception, Torres Vedras in the strategical sphere, and Salamanca and Waterloo in the tactical, are classics of military history. He was especially jealous of the good name of his army. Outrages like those of Badajoz, committed in hot blood after the horrors of the breaches, he could not restrain; but alike in France and Spain, plunder was a capital crime—the Spanish guerillas were even sent back from France on this account—and so the inhabitants even of the enemy's country came to trust the English armies, who reaped the fruits of their forbearance in supplies and information. Nor was the Duke one to scoff at the loss of a million men; unlike Napoleon, whose first thought after the Moscow retreat was that he himself had never been in better health. Indeed, a gentleman (or more probably Creevey) who hastened to congratulate him after Waterloo, was astounded to find that the first thought of the conqueror was one of regret for the thousands of brave men who had perished. Whatever may be the authenticity or literal truth of the saying about the playing fields of Eton, it is certain that what won Waterloo was the sportsmanlike spirit of devotion to the side (Napoleon cheated at games), a spirit which animated not only the English general, but gallant old Blücher, whose loyalty neither the defeat of Ligny nor the scruples of Gneisenau could shake, and who cried to his gunners, toiling in the

mud of St. Lambert, "My children, you would not have me break my word to Wellington!" Infinitely grander are the words and actions of those men who strove for Europe in the hour of her deliverance, Nelson's last signal, Pitt's "How I leave my country!" Wellington's "Tell him to die where he stands," than those of the band of princes and marshals who intrigued against each other, and all forsook their master and benefactor in the hour of his need. The last words of Desaix, the noblest of them all, had been of himself, "Go, tell Napoleon that I die with regret, since *I* have achieved nothing worthy to live in the remembrance of posterity"; Masséna had commandeered Portuguese girls wholesale for the use of his troops, and then turned them loose to starve; Davoust's name was cruelty; Augereau, that virtuous republican, insulted Napoleon in his downfall, as he had cringed to him in his prosperity; that pitiable snob and swashbuckler, Murat, had taken arms against his master in a remote hope of saving his crown; even "the bravest of the brave," who had forsaken one master and shamefully betrayed another, who wrecked the whole Waterloo campaign by his selfishness and insubordination, by his alternate dawdling and rashness, scarcely redeems for himself a place among the heroes by exclaiming, with the desperate magnificence of physical courage, "See how a Marshal of France can die on the field of battle!" Just before the last charge of the guard, Napoleon sent an aide-de-camp along the ranks of these gallant picked veterans who were going to die for him, to tell them that Grouchy was at hand. There is something in this lie even more contemptible than the clause in Napoleon's will in which he rewarded the scoundrel who had tried to murder Wellington. The Duke, for his part, had refused to let his gunners take aim at Napoleon, even though the French were deliberately aiming among his own staff.

The noble forbearance that England had shown during the war was never more conspicuous than during its final stages. If the nations of Europe were roused against Napoleon, her kings were little better than those who had aspired to nip the Terror in the bud nearly a generation back. Only the strange, wayward figure of Alexander, the Tsar of the Romantic movement, much attracts our sympathy. Their old hatreds were as keen as ever, and only restrained by the lively fear of a common peril. They regarded their awakened peoples with uneasy suspicion, though they were fain to make use of their enthusiasm. They were as greedy as ever for territory, and as unscrupulous in their methods of acquiring it. But England, who had sustained the struggle longer than any of them, was nobly contemptuous of reaping direct compensation for her efforts. She was even ready to give up land she had conquered, provided she could secure an honourable and safe peace.

Everywhere her steady, remorseless pressure was bleeding Napoleon to death. During the Armistice of Pleswitz her influence had been steadily exerted to bind the allies in a common cause, and at last the subsidies she so lavishly expended were not thrown away. After the overthrow of Leipzig, it seemed for a moment as if the diplomacy of Metternich might let Napoleon off with the Rhine frontier. Here again England was firm. The question of the Low Countries was still vital, and Castlereagh was determined that the French should not remain in Antwerp, which Napoleon himself had described as a pistol held at the head of England. When these negotiations had fallen through, and the allies had entered France, Castlereagh proceeded in person to their headquarters, and became the most powerful influence among them.

This was the zenith of his career. His quiet, impassive figure stands nobly apart from the jealous intriguers who

were even then threatening to pull the alliance to pieces between them. He had the most difficult of tasks to perform, but one for which he was pre-eminently qualified. If he was prolix in debate, no one could be more persuasive in his dealings with men, and his firmness was equal to his courtesy. Now the whole of his energies were bent to keeping the allies together, and it was his diplomacy that finally brought about the Treaty of Chaumont, which bound the Powers in an indissoluble compact against Napoleonic aggression. It was his rapid decision that ended the treacherous vacillations of Bernadotte, and decided the fate of Paris by bringing up two fresh corps to reinforce the hard-pressed army of Blücher. His attitude towards France was marked by a noble forbearance. He alone would have treated with her fairly and frankly, on the basis of the Châtillon proposals, restoring her Bourbon frontiers. He had no idea of reverting to Burke's policy of forcing the old régime on an unwilling people.

He again represented us at the Congress of Vienna, that most ironic of anti-climaxes. Amid pomp and luxury, amid splendour unprecedented and copious display of royal brotherhood, the victorious sovereigns proved that they were still the men of the eighteenth century, a gang of crowned sharpers, without honour, and almost without shame. The comic spirit, in the Meredithian sense, happened to be embodied in Talleyrand, the fascinating old Revolutionist who nonplussed the whole Congress, and drove Alexander to the verge of madness by a pious and unblushing championship of divine right. There was the Tsar, grasping after the whole of Poland; the King of Prussia, seeking to appropriate the whole inheritance of his brother of Saxony; Austria, busy fastening her chains upon Italy; and the imminent prospect of another war, as bloody as the one which had just been concluded. Amid this unlovely spectacle, England may fairly con-

gratulate herself upon the part she played, which was noble and unselfish, as befitted her own dignity and the character of her representative.

Napoleon, materialist to the last, was lost in surprise at what seemed to him "the utter imbecility and ignorance of Lord Castlereagh." All the other powers, he told O'Meara in his last exile, had gained by the peace, but we had actually given up colonies. Why did we not acquire Hamburg, Java, Sumatra, Martinique? Scoffers said that Castlereagh had parted with Java because he could not find it on the map. But there was a deeper wisdom behind his policy than Napoleon could understand. We had tried the selfish policy and it had brought us to the verge of ruin; our moderation was to raise us to the first place in Europe. We had secured the key of our position by creating an independent Netherlands, though Castlereagh's plan for a united monarchy was doomed to failure. As it happened, our little-regarded acquisition of the Cape proved to be the germ of our South African Empire, and during the course of the struggle it had been rendered certain that the little-known continent of Australia should pass under our flag. We had succeeded, too, in carrying on Fox's policy, and doing something to mitigate the horrors of the slave trade, a purely unselfish action, which could bring us no material advantage. In prestige we had won the first place among European nations; in commerce we had gained a start which the competition of generations could not overtake; and we had laid firm, though without knowing it, the foundations of a World Empire. Well might Canning exclaim, "Is there any man that has a heart in his bosom, who does not find, in the contemplation of this contest alone, a recompense for the struggles and sufferings of years?"

# CHAPTER VII

## THE AFTERMATH

THE strain was relaxed; after twenty-one years of almost unbroken fighting, England stood victorious, and was able to reckon up the cost of victory. The bonfires and illuminations, the rapture of victory and pride of unbroken resistance, were things of the past, and the inglorious attendants of war, hunger and squalor, and crushing taxation, were upon us in all their naked ugliness. Napoleon thought that he had left a fatal wound in the national debt, but here again he was a materialist, for never had money been more profitably invested than that which we had poured out like water in subsidies and campaigns for intangible returns. But for a few years the state of the country was parlous enough.

How much this was due to the war is not easy to compute. The whole industrial system had been thrown into the melting-pot, and it was only natural that a certain amount of distress should be the result. Perhaps the war even had its uses, in helping us to tide over the change, in stimulating certain forms of industry, and in finding occupation in the field for our unemployed youth. Our immunity from invasion allowed our manufacturing system to develop with giant strides, while the commerce and industry of all Europe were moribund, or at a standstill. Napoleon was not blind to these advantages, and made genuine though futile efforts to make the industry

of France independent of her rival; but while he was vainly trying to extract sugar out of beetroot, he found himself forced to clothe his troops with English cloth, and even to provide his own table with prohibited delicacies.

The weapons to which Napoleon resorted, after arms had failed, were impotent indeed to conquer us, but were capable of inflicting a vast amount of suffering. Under the Continental system trade may have offered large profits, but it was exceedingly speculative, and failures were frequent. Besides which, there was the problem of finding means for the subsistence of a rapidly increasing population, and this, when the American supply was withdrawn, when harvests were bad, and the Continental system at its height, was an almost desperate problem. Fortunately, Napoleon threw away the greatest of his opportunities, for when our food supply was almost exhausted, he had the folly to give facilities for its exportation to England.

The backbone of the country had been the landed interest, who formed the basis of the Tory Party, but even for them the war was no unmixed blessing. Farming had received a vigorous but unhealthy stimulus; the profits varied enormously from year to year; and poor land was taken into cultivation, in the delusive hope of permanent returns. Such was the condition of affairs at the end of the war, that Corn Laws had to be imposed, with the avowed object of bolstering up the landed interest, after the stimulus and partial monopoly of the war were withdrawn. Then, too, the problem of pauperism had assumed gigantic proportions; the sudden increase of population had gone along with the ruin of the old domestic industries by the competition of machinery, and the enclosure of common lands. The class of yeomanry, of the small, independent farmers, which had long been decreasing, was almost annihilated during the transition,

and the migration to the towns, which has been one of the most serious features of the nineteenth century, commenced. At the same time, something had to be done with the hordes of paupers, the human wastage of industrial progress, and the hand-to-mouth method of supplementing wages out of rates had the effect of pauperizing some fifth part of the population, and sapping thrift and self-respect to an appalling extent. Crimes, such as rick-burning and armed poaching, were never so rife; and it was a long period of discontent that finally culminated in the abortive peasant revolt of 1830 in the Southern Counties. What with the widespread distress and the fearful severity of the penal laws, it is no wonder that the patience even of Johnny Raw was at length exhausted.

In point of numbers, the proportion between town and country people was changing with great rapidity. Hitherto it had been the object of British statesmen, under the mercantile system, to keep a large population on the land and on the sea. Until the Industrial Revolution, they had been fairly successful, but since the invention of the machines, and the pre-eminence, verging upon monopoly, that England had obtained in the world's industry, the centre of national gravity was shifting to the grim, smoky towns, which were everywhere springing up like enormous fungoid growths (so it seemed to the Tory mind) upon the blackening face of the country-side. This transference did not affect the lower classes alone, for the accumulation of capital involved a corresponding increase in the number of wealthy capitalists; a plutocracy with traditions and ideals widely differing from those of the landed aristocracy, and who were to attain the zenith of their power in the middle of the nineteenth century.

The working class, which was increasing with such rapidity in the towns, was in a terrible condition. They had very little political power; they were without leaders.

The replacement of hand labour by machinery, whatever might be its effects in the long run, was, for the existing generation of workmen, a great hardship. Not only was trained skill rendered of no effect, and the industry of wives and children destroyed, but, as Dr. Cunningham has pointed out, it was almost impossible to obtain any substantial rise of wages, since employers would find it more profitable, in most cases, to turn off hands and introduce fresh machinery. The new order was imperfectly understood, and the conditions of labour were too often bad in every way; the long struggle of trades unions and social reformers to better them had scarcely begun; the men were uneducated and frequently brutalized by long hours and unhealthy surroundings; and, worst of all, the youth of the nation was being sapped by the outrageous abuse of child labour. Such were the natural consequences of a too rapid change, affecting the whole order of society, of a social system which had not had time to adjust itself to new conditions. The country had, in fact, been under such urgent necessity of producing, that the problem of how the wealth was to be distributed was lost sight of. This was partly the result of the war. We had been struggling for life, not only with our arms, but with our tools. Our capacity for producing wealth had enabled us to bid defiance to Napoleon's efforts to starve or bleed us to death. As long as we were able to keep our looms humming and our granaries stored, we were at least safe against actual ruin. It might plausibly be argued that any check upon the volume of our output would have turned the scale against us, and that therefore it was impossible to interfere with the activities of capitalist and landowner. It was only natural that every facility should be given to high farming by the encouragement of enclosure, and to industry by the provision of cheap labour; above all, that order should be preserved by Draconic repression of disturbance, and even

of combination amongst labourers. But it was serious enough that while we were delivering Europe, our own social system was taking a turn for the worse, and we were accumulating difficulties, with which we are, even at this day, still contending.

With this state of things the Tory Government was not altogether fitted to cope. William Pitt had been willing to meet the new conditions with new measures, but the governing class had been thoroughly alarmed by the Revolution, and had vague forebodings of the fate of Louis XVI and his nobles, should they ever be so rash as to introduce the thin end of the democratic wedge. They had come to worship the British Constitution with an ardour approaching to fanaticism, and were apt to forget that one of the chief advantages of this Constitution was its flexibility. Canning, indeed, had no part in merely obstructive conservatism, but the rank and file of the party were more inclined to agree with the views of Sidmouth, and of Eldon, who worshipped the law as an uneducated field preacher worships his Bible. The domestic policy of these men was to do nothing until the misery became intolerable, and then to adopt strong measures. The problem was further complicated by the necessities of the war, for when we were straining every nerve against the tyrant of Europe, it might reasonably be argued that it was not the time to introduce domestic changes on a large scale, and this argument was more or less appreciated in the country, while the war lasted. But when, after the peace, the car of State continued to lumber along the old ruts, and when Castlereagh, with his usual lack of sympathy, began to talk about "ignorant impatience of taxation," popular indignation was no longer to be restrained.

The Whig Party, on the other hand, certainly displayed a certain amount of verbal enthusiasm for reforms, but this was mainly due to the natural desire of an Opposition

to have any stick wherewith to beat the Government out of office. Still, while the Tories had identified themselves with the liberties of England and of Europe as against France, the ideas of domestic freedom, which had been so conspicuous a feature of the later eighteenth century, had taken refuge for a while among their benches. They were a party of opportunists, of trimmers, and though they professed some vain desire to forward social amelioration, they were averse to heroic measures. They were the representatives, not of the people, but of the great Whig houses, in alliance with the upper middle class; and they had the dislike of war and militarism that is nearly always the characteristic of a bourgeoisie. When at last they did get into office, they soon showed that they had even less sympathy with the poor than their opponents, and were naturally ready to embrace and act upon the hardest fallacies of the new Political Economy. The most brutal of squires was a kinder master than Mr. Gradgrind.

The first phase of thought after the war is one of passionate reaction against the Tory ideals that had governed its course. The last phase, that of Wellington and Castlereagh, of the Luddite riots and the Continental system, was less calculated to arouse intense emotion than the time of Nelson and the Boulogne flotilla, when our homes and women-folk were in danger, and even the great heart of Pitt broke beneath the strain. And thus the stream of thought and poesy, swollen and overflowing from the impetus of the war, finds its way into other channels; the cult of liberty again becomes individual, and rises to a fever-heat of reaction against the governing classes, who seemed responsible for, or at least callous to, so much misery. Towards the end of the war the discontent had gained considerable importance, though it was kept under by the national determination to fight to a finish; but at the peace it burst forth in full fury.

Incoherent and dangerous its expression certainly was;

the blind, pitiful resentment of men who feel that they have a real grievance and know not how to express it; or the windy appeals of vain demagogues, like Orator Hunt and the Watsons, inflaming the passions of poor fellows scarcely more ignorant than themselves. The Spa Fields Riot and the march of the Blanketeers must have seemed contemptible enough to the unsympathetic eyes of a Sidmouth or an Eldon, and such attempts as that of Thistlewood, or such moral codes as those of Shelley and Byron, were enough to damn the whole democratic cause, in the eyes of old Anti-Jacobins and new Quarterly Reviewers. Principles and practices so subversive of order and decency called for brutal repression; the Lord Chief Justice, who turned advocate upon the bench against an undefended bookseller, and the "deaf and viperous murderer" of Adonais were pursuing a common policy. Even Canning supported the Six Acts.

One of many proofs of the bitterness of popular resentment is an extract from one of Hone's pamphlets, and appears beneath a picture of starving workmen, with their wives and children, being cut down by yeomanry:

> "These are the People, all tattered and torn,
> Who curse the day wherein they were born,
> On account of Taxation too great to be borne,
> Who pray for relief from night to morn,
> Who in vain petition in every form,
> Who peaceably meeting to ask for reform
> Were sabred by Yeomanry Cavalry. . . ."

The manifesto of the Spa Fields conspirators, four years earlier, ran:

> "Four millions in distress ! ! !
> Four millions embarrassed ! ! !
> One million and a half fear distress ! ! !
> Half a million live in splendid luxury ! ! !
> Our brothers in Ireland are in a worse state,
> The climax of misery is complete—it can go no further.
> Death would now be a relief to millions."

These conditions afforded peculiar scope for the activities of the demagogues, the fathers of our cheap Press. The people were grossly uneducated, and the Tory Government, owing to its connection with the Church, was particularly backward in introducing any reform that might have weakened ecclesiastical influence. The "Quarterly Review" of January, 1817, has a very interesting and temperate article on the growth of demagogues, and connects the rise of the political adventurer with the break-up of the old order of society, and the consequent discontent and competition for employment. His trade was indeed precarious, for the law of libel was very strict, and judges like Ellenborough were ready enough to bully prisoner and jury in the interests of Government. Happy was the assailant of the powers that be who did not, at some time or other, find his way to gaol.

The most prominent of all these men was Cobbett, upon whom after the Revolution fell the mantle of Wilkes. But Wilkes had been a man of wealth and culture, steeped in all the vices, and endowed with all the charms of the eighteenth-century dilettante; Cobbett was not only for the people, but of them, rude and violent, with the stern moral sense of a Puritan, and the keen sympathy with nature of a Romantic. Cobbett, too, was in his way as much a philosopher as Wilkes had been an opportunist. Above all, he was, through all his changes of party, a devoted lover of his country. He had, when a young man in the States, taken up a violently loyal attitude, and put a portrait of George III in his window, in defiance of the mob. When he came to England, it was only after the threat of invasion was past that he definitely came over to the Radical camp. He did not, however, wish, like some men of much less advanced opinions, for the failure of our arms, and when he was imprisoned it was because he violently denounced the flogging of English militiamen

by Germans. In the heyday of his Radicalism he reproached the King for abandoning his title of King of France.

But the sufferings of the class from which he had sprung had touched Cobbett's heart. He had been wont to boast of the happiness of the English peasants and workmen, and when experience showed him that they were often worse off than the slaves of other lands, he at once leapt to the conclusion that this must be due to the tyranny and greed of the upper class. There seemed to him to be a huge and tacit conspiracy of landowners, manufacturers, priests, lawyers and idlers, which he called "The Thing," and which exploited the woes of the country for its own selfish purposes.

To this "Thing" Cobbett therefore directed all his energies, and it was against it that he thundered in the rude philippics of his "Political Register." He had the gift, like the tinker Bunyan, of writing homely and lucid English, easily understood by the people, and the very coarseness of his mental equipment, his inability to understand subtle distinctions of fine shades of thought, told in his favour. He had one quality that more than any other endeared him to the average Englishman, he was a hard-hitting and manly fighter. Unfortunately, coarseness of thought was sometimes combined with a certain moral obtuseness, he was capable on occasion of shuffling and equivocation, and he was guilty of worse than Byronic brutality in his gloating triumph over the death of Castlereagh, and in his gross attacks upon those from whom he happened to differ. Cobbett had as little in him of Aristides, as he had of Thersites. He was a man of war from his youth up, and he had little time for dispassionate reflection.

The influence that he came to exercise was enormous; his "Register" was read all over the kingdom, and his popularity among the poor was only equalled by the hatred

he excited among the governing class. He hated the Whigs and Whig nostrums as much as he hated the Tories. The individualism of the middle class was as distasteful to him, as the tyranny of the upper class. Education seemed to him but a quack remedy, the biggest blackguards in his regiment had often been the best educated. The growth of the great manufacturing towns he viewed with unqualified dislike, he nicknamed them "wens," diseased growths upon the social system. The emigration from the country to the towns he saw and felt to be an evil; he attributed it to the selfishness of the landowners, a class of "reptiles," and to the crushing incidence of taxation. At the same time he was no bigoted opponent of progress, and he defended the introduction of machines. His remedies were crude, the repudiation of the debt, and universal suffrage, which was to include even paupers, and to exclude only madmen, criminals, women and children.

He was always harking back to an ideal past, and he expounded his views on this subject in a treatise on the Reformation, a period which had afforded as keen a subject for modern controversy as any contemporary quarrel of parties and sects. Before the great enclosures, and the plunder of the Church, the poor had been happy and well looked after; since then everything had been going to the dogs. Cobbett was never tired of impressing upon the poor the importance of their own personality. That is the gist of the first twopenny number of the "Register," it is this thread that runs unbroken through all the changes of his career. Men are by nature equal; the pauper is just as important and respectable a member of the State as the Duke. Cobbett accepts the theory of a social compact, and deduces therefrom certain natural and inalienable rights that reside in every man, those of liberty, life and property, and, above all, the right to a vote.

He is no Socialist; he believes that it is right and natural that some people should be very poor, and his reason for desiring universal suffrage is in order that people shall not be able to put their hands into each other's pockets, as they do under a limited franchise. He is an enemy to violence, and he despises the "impatient patriots" who think that the baleful tree of corruption is going to fall at the first blow. These men are selfish, and want the good things of earth for themselves; we must be content to sacrifice our own interests to those of our country, and to sow even where we may not reap. And yet, at the end of his chapter on the duties of citizens, he gives the following counsel, as the conclusion of the whole matter: "Love of one's native soil is a feeling which nature has implanted in human breasts, and that has always been peculiarly strong in the breasts of Englishmen. God has given us a country of which to be proud, and that freedom, greatness and renown, which were handed down to us by our wise and brave forefathers, bid us perish to the last man, rather than suffer the land of their graves to become a land of slavery, impotence and dishonour."

Just as in Wordsworth we have watched patriotism being driven, as it were, outward, from the civic to the national sphere, so in Cobbett we see it driven inwards, and he is more concerned, at the end of his life, to see Englishmen delivered from English than from foreign tyrants. His national patriotism is never very long dormant, however, and to his contempt for men of other countries, he added the true Johnsonian prejudice against Scotsmen, being perhaps the last prominent man who indulged this feeling, for Lamb's banter is surely too playful to be offensive.

Wilder theories than those of Cobbett were abroad. Socialism, in its crudest form, was eagerly embraced by certain of the more desperate spirits. Spencean Societies

were formed, taking their name and principles from a poor pedant who had flourished during Revolutionary times, and who had crammed his head with theories of human rights, from which he deduced the summary abolition of property in land, as the cure of all evil. With capital he in no way concerned himself. Spence was, however, a very scientific Socialist; he had found every art and science to be a perfect whole, with the exception of language and politics. These he himself reduced to order. He proposed to bring about Utopia by the distribution of little pamphlets of his own composition; a few parishes had only to turn out the landlords, and all the rest would follow their example. It would be, he modestly explains, like the Almighty saying, "Let there be light," and it was so. And a vigorous chorus, to the tune of "Sally in our Alley," serves as the reformers' pæan.

The "Spencean philanthropists" issued a manifesto of their principles, in which they maintained that the land was the people's farm, and its owners unjust stewards. Parochial partnerships in land were required for the preservation of the Rights of Mankind. This somewhat crude anticipation of Henry George went out of fashion with returning prosperity, and the red flag of Socialism passed into the more capable hands of Owen.

While neither Cobbett nor Spence gained more than insular notoriety, a third and more celebrated reformer, now an old man, was gradually achieving a European reputation, and laying the foundations of a school of English thought. Jeremy Bentham had written some of his best work before the French Revolution, but after the war he was still writing as vigorously as ever, and the utilitarian and radical doctrine was coming to be a factor of importance in English thought and politics. The prose philosophy, which had taken refuge among the *philosophes* and *idéologues*, was now returning

to the land of Locke and Walpole, and while France was inaugurating an epoch of colour and romance, the spirit of materialism was once more gaining the ascendant in England.

That Bentham was a man of extraordinary talent, no just man can deny. It was in the field of jurisprudence that his uncompromising iconoclasm showed to the best advantage. Under the régime of Eldon the state of English law was scandalous. Cruelty, obscurity, expense and delay made it the curse of its victims, and the fetish of its administrators. The vigorous attacks and sweeping proposals of Bentham were a healthy corrective to the interested idol-worship of the lawyers and the scruples of the old Chancellor, who was notoriously unable to make up his mind about the cases of his own court, and who was equally loth to get rid of arrears of business and abuses of legislation. Eldon, to whom everything was sacred, was thus confronted by a reformer to whom nothing was sacred, and it was largely owing to Bentham's influence that the car of justice began to go forward at all. Even here his usefulness was due to the badness of the system he was attacking, for he was the disciple of the rigid and lifeless doctrine afterwards developed by Austin, at a time when Savigny, on the Continent, was showing how the laws are the living growth of ages, and how they must of necessity vary with different times and countries.

As a philosophy, the system of Bentham is shallow in its conception, and ignoble in its results. He took up the doctrine of Helvetius, and pushed it to its logical conclusion for half a century, with a fanatical ardour that burnt frore, and made cold perform the place of heat. Bentham's life is one of countless refutations of the strange belief that cold and unimaginative men are more practical than the poets and enthusiasts they affect to despise. How much more was the mystic Burke in touch with

facts than the "hard-headed" Bentham; Burke, who wept as he wrote, and could yet master the plan of a campaign, or predict the course of a revolution; Bentham, who was wont to waste infinite labour and ingenuity on the details of schemes that could have no application to real life, was ready to devise perfect and similar constitutions for all states from China to Peru, and some of whose suggestions are so naively absurd as to stagger even an average intelligence!

He shared with Spence the idea that it was possible to reduce human affairs to an exact science, and, like Helvetius, he simplified the problem, by assuming that man, irrespective of place, race, or time, could be treated as a fairly constant unit. The sole influences that moulded his character and actions were the desire for pleasure, and the fear of pain. Happiness was the end of life, and half the means to that end; all pleasures and pains could be calculated, like different items in the same account. The love of pushpin could be pitted against the love of poetry, the fear of God against the fear of indigestion.

To any one gifted with a spark of imagination, or even a sense of humour, the bare statement of such a case would be sufficient reason for laughing Bentham out of court. But the hard-headed philosopher is determined to drain the cup of absurdity to its last dregs. He elaborates what the jargon of our own day would call a psychology, a list of all the pleasures and pains to which man is liable, drawn up and tabulated in neat parallel columns. These consist of a number of abstract motives, whose spheres frequently overlap, and whose very existence is often a refutation of the utilitarian theory. Interests of the purse, of the heart, of the gall-bladder, of the altar, of the bottle, all jostle one another on terms of perfect equality. It would be easy enough for a man of moderate ability, and a taste for conundrums, to pass the whole of his leisure in drawing up alternatives to this scheme,

all equally plausible, ringing infinite changes on headings and sub-headings, and multiplying distinctions even more subtle than those between sycophantism and "toad-eating," faint-heartedness and chicken-heartedness, vainness and vanity. On the subject of patriotism, Bentham is at his best. The springs of action are arranged, under their various "interests," in three columns, eulogistic, dyslogistic and neutral. In the first shine, as separate virtues, patriotism and the love of country; in the second lurks the vice of nationality; in the third hover national attachment and national zeal. Thus, in a utilitarian heaven, if the imagination can rise to such a conception, we shall find the souls of those Englishmen who have loved their country; in hell, muttering anarchical fallacies amid conditions that yield a balance of unhappiness, languish those who have fixed their affections upon the English nation; in purgatory, which we may imagine to be managed upon the lines of the master's projected model penitentiary, those who have forsaken alike the broad path of love for their nation, and the narrow path of love for their country, for the featureless plains of national zeal, are moulded for a higher sphere by a judicious distribution of rewards and punishments. He, therefore, that would be saved must model his conduct upon these and similar precepts; for upon such pillars reposes the shrewdest, clearest and most practical philosophy that the world has ever known!

To attempt to build up a philosophy upon the shifting sands of happiness argues not only a coldness of heart, but narrowness of understanding. Pleasure and pain are not the supreme conflicting powers, the Ormuz and Ahriman of our universe; they are twin guides of the blind, whose duty it is to warn us of the approach of danger, and to apprise us of the achievement of some end. They are but poor peasant guides, for despite their shrewdness and constancy, their knowledge is

limited; they can tell us when we wander from the path, but amid a thousand paths, they know not how to choose aright. Those who have smitten at Pain for his blunt warnings, or besought the soft hand of Pleasure, have ever been disappointed; for he is quick to avoid the strokes of the blind; and she is but a peasant, and her simple talk soon wearies—besides, the girl cares more for the drunken clods, and even for the idiot, of her native village, than for all the rich and learned strangers in the world. And some, who have sought only for her love, have sat down by the waters of Marah, and denounced her to the world as a false and shallow coquette. But the heroes and true men have never greatly troubled themselves about the love or rudeness of their guides, they have courteously accepted their services, and diligently sought for their advice, but their goal is far away, and they have little time for quarrelling or dalliance upon the road.

To attempt to order life upon any calculus of happiness, such as Bentham would formulate, is to confuse the means with the end. For whatever the end of life may be, it can never be happiness, since happiness signifies a purely transitory relation between a creature and his surroundings. A pig is happy on the arrival of his wash, a saint upon the achievement of the beatific vision. The pig will presently stretch himself, gorged, in the dirtiest part of the sty, and go to sleep; the saint's raptures will merge into the listlessness of Nirvana, or sink, by reaction, into an agony of doubt and melancholy. In either case, happiness is merely the consciousness that some end is being attained, and ceases with the attainment of that end. It is thus a machine that registers the speed at which we are travelling, but tells us nothing about our destination, and those who worship it are like motorists, who care not whither they go, provided they are exceeding the speed limit. It would be just as sensible if a man

were to aim at quantity, quite regardless as to whether he accumulated a huge number of guineas, or wives, or sentences of imprisonment, or good deeds, or devils. Quantitarianism, to coin an equally hideous and technical expression, is intellectually and morally on a par with utilitarianism.

John Stuart Mill demolished the theory once and for all, by the admission that it is better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a pig satisfied. Judged by Bentham's calculus, Socrates is plainly the loser, since a plus quantity is always greater than a minus. Mill, therefore, must have in his mind, like any man of feeling or character, some standard other than happiness, and in so far as he holds to this, he eschews utilitarianism.

Perhaps the most bewildering feature of this intellectual chaos of Benthamism is the attempt to bring the calculus into harmony with respectable humanitarian ideas, by the adoption of the formula, "the greatest happiness of the greatest number." Even Bentham does not attempt to go very minutely into the question as to how great a proportion the bliss of Bill Sikes bears to that of Lord Eldon, or the raptures of Shelley to those of a drunken tinker, and how many shares ought to be assigned to each, in this business of maximizing the dividend of happiness. And not only does the formula elude all efforts to assign any sense to it, but even if we assume that it means something vaguely benevolent, there is no particular reason why any one should bother himself about attaining it. Mankind are, according to Bentham, under the absolute dominion of pleasure and pain, and pleasures and pains are different only in quantity, and have been neatly pigeon-holed under their different headings. Now there is no reason for giving the pleasures of benevolence any marked preference over those of the bottle or the purse. In the breasts of the majority of mankind, benevolence would be fortunate indeed to obtain

the second place; in the breasts of some it is non-existent. So the utilitarian is driven back upon the argument, that if men were properly instructed, they would see that their own interests were the interests of society. But on that point, too, the calculations of selfish men may well differ; especially in view of the fact that countless self-seekers have managed to feather their own nests at the expense of their country, and to grow fat upon the proceeds of their villainy. Long before the age of Bentham it was known that

> "There is one event to the righteous,
> And to the wicked,
> To the good and to the clean,
> And to the unclean;
> To him that sacrificeth,
> And to him that sacrificeth not;
> As is the good, so is the sinner."

A Louis Quinze murmurs "Après moi le deluge," as he sinks into the arms of Dubarry, and the slanderer who winged "the shaft that flies in darkness" lives to a respected and prosperous old age; but the crowd in the abbey cheer as Castlereagh descends into the vault, and Keats, in the agony of his soul, wants his name to be writ in water; nay, the very Son of God is forced at last to that terrible cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

If the utilitarian is unable to find an unselfish reason for doing right, it is still more hopeless for him to look for a selfish one. Enlightened calculation may go to make a finished scoundrel, but it will hardly make a good or noble man. The utilitarian doctrine is atheism in its most insidious form, an atheism that shrinks from formulating its own conclusions, and seeks to clothe its nakedness with the garments of verbiage and confused thought. It cuts at the root of all that makes men or nations great. Openly glorying in its lack of imagination it seeks to belittle everything that it cannot understand,

and, like Vivien, leaves not Lancelot brave nor Galahad pure.

Thus we need not be surprised to find Bentham and his followers railing upon everything that makes for continuity in states, that links together the present with the past, and connects both with the future. Reverence for the wisdom or experience of our ancestors is an anarchical fallacy, and Bentham's admirer, Sydney Smith, laughs at anything of the kind as only fit for the minds of noodles. The State is a chance collection of human units, pain and pleasure shuttlecocks, subject to certain easily ascertained rules of the game of constitution-mongering. The existing British Constitution is absurd, illogical, and only fit to be smashed to pieces and re-moulded nearer to the mind's calculations.

These calculations are a good deal simplified by assuming, either openly or tacitly, the innate and absolute selfishness of humanity. A monarchy must needs be the worst of all governments, because the king, being a man, will make as much profit as he can out of his business, at the expense of everybody else. As any king will be a tyrant, by a similar train of reasoning, any aristocracy will be a corporation of tyrants. Similarly, universal suffrage will ensure the government for all by all; the machinations of the caucus-monger, the tyranny of a majority, and the possibility of universal corruption leading to universal ruin, being conveniently slurred over for purposes of simplification.

Of course, we find in the tables instances of pleasures, like benevolence and patriotism, that are not self-regarding, but when we begin to embark upon calculating the actions of men in the mass, we soon realize that such pleasures are for ornament, and not for use. Bentham is not even ashamed to maintain that duty must and will be subservient to interest. Utilitarianism inaugurates the era of that unlovely fiction, the economic man, surely

the most cynical of slanders ever perpetrated against the poor human race. Hard-headed and hard-hearted, with a shrewd eye for his own gains, he has no bias of love, or beauty, or self-sacrifice, to turn him from the supreme aim of life, that of filling his pockets and his belly. And yet, by some strange superstition that haunts the minds of Bentham and his disciples, the jarring interests of all these inhuman scoundrels are, somehow, to work together for the common good, and the best thing the State can do is to stand aside and let them fight it out as best they may. In other words, the political creed of the early utilitarians is individualistic. "To obtain the greatest portion of happiness for himself must, and will be the end of every rational being."

Bentham's views upon international policy are what we might expect from such a philosopher. Beyond the cryptic references to patriotism in the tables, it would be hard to gather from his works that either he, or any one else, was capable of a spark of affection for the land of his birth. The counsel he gives his countrymen in 1789 is something more than foolish—it is insane. He is engaged upon formulating a scheme of universal and perpetual peace, on the very eve of the greatest of European wars, and in the course of his argument he formulates a number of propositions, of whose truth, he says, reflection has convinced him. These include the discovery that we need no foreign dependencies whatever, and no navy, except a few ships to deal with pirates. We ought not to make any alliances; though only in the previous essay, Bentham has recommended defensive confederations as a remedy against foreign schemes of conquest. Commercial treaties, secrecy in diplomacy, and "any regulations whatever of distant preparation for the augmentation or maintenance" of the navy, are likewise condemned. Bentham's argument is, that if we had no colonies, France would have no object in attacking

us—an argument that might not have appealed strongly to the Jacobin liberators, or to Napoleon. One shudders to think of what might have happened, if Pitt and his colleagues had stripped their country of defence and dominion in the face of the enemy!

It is after the war that utilitarian doctrines begin to get really powerful. David Ricardo, the Jew banker, and James Mill carried the master's philosophy into the domain of economics and politics. Of the two, Ricardo was the more influential, for Mill's theories were more sweeping and muddle-headed than those of Bentham himself. Mill's encyclopædia article on Government, which did not appear till 1823, was a sort of *reductio ad absurdum* of Benthamism, and need not detain us long, since it shares, with Robert Montgomery's poems, the distinction of having been held up to immortal contempt, by the too merciful hand of Macaulay. Too merciful, because Macaulay, though he could and did expose with ruthless precision the puerilities of Mill's argument and the absurdity of its conclusions, was himself too much tainted with materialism to criticize, as it deserved, the odious assumption that government is an affair of selfish scoundrels, trying to come to a business agreement for the harmonizing of their various interests. The habits of the economic men, in Mill's universe, are such as might well bring a blush to the cheek of a Yahoo. They will all try to get as much power as possible, for the purpose of procuring pleasure, and there is no form of tyranny or cruelty that they will shrink from if unchecked in its pursuit. Mill talks about kings and nobles like a Jacobin street orator, and actually wishes to rule out the facts of history, because these facts have the incredible insolence to contradict his theories. By such stages, Mill and his economic men arrive at universal suffrage. The article was dull, but it served as a sort of utilitarian manifesto, and Bentham himself defended it.

Ricardo was more level-headed than either Bentham or Mill. He was a thorough utilitarian, but he was content to assume the doctrine as the basis of his calculations, and to confine himself to business matters. He had retired after making a good fortune on the Stock Exchange, and turned his undoubted abilities to building up a science of economics, which was to hold the field almost unchallenged till 1848, when John Stuart Mill took his place upon the dismal throne, and maintained the system, with certain modifications, for twenty years more. On questions of finance, Ricardo's technical knowledge stood him and the nation in good stead, but when he strayed into wider fields, his outlook was limited and unimaginative. He assumes that he is dealing with a country composed entirely of economic men, without a history, and in no way distinguishable from other nations. The object of this country is to pile up as much wealth as possible, under certain definite and fixed rules. The much-abused mercantile school had at least done their best to consider economic conditions, as they affected national defence and greatness, but no such unbusinesslike considerations trouble Ricardo. All the qualifications that Adam Smith had introduced into his system are simply ignored by him, he is like the cityless man of Aristotle. "What are we to think," says Coleridge, "of the soundness of this modern system of Political Economy the direct tendency of every rule of which is to denationalize, and to make the love of our country a foolish superstition?"

Ricardo falls into the same error as Bentham, by taking no account of the fact that nations are living growths, and not chance collections of economic units. He talks of land and capital and labour, as if these words meant the same thing for all nations at all times. And just as a Continental jurist had pointed out a more excellent way than Bentham, so the German List, who was Ricardo's

contemporary, though his masterpiece did not appear till the early 'forties, showed how it was possible to substitute for the barren abstractions of the English " classical " school a method that did at least bear some relation to the facts of life.

For List bases his system upon the very thing that Ricardo ignores, the nation. Though an economist, he is not ashamed to be a patriot, and concludes his preface with a hope that the book may benefit his German Fatherland. He was, for instance, in favour of perpetual peace and universal free trade as ultimate ideals, but he saw that neither was possible as an aim of practical politics, and that a free-trade policy for the Continental nations was playing into the hands of England. By thus keeping in touch with national development, he avoided the fundamental error of Ricardo, that of treating transitory conditions as if they were eternal laws. The mistake, for instance, of talking of wages as if they were limited by capital, because something very similar was actually the case during the Industrial Revolution.

The Ricardian system is a sweeping extension of certain doctrines of Adam Smith, shorn of all their qualifications, and with the addition of the Benthamite philosophy. What Ricardo was to Adam Smith, Ricardo's followers were to Ricardo. For the Jew banker could never quite lose touch with reality, like James Mill and Bentham ; he was often careful to qualify the harshness of abstract theories that his followers accepted absolutely. But though it would be unfair to saddle him with the responsibility for all the crudities of the classical economists, it is equally absurd to treat his slipshod and slovenly style as evidence of profundity, as do certain modern economists, who interpret his writings as Puritan divines comment upon the Song of Solomon. Certain it is that his crudities and not his qualifications went to the making

of the Ricardian or classical economy, which it was heresy to dispute, and which was a very capitalist's Bible in the second quarter of the nineteenth century.

Adam Smith had erred in being always practical, and frequently humane and patriotic. The great achievement of the classical school was to purge economics from such amiable weaknesses, and by the adoption of a deductive method to abolish the tyranny of fact that so seriously impeded the efforts of those seekers after truth, whose object it was to reduce human affairs to an exact science. The problem was simple: given a number of calculating rascals called men, engaged in piling up material wealth, in a state of unbroken and unbreakable peace, to find out the quickest way of increasing the pile, and how, incidentally, the proceeds will be divided between the three great fixed classes of God's people, landlords, capitalists and labourers. The solution seems to be, that the few scoundrels who represent the State shall prevent all the other scoundrels from cutting one another's throats, and from the grosser forms of foul play, and keep the ring as clear as possible. As a result of this struggle, the labourer gets just enough to enable him to subsist and breed (Ricardo himself admits that the standard of subsistence may rise), and the landlord, whose interests are opposed to all classes alike, pockets a continuously increasing toll for the natural and indestructible properties of the soil, whatever that may mean.

The Malthusian theory of population rounded off the system. Like all the other doctrines of the classical economists, it had a certain element of truth, and of this Adam Smith was aware long before Malthus. But the passion for logical consistency led its followers to talk as if a declining birth-rate were a panacea for social ills. It cast a blight over all efforts for the betterment of the people. The humanity and practical good sense of Smith's chapter on wages is in sharp contrast with the dry ab-

stractions of Ricardo on the same subject, and Ricardo, who does at least admit some faint glimmering of hope, is tenderness itself, compared with certain of his disciples, who opposed Factory Acts, and amongst whom even John Bright must be included.

The economists would have made a clean sweep of all commercial or industrial regulations which were inspired by any other motive than greed. The Navigation Act, which Smith himself had admitted to be the wisest of our commercial regulations, was condemned under economic law, by a court-martial of militant materialists; the corn duties, whose object, at least in part, was to strengthen the agricultural interest, and to make England self-supporting, were condemned on a balance of profit and loss, in which cheap wages, rather than cheap food, formed the main argument for abolition; colonies were treated with no more sentiment than bales of goods. These men reversed the teaching of Burke, and the State was, in their eyes, on a par with an association for the production of cloth or calico.

The rise and supremacy of the classical school is typical of the evil that must ensue upon a heartless and shallow philosophy. These economists were nearly all men of ability and honour, but their outlook on life was blurred by the smoked glass of utilitarianism. Their teaching fortified the worst instincts of the capitalist class. Its exponents lent their authority to absentee landlordism in Ireland, to the sweating of little children at home, to slow torture or sudden death amid horrible conditions in factories and mines, to scientific starvation in workhouses. They set their faces against all that made for beauty or tenderness in life, their god was Mammon, and their Motherland the City of Dreadful Night. They were not wicked, but they lacked sympathy, and their scientific conscience was ever at hand, to choke such instincts of humanity as might find scope in their

private relations. Such men were inevitably cosmopolitan; for how can any one love by calculation, or die for a syllogism? and why should one economic man sacrifice his interests for those of a few million knaves no better than himself?

## CHAPTER VIII

### REACTION AND DESPAIR

WHILE "cold hearts and muddy understandings" were building up their bourgeois philosophy of greed and guineas, there were other, and finer, spirits, to whom the England of Eldon and Castlereagh was very hell. The Romantic movement continued in full swing, but a new direction had been given to the passions of its exponents. Shelley and Byron had indeed begun to write during the Peninsular War, but they had not felt the wave that swept over the country when the Grand Army lay encamped within sight of our shores, nor known the imminent peril of the Nore mutiny, nor the crowning mercy of Trafalgar. The fear of invasion was past, and the Peninsular War, glorious though it was to our arms, was being waged far away, and, as it might well seem, with scant prospect of success. The Convention of Cintra; the apparent fiasco of Corunna; the retreats after Talavera, Busaco, Salamanca; the carnage of Albuera, of Ciudad Rodrigo, of Badajoz; the grim, undemonstrative leader, who was depicted as the creature of the Tory Government—these might and did arouse enthusiasm in the breasts of men like Wordsworth and Canning, who had followed the struggle from the beginning, and appreciated their significance; the later poets only saw misery and starvation around them, and above them a cabal of hard, and often stupid men, who seemed determined to drag the country

through every depth of misery, for the sake of a hopeless war in a distant land.

A passionate hatred of war is a feature in the writings of all these men. This they share with the Benthamites, for another reason. War annoyed the utilitarians, because they saw in it a needless sacrifice of utility without any returns, and they could not imagine how men could have their passions aroused to such a pitch as to risk their skins. The Romantics, on the other hand, could not bear the thought of brave men being hurled out of life, or racked with agony by the thousand; brothers rending each other like brute beasts, in a cause they did not even understand. For towards the end of the war, we find a revival of the doctrine of Swift and Voltaire, that war is the affair of the rulers, and not of the people. Wordsworth knew better, and actually hailed carnage as God's daughter, for his stern Puritan spirit, which had not shrunk from the sacrifice of a king, was even as Wellington's, and disdained to reckon up the cost of duty. But then Wordsworth saw the struggle as a whole, and looked beyond the horror and carnage to the salvation of Europe.

But to the younger Romantics all this was vanity. It seemed as if the whole struggle had been undertaken, to rivet the chains of despots more firmly upon the necks of their people. Napoleon was at least a more splendid figure than that Most Christian guzzler, Louis XVIII; than the cruel coward whom we had restored to the throne of Spain; than the crowned bigot of Sicily; than the numskull Emperor of Austria, and the fox who juggled with the nations in his name. A period of deep gloom was beginning for Europe. The patriots, who had borne the brunt of the struggle, were neglected and persecuted; the banner of liberty, under which they had fought, was trampled into the mire by their ungrateful masters. For the kings were less inclined to coquette with demo-

cracy than they had been before the Revolution, and a new philosophy had arisen that upheld the extreme doctrines of divine right, and would have delighted James I and Filmer. Men of the school of Chateaubriand and de Maistre were so indignant at the sophisms of the rationalists, and the horrors of Jacobinism and Cæsarism, that they rushed to the wildest extreme of reaction, and de Maistre actually devotes one of his St. Petersburg soirées to the glorification of the executioner. These men had but a faint conception of patriotism. Their views had been formed among the disloyal Royalists, who preferred the triumph of the Bourbons to the triumph of France, and who had borne arms against their country. The Bourbon rule was doomed, since its second restoration by foreign bayonets, and the piercing of Marshal Ney by French bullets. Many of the German Romantics, like Gentz, the confidant of Metternich, ranged themselves on the same side as the French reactionaries, and plunged into a cult of the past and the Church, that was often less sincere than sentimental.

The Metternich system operated in Germany, like the English censorship of the drama, on a vast scale. Its object was to penalize any attempt to deal with the problems of life, in a way that could be interpreted as dangerous or disagreeable to authority. Thus the only safe course, for those who wished to deal with problems in political philosophy, was to tread in the footsteps of Hegel, whose doctrine of the rational being the real, amounted to saying that whatever is, is coming right; and that all must be for the best in the best of all possible worlds, and especially the Prussian Government.

Hegel had shown with what ease a principle, if pushed far enough, passes into its opposite, and there is a natural transition from his own optimism to the pessimism of his enemy, Schopenhauer. The denier of the will to live is the true philosopher of the reaction, and if the decline

and fall of Western civilization has to be recorded, the name of Schopenhauer will assuredly play an important part therein. For he embodies the spirit of the East, of Omar Khayyám and the Buddha, that treats life and the universe as a vast blunder, a bad dream, and aims, not at improving them, but at getting away from them altogether. History is merely the record of the "long, heavy, confused dream of humanity," and it offers no hope of betterment. The ideal of happiness, that of the Benthamites, is "a hollow, deceptive, decaying and sad thing," and the only Utopia of which man can conceive is a fat, well-governed community. That is mentioned only to be dismissed with contempt. Neither invention nor prayers can make things any better, these also are vanity. Art itself is but a fleeting respite from the torture of existence, and the only way of salvation is to deny the will to live.

The consequences of such a system are too obvious. The tyranny of Metternich is no worse than any other government, in fact, it is, if anything, better, for it tends to suppress the manifestations of the will to live, and to produce the calm, devoutly to be wished, of stagnation and the grave. The patriots, the heroes, the liberators, were but poor fools chasing shadows, like Stevenson's youth, who killed his father and his mother, in order to shift a gyve from the right leg to the left. There is here none of the savage indignation of Swift; where there is no hope there can be no despair, and where there never could have been hope, there is scarcely room for bitterness. When the high gods are cruel, it behoves men to be resigned, for there is no fighting against necessity.

The poison cloud of pessimism was not long in spreading itself over Europe, and pervaded, to a greater or less extent, every form of art. De Musset in France, Leopardi in Italy, Schopenhauer in Germany, all advanced it in their different ways, and music, always the latest of the

arts to reflect the spirit of the age, at last caught up the strain, in the heartbreaking wistfulness of Chopin, and the yearning for the night of Tristan and Isolde.

"La vie est telle
Que Dieu l'a fie,
Et telle quelle
Elle suffie!"

is the cry that is repeated by a thousand voices, from the plaintive undertone of resignation to the crackling laugh of defiance. It was as if the world were growing old, and sick of the dreams of youth and the travail of its prime, as if it desired nothing better than to sink back, without a struggle and without regret, into the nothingness from which it never should have emerged. Vanity of vanities!

One of the chief tendencies of the age was the weakening of faith. The "enlighteners" of the eighteenth century, the materialists of the nineteenth, knew not what they did. To the dull heart of a utilitarian, it mattered little to think that spiritually he was lower than a brute; to the man with the muck rake the crown was a nuisance. But to those who scorned to rake together straws, the conclusions of the rationalists, the denial of God, of freedom, of immortality, came as a death-knell. One beautiful starlit night, the young Heine was standing at an open window with Hegel, and called the stars the abode of the blest. "So," sneered the philosopher, "you want a pourboire for having supported your sick mother." Even the defenders of faith were wavering; it is impossible to read Chateaubriand's apology for Christianity without sometimes feeling that the author is blowing a trumpet very loud, to silence his own doubts. Christianity was, at least, a religion of hope and upward striving; rationalism, with all its talk of progress, could only offer the choice between brutalization with Bentham, and suicide with Schopenhauer.

The apostles of nineteenth-century world-weariness take up an attitude towards art, that is set forth with systematic thoroughness in the pages of Schopenhauer. Hitherto, art had been the expression of what was noblest in a city or nation, it bodied forth triumphantly what a people was trying to say, or went before and pointed out heights unscaled, and heavens undreamed of; it gave a deeper meaning to religion, it kindled a whiter flame of national consciousness, it invested common things and common lives with beauty. But now art was no longer to be the crown of life, but an escape from life's torture-house. The beauty that endureth for a moment was but to lighten the misery that endureth for ever.

This is the note of doom that sounds all through the work of the three leaders of English poetry in the years after Waterloo. In the case of Wordsworth, and even of Coleridge, though sorrow is intense and bitter, there is the sense of some overmastering power, some ultimate harmony of the universe, by virtue of which even sorrow has its dignity and divine sanction. One cannot read the "Ancient Mariner," or the sonnets on National Liberty and Independence, without rising with hope refreshed and courage strengthened, but the intense beauty of Keats or Shelley leaves the heart sad.

> "Now more than ever seems it bliss to die
> To cease upon the midnight with no pain!"

cries Adonais at the moment of supreme inspiration, and the world to him is a place

> "Where e'en to think is to be full of sorrows,
> And leaden-eyed despairs."

Shelley would fain

> "Lie down like a tired child,
> And weep away a life of care,"

and Byron bids us

> "know whatever thou hast been,
> 'Tis something better not to be!"

Shelley was one of those exquisitely sensitive natures that feel the least touch of harshness or unreason as if it were branded with red-hot iron. He walked through the world as a stranger; for in his dreams he had another world, where everything should be free and beautiful and wise, where all fetters should be struck away, and where men and women should eat of the tree of perfect knowledge and not know that they were naked. Shelley derives his intellectual descent from Condorçet through Godwin, but the rationalist Utopia of the Girondin, and the anarchical vapourings of Shelley's egregious father-in-law, became transmuted, by the alchemy of his imagination, into the nurslings of immortality. It was the very wildness of these fantasies that made them so attractive to Shelley, for neither philosopher had seriously troubled himself about reality. But what merely bothered the spinners of theories caused agony to the poet. Shelley's temperament was sensitive to an extraordinary degree. His fine nerves rendered him acutely sensitive to pain and injustice of any kind, enabled him to feel the sorrows of the multitude as his own. Much more than a man born and bred poor was he able to feel the woes of poverty, because he naturally tended to judge of its misery by the feelings of an educated and refined nature, and what the peasant or factory hand had learnt to endure with dull resignation, and what their masters regarded with uncomprehending complacency, was torture unspeakable to the poet's soul. Add to this that Shelley's career coincided with the period of greatest distress, not only in England, but all over Europe.

The cry of the oppressed had never found a voice so eloquent and so piercing. Shelley went to lengths of which Fox, humanitarian though he was, had never dreamed, and of which even the Jacobins had stopped short. Not only the political hierarchy of nobles and kings, though he hated it from his soul, was the object of his

attack; but the whole structure of society, which allowed a few men to enjoy an unlovely luxury, and condemned millions to a fate, compared with which that of pigs and oxen was happy. Voices had sounded before, demanding universal suffrage and a national convention, but it was a new thing to hear arraignments of society so unthinkably scandalous, from the point of view of the average English gentleman, as

> "Men of England, wherefore plough
> For the lords who lay ye low?
> Wherefore weave with toil and care
> The rich robes your tyrants wear?"

Shelley had put a question, which other reformers had hardly dared to whisper, and which perhaps would have sounded nonsense before the Industrial Revolution. But it was the inevitable result of a social system, which leaves the great majority of the people dispossessed, and in a state of dependence upon wages that may involve the bondage, but not the security of slaves. It was articulate in the roar of every loom, and the frown of every poorhouse. The country was not ready for such a prophet; the poor labourer had not learnt to trouble his head with theories about the order of society; but the question which Shelley put has been repeated, with increasing vehemence, through all the years since his death, and is now heard throughout the length and breadth of the country, clamorous for solution. A thousand voices have taken up the cry,

> "Arise, arise, arise!
> There is blood on the earth that denies you bread!"

The government of England Shelley holds to be an unmitigated tyranny, and he denounces it in a sonnet of unmeasured vehemence. Castlereagh and Sidmouth and Eldon are, in his view, but the embodiments of Murder, Hypocrisy and Fraud. The Constitution, which had excited such universal veneration, he contemns as only fit

for swine. He wrote a national anthem, in which Liberty appears as the Queen of England, to raise her from her grave of tyranny. The frightful satire of "Swellfoot" was suggested originally by Burke's phrase, "the swinish multitude." "Alas," says the chorus of swine, "the pigs are an unhappy nation," and the tyrant, the Prince Regent, is made to say, as an excuse for an unspeakable outrage on the sows:

> "Moral restraint, I see, has no effect,
> Nor prostitution, nor our own example,
> Starvation, typhus fever, war nor prison,"

and the chorus of swine expresses perfectly Shelley's own theory regarding the condition of the people:

> "Under your mighty ancestors, we pigs
> Were bless'd as nightingales, on myrtle sprigs,
> Or grasshoppers that live on noonday dew,
> And sung, old annals tell, as sweetly too;
> But now our stics are fallen in, we catch
> The murrain and the mange, the scab and itch;
> Sometimes your royal dogs tear down our thatch,
> And then we seek the shelter of a ditch."

If there is any laughter in this satire, it is as the crackling of thorns under pots, more bitter than tears. Shelley saw the world, as his Prometheus saw it from the Caucasus, under the shadow of a monstrous tyranny, a place of unthinkable woe, and his whole soul cried aloud:

> "I fall upon the thorns of life, I bleed!"

Shelley was a Romantic of the Romantics, and his spirit, which chafed at restraints, was naturally quick to scent oppression, and unable to abide it. But if he had the genius, he had also, in full measure, the weakness of the romance. He was a mass of nerves, instant in his response to the least stimulus, but without the power to remain steadfast and the master of his fate. As we notice so frequently in his poetry, his muse carries him away, and his verse dissolves into wonderful rainbow spray,

like that of waterfalls, or evaporates into crimson and amethyst clouds. He feels the pain of life, but he has no remedy; he is powerless to console, and he would fain lie down and weep his life away. Rather than take up the cross manfully, he seeks refuge in dreams.

Between the world as it is, and the world of his longing, there is a void, that only some shadowy unimaginable Demogorgon, and no effort of man, can bridge over. He has the passion for extinction, for the very luxury of becoming nothing, that is essentially Oriental, and has come to pervade so much of Western thought. In the last twenty stanzas of "Adonais," it is expressed with a sustained music and splendour unsurpassed in any literature, but it is the beauty that flees from the world, and hails death as the tortured patient welcomes sleep. The metre, the surest guide to the meaning of great poetry, tells, even more surely than the words, of the agonized, long-drawn yearning for the night, as of the violins of Tristan, as of Chopin's wind moaning over the graves. To be made one with nature, to be merged in the song of the nightingale and the moan of the thunder, to die into the love, which somehow transcends the misery we feel and see, that is the crown of life, that is Nirvana!

Such is the only remedy that Shelley has to offer mankind, for his Utopia is but a dream. Liberty, absolute and unrestrained, is the object of his worship, but this very liberty is, by his account, a tyranny more grinding than that of the Six Acts. He bids us forsake the domination of royal and priestly masters for an Empire of Necessity that extends, with iron sway, over the minutest thought and deed of which man is capable. He hymns Necessity, in "Queen Mab," and elaborates the theory of predestination in his prose notes. Nor is this a mere form of words, for all his work is pervaded with the notion that man is the slave of his fate. His Hercules is but the shadow of a shade, and his strongest character, Beatrice

Cenci, is a woodcock struggling in a gin, whose teeth do not relax, even with the death of her father. Prometheus sits resigned and waits for a deliverer; Jove is not even allowed to struggle in the hour of doom.

Shelley faces the problem of evil as much with pity as with indignation. In his notes to "Queen Mab," he describes crime as madness, and Prometheus refuses even to disdain his torturer. What a shadowy and bloodless figure does he appear by the side of the chained Titan of Æschylus, who, even in the midst of his defeat and agony, never ceases to thunder back defiance at the conqueror! Bad men are like plague and famine, mysterious and sinister scourges of nature. Count Cenci is a worse character than the Economic Man or the Devil, and this in a play where Shelley is consciously trying to sink the poet in the dramatist. Cenci says of himself:

> "I do not feel as if I were a man,
> But like a fiend appointed to chastise
> The offences of some unremembered world."

Once, indeed, Shelley's wrath burst forth in a splendid flash of indignation, against no impersonal force, but a man, a scoundrel and a coward, the murderer of his friend Keats. But this is a solitary deviation from his rule of regarding his fellows. When he talks of Castlereagh and Eldon, he is not thinking any more of actual human beings than Blake, when he made Hayley and Schofield figure as spiritual forces in his "Jerusalem."

It is therefore not to be wondered at that he anticipates Tolstoy's doctrine of conquering violence by passivity. He thus counsels the oppressed multitude:

> "And if then the tyrants dare,
> Let them ride among you there;
> Slash and stab and maim and hew,
> What they like, that let them do."

In "Peter Bell the Third," Shelley says that the poor are damned indeed, when they take Cobbett's snuff, revenge.

In the "Revolt of Islam," a king's army slaughters masses of unresisting people, and then runs away for no reason, whereupon the people forgive the soldiers, and all fraternize. The king, who is of course a villain of the deepest dye, gets off, on the ground that his victims, being liable to sin themselves, have no right to punish it, and soon returns with a more reliable force, which, laughing, massacres the people for several days. Royalty is then restored, with its natural accompaniment of plague, famine, religion and the Inquisition.

With such a philosophy, one would imagine that Shelley could not be a patriot. It is because we love life that we love the Giver. No flame of patriotism kindles in the breast of the pessimist or Oriental mystic, nor yet in the brain of a Godwin. But Shelley always uses the word in an honourable sense, and speaks of England with pride and affection. He is too great to be wholly consistent in his pessimism:

> "Men of England, heirs of glory,
> Heroes of unwritten story,
> Nurselings of one mighty mother,
> Heirs of her and one another!"

is his invocation to his countrymen. Her great names are often on his lips: "Saxon Alfred's laurel-cinctured brow," Milton, "the third among the sons of light," Sir Philip Sidney, "sublimely pure, a spirit without spot." But this is not the fervour of "Star of my country," or the "Fighting Temeraire." Shelley prefers a cloud landscape to that of England; he does not feel the homesickness of Wordsworth, nor long, like Browning, to be in England, instead of Italy, at the dawn of spring. To fight beneath her flag would have revolted him, for he hated fighting. "Mr. Peacock," he writes in one of his early letters, "conceives that commerce is prosperity, that the glory of the British flag is the happiness of the British people. . . . To me it appears otherwise."

In " Hellas " he comes nearest to taking up a patriotic attitude, but this is patriotism for another country. Shelley was no Greek in spirit; there was more of the Brahmin, or the Sufi, in his philosophy; and of all the Greeks, he has the most affection for Plato, the Egyptian mysticism of whose dialogues appealed to him, as it had to the Alexandrian Neoplatonists. But the ancestry of the Greeks, and the fact that they were struggling for freedom, made Shelley an enthusiast in their cause, and " Hellas " is the one of all his works in which he gives any countenance to fighting. But even " Hellas " dies away in gloom; the Greeks are crushed, and the chief of the oppressors is England. At the end of the play, Shelley flies back to his dream paradise, and the final chorus closes on the note of desolation:

> " The world is weary of the past,
> Oh, might it die and rest at last! "

As far as Shelley holds that the world can be bettered at all, it is through Liberty. The word is elastic, and is capable of implying anything, from the absence of restraint to moral and intellectual perfection. Shelley held political freedom to be an indispensable preliminary to any general freedom in the wider sense. When he says,

> " No, in countries that are free,
> Such starvation cannot be
> As in England now we see,"

he does not mean, as a modern historian has ventured to assert, that freedom means something to eat, but that it is necessary for mankind to break their chains before they can hope even for physical betterment. In " Charles I," he makes Hampden talk about that inheritance of freedom, without which he cannot speak of his country, or even of England. In one of his sonnets we read:

> " Nor happiness, nor majesty, nor fame,
> Nor peace, nor strength, nor skill in arms nor arts
> Shepherd those herds whom tyranny makes tame,"

and he conceived of the whole creation as groaning in hopeless travail.

Shelley's poetical genius was strong enough to carry him beyond the confines of Godwin's frigid rationalism, and, by a divine inconsistency, to point him to another philosophy, which it is permissible to think he might have adopted and developed in all its implications had his life been prolonged. It was inevitable that such an artist should apprehend the importance of Blake's creative imagination, what Shelley himself hymned as Intellectual Beauty. In that marvellous essay, which may fairly be described as the Magna Carta of poetry, he attributes to this faculty all that there has ever been of good or beautiful in the history of mankind. He uses the word poetry in the widest sense; it is thought acting at white-heat, the alchemy that turns all things, even death, to loveliness. He condemns the rising school of political economists for their neglect of the imagination; their system only tends to make the rich richer and the poor poorer. And in this supreme faculty Shelley has found, as he finds nowhere else, the means of bridging over the gap between his dreams and reality, between the world of Zeus and that of Prometheus. He had only to follow this thread in order to understand and be mingled with the patriotism that had fired, almost without exception, those creative leaders of mankind, among whom he himself was to be enrolled. He asks, what are "virtue, love, patriotism and friendship, without the spirit of poetry to bring light and fire from those regions where owl-like calculation dare not soar?"

Though we may not give Shelley's name a high place in the roll of English patriots, we have no hesitation in saying that he had in him all the makings of a patriot. He was an exile from his university, his family, his children, his country; his genius was blasted before its noon. All around he saw oppression and cynicism, chains

and suffering. Was it such a wonderful thing that he should take refuge in the opiate bowers of pessimism? His genius shows most in this, that he was able, even fitfully, to pierce the clouds of fatalism and infidelity, and to catch glimpses of a light that might have burst upon him in full radiance had he lived. Who shall dispute his own inspired estimate of himself, before which criticism must perforce be dumb?

> "A pard-like spirit, beautiful and swift,
> A love in desolation masked, a power
> Girt round with weakness;—it can scarce uplift
> The weight of the superincumbent hour
> It is a dying lamp, a falling shower,
> A breaking billow,—even whilst we speak
> Is it not broken?"

A more thoroughgoing adherent of Schopenhauer's theory of artistic detachment was John Keats. Not that Keats had ever read or heard of Schopenhauer, but the spirit that moved the two men was the same, or rather Keats practised what Schopenhauer preached. There is nothing in the History of Patriotism of more significance than the almost entire absence of the very idea from the more important work of, perhaps, the most lovable of English poets. Oscar Wilde traces from Keats the rise of the English Renaissance, which is, in Wilde's eyes, his own cult of art for art's sake. And from this fountain, that sprang almost unseen, do indeed flow those quiet and languorous streams of decadent art, between banks fledged with strange, passionate flowers, and breathing silver-grey mists of death. Keats himself was far from the decadence of the "Sphinx" or "Under the Hill," but the germs of them are in his work, and it only needed the logic of lesser men to push his principles to their conclusion.

Of his political views there is little to say. His association with that sentimental Radical, Leigh Hunt, led him to adopt a somewhat lukewarm Liberalism. But the

references to politics in his letters are few and casual, he does not give the impression of being really in earnest. He was no party man; he did not believe in hot-headed Radicals like Burdett, and he pays his tribute of respect to Wellington and Nelson. In one of his letters, he launches out into a sweeping and very amateurish theory of English History, which he divides into three phases, the growth of liberty, its depression, and its subsequent resurrection. He censures the Tory Government for its opposition to all reforms and innovations; he looks upon Napoleon as an arch-enemy to liberty; and he has, like Rousseau, a curious dread of expanding Russia. He hopes to contribute his mite to the Liberal cause; and this is about the sum of his prose references to politics.

In one of his early sonnets, not usually printed among his works, but published by Mr. de Selincourt, he hails the coming of peace, but is haunted by fears lest peace should be the grave of freedom. "With England's happiness," he cries, "proclaim Europe's liberty," but he counsels Europe to:

> "Keep thy chains burst, and boldly say thou art free;
> Give thy Kings law, leave not uncurbed the great."

The sonnet would hardly be worth preserving, did it not show how Keats, like Shelley, Byron, Heine and Schopenhauer, felt the influence of that upas tree of pessimism, the Metternich system.

Keats started with a genuine love of his country, her soil, her art, and her great men. The highest compliment that he can pay to Kosciusco is to compare him with Alfred. There is noble enthusiasm in his lines:

> "Muse of my native land! loftiest Muse!
> O firstborn on the mountains,"

and even when he pines for the clear skies and warm loves of Italy, he is content to see no other verdure than that of England, and to feel no other embraces than from the

white arms of English girls. He has a closer attachment for the soil than either Shelley or Byron, who were, after all, exiles; closer, too, than his spiritual children of the "English Renaissance," Rossetti and Wilde. He was an ardent observer of natural beauty, and he loved country folk and their ways. One of the most fascinating of poets' letters is the "bit of doggerel" he dashed off at Teignmouth for his friend Haydon, and he had a child's delight in such rhymes as:

> "Over the hill, and over the dale,
> And over the bourn to Dawlish,
> Where ginger-bread wives have a scanty sale,
> And ginger-bread nuts are smallish."

Keats's delight in scenery is different from Wordsworth's. Wordsworth loved mountains and the ocean because they were to him the dwelling-place, and, in part, the revelation, of "something far more deeply interfused," the visible manifestation of the God in his own heart. To Blake, even Wordsworth was an atheist, for to him nature was the mundane shell, that impeded spiritual vision. Imagination is "the real and eternal world of which this vegetable universe is but a faint shadow." Keats stands at the other extreme. He accepts nature without seeking to fathom her meaning, he trains his exquisite senses to respond to her subtlest moods; he is ever on the watch to snatch from her some relief from the burden of existence.

This is the whole secret of Keats. He takes refuge in beauty, as Omar with the Daughter of the Vine, because he is able to forget for a while that life is cruel, and that pleasure, aching pleasure, turns ever to poison. Pessimism and world-weariness are at the root of his art; he is haunted by a sense of the transience and decay of things; he seeks to forget reality in the contemplation of forms of eternal beauty. He hymns the Grecian Urn, because it is able to tease him out of thought, and contrasts, in

agonized strains, the trees and lovers of earth with the figures on the urn, the happy, happy boughs that cannot bid the spring adieu, and the happy, happy love that is for ever warm and still to be enjoyed.

Keats is more consistent than Shelley; the same idea is repeated, again and again, throughout his more important poetry. It is the burden of the "Ode to Sorrow" in "Endymion," with its plaintive commencement, rising to a climax of Bacchic frenzy, and dying away again in sorrow; it is in "La belle dame sans merci," with its transient glimpse of faerie, and its ghastly awakening on the hillside; it is in "Lamia," which is but a variation upon the same theme, and in the ravished joys of Isabella and Lorenzo; it is set forth with passionate directness in "The Nightingale"; and in that supreme, heartbroken cry, that wonderful sonnet into which Keats seems to have thrown all the unrealized glories of his prime, he yearns for the changelessness of the great star that watches, unmoved,

> "The moving waters at their priestlike task
> Of pure ablution round earth's human shores."

He was no poet of the robust joy of life, like the Elizabethans. His function was rather to give expression to a feverish joy snatched from life. "Aching" and "swooning" are terms such as he is always using in connection with pleasure. Even where he consciously tries to be merry, there is generally an undertone of regret, as in his lines to Robin Hood:

> "No, those days are gone away,"

lines which only make us feel how far we are from the spirit of the time, that could inspire even an obscure poet to such a chorus as:

> "Hey, jolly Robin Hood! Ho, jolly Robin Hood!
> Love finds out me,
> As well as thee,
> To follow me in the greenwood!"

On the cheeks of those Elizabethan songsters is the ruddy glow of health, on those of Keats is the delicate bloom of consumption.

In the latter stages of his too brief career, when he was producing his greatest masterpieces, the pessimist cult of beauty got complete possession of Keats. He withdraws from the world of reality, and pitches his tent in his own self-created kingdom of art. All references to liberty, all hints of interest in any social or political affairs, are rigorously excluded. When he does once condescend to a satire, with some obscurely political references, the result is a failure. He accepts, in its extreme form, the doctrine of art for art's sake.

Keats's dream world is not to be confounded with Blake's Kingdom of the Spirit, his Jerusalem. Blake would probably have agreed that Truth and Beauty were the same thing in the end; but whereas Blake would have believed, by faith, that the supreme truth for which he sought must also be supremely beautiful, Keats was content to seek beauty first and only, and to accept what he found for truth. Blake, in his darkest ecstasies, was a patriot and a reformer, he hoped to build Jerusalem in England, and he cried:

> "England, awake, awake, awake!
> Jerusalem thy sister calls."

But Keats did not think these things worth troubling about, his fatalistic bent of mind would have made any thought of bettering the world at large seem hopeless indeed. Blake was at heart an optimist and a Christian, Keats was a pessimist and a pagan. Blake died making the rafters ring with his hymns of joy, but it was not joy that wrung from the dying Adonais those last, choking words, "Thank God it has come!"

As early as the "Endymion," Keats had expressed his views on political ambition (and especially, as he himself

once remarked, upon the Tory Ministers), in the beginning of the third book :

> " There are who lord it o'er their fellow-men
> With most prevailing tinsel."

That he is not referring to Tories only, but to rulers in general, is evident from the empurpled vests, crowns and turbans with which they are endowed by blear-eyed peoples. These men

> " with not one tinge
> Of sanctuary splendour, not a sight
> Able to face an owl's,"

are able to glut their ridiculous vanity upon a people's sufferings. But Keats is not rebellious or coldly contemptuous, he merely turns away wearied from the turmoil and the din :

> " Ah, how all this hums
> In wakeful ears, like uproar past and gone—
> Like thunder-clouds that spoke to Babylon."

The world of his dreams is more real and serious than that of life, he sees his country and her rulers through a glass darkly, but Endymion and the palace under the sea are more familiar than his own Hampstead.

If he shrank from contact with the men of action, he had no greater love for the spinners of theories. " How all charms fly," he cries,

> " At the mere touch of cold philosophy ! "

There was even less room in his heart for Bentham than there was for Eldon.

In the debate of the Titans, in the " Hyperion," he rises to the summit of his powers, and here directly challenges comparison with Milton. The comparison is significant. The fallen angels, even in Hell, are still unconquered, and above all, sternly determined to face the facts of the situation. They are strategists, statesmen, skilled orators.

Not even the economic possibilities of Hell escape their attention. They are making an heroic attempt to grapple with the problems of a desperate situation, and the reader can scarcely refrain from joining in the applause that greets the oratory of Mammon, or waiting, in breathless expectancy, for the pronouncement of Beelzebub. Not even Omnipotence can daunt the "unconquerable will."

Warriors of a feebler stamp are the Titans. What a poor creature is the dethroned lord of the universe in comparison with the archangel fallen! The old god feels faint, and would have sunk into apathy with the rest but for Enceladus; he makes his followers the confidants of his grief and perplexity:

> "O Heaven wide! O unseen parent dear!
> What can I?"

Then follows Oceanus, in perhaps the most beautiful, and certainly the most profound, of all Keats's blank-verse passages. His view is that of the pure fatalist; he thinks that the new gods were destined to succeed, and he would sooner gaze upon their beauty than fight for his empire. It is the Eternal Law that

> "First in beauty should be first in might,"

but beauty is something beyond the control of either Oceanus or Jupiter. It is Kismet, and true wisdom consists in resignation.

In the hectic murmurings of Clymene, we hear the voice of Keats himself, in his final phase. She has no aid to give of counsel or action; she is only conscious of grief that has crept into their hearts, and the mingled rapture and agony of the music heralding the new-born Apollo. For the solace of beauty was all that Keats knew, and all that he cared to know.

Keats had agreed with Schopenhauer in not opposing his will to the evil of the universe. Shelley had rebelled in dreams, but it was for Byron to accept their common

doctrine of pessimism in its darkest form, and yet to endure all with head unbowed, and, even if the Powers of Darkness were omnipotent, to laugh back defiance in their faces. "I will have nothing to do with your immortality," he writes to Hodgson, "we are miserable enough in this life." The life of Byron has much in common with a piece of music hardly less wonderful, the third movement of Tschaikovsky's "Pathetic Symphony," in which, out of an agony of ruin and despair, there emerges, at first faintly, and then with a proud, steady swing, a march which contains the spirit of every forlorn hope that ever failed, from the time when the Spartans died at Thermopylæ, to when General Marguerite's squadrons were swept away in their wild charge to break the Prussian ring at Sedan. There is never the least suggestion of any end except death and failure, but the more insistent becomes the note of doom, the more defiant swells the heroic answer. So it is with Byron. The Zeus of Shelley rules his Universe, but it is like the Prometheus of Æschylus that Byron gives answer.

It is a modern fashion to belittle Byron's poetry, and it is almost a mark of culture in certain circles to deny that he was a poet at all, in the sense that Keats and Shelley were poets. Every one must admit that Byron was the most careless and fallible of the three; he did as much bad work as Wordsworth; but it is by his greatest, and not by his worst work, that a poet is to be judged. He doubtless never attained to the spiritual ecstasy of the "Adonais," nor to the delicious richness of "St. Agnes's Eve"; but he has a note of his own, in which neither of his rivals could match him, a thunder-tone of sublime pride, that shook Europe from end to end, that won the admiration of Goethe, founded a school in France, and gave to Byron a fame as world-wide as that of Shakespeare.

To pedants and bookworms, to men of petty minds, the name of Byron is as bitter as gall. These men fall down on all fours with their microscopes to detect the roughness on the face of the mountain. Men who exalt Shakespeare's "Richard II" above his "Henry V," who fancy that everything manly must necessarily be unpoetical, cannot away with Byron. The contempt he flaunted for the worms who hounded him out of England, and for their hypocrisies and respectabilities; his unshrinking assertion of his personality in the face of God and man; the withering sarcasm with which he crushed every attempt to crush him, are things not to be forgiven by those who, themselves unscathed, feel, by sympathy, their souls withered in the flame, and their backs scored by the lash.

Byron is a poet, and a poet of the highest order. The Waterloo and sea stanzas of "Childe Harold," lyrics such as "She walks in beauty" and "There's not a joy that youth can give," the Chillon sonnet, the opening of the "Bride of Abydos," the "Isles of Greece," the Haidée episode in Don Juan, the final poem in which he wrote his own epitaph, are sufficient answer to Byron's detractors. He has nothing to fear by comparison with his contemporaries, and we need not reverence them any the less in order to admire the man to whom Keats, and even Blake, give their tribute of praise, and whom Shelley, in his finest poem, called "The Phœbus of his age."

Byron's philosophy is simple. The world is as bad as it can be, and its inhabitants are mostly contemptible. It is a hell in which he, Lord Byron, plays the part of the Miltonic Satan, or rather, it is an immense black canvas, upon which he paints, in colours of flame, his own personality. It is a portrait which will only fade with the world itself, for with all its imperfections, upon every line there is stamped greatness. He was a king among men, and though his robe may have been crimson with guilt,

it was never tainted with pettiness. Manfred's scorn in the Court of Arimanes was no literary pose, it was natural to the man who, in imminent danger of shipwreck, went to sleep wrapped up in his cloak, and who quelled a rabble of savage mutineers upon his death-bed. Had Byron lived, he might have been King of Greece.

Great though he was, his was, for long, an imperfect greatness. He was the rebellious angel, the Marlowe of the nineteenth century. The completeness of Shakespeare was not for him. At the end of his life, he rose gloriously above the limits of a Titanic egotism, and attained to an ideal of service to which Marlowe never even approached. But for the greater part of his life, he was content to be, like Tamburlaine and Guise, a splendid individuality. He was never seen to better advantage than when he was attacking his personal enemies; he never failed so grievously as when he tried to describe any one whose outlook upon life differed from his own. It is a commonplace of criticism, and strangely enough, also quite true, that the only Byronic hero is Byron himself.

The Doge, Marino Faliero, is the Byronic hero in the political sphere. Though he is the responsible head of the State, he enters into a conspiracy to overthrow it, for no better reason than that one of his private enemies has been let off by the "forty" with too light a sentence. When he meets the fate he has richly deserved, he makes a dying speech, in which he gloats in anticipation over the ruin of his country. As for Lara, another revolutionary of the same stamp,

> "What cared he for the freedom of the crowd?
> He raised the humble but to bend the proud."

The heroes of the Romances, which surpassed those of Sir Walter Scott in popular fame, are splendid partisan chiefs, but they are incapable of rising to the dignity of patriotism. Perhaps this limitation of outlook is

the reason why there was no great school of Romantic Drama in England. Neither Byron, nor Keats, nor Shelley, seems to have conceived of public characters as being inspired by any other than private motives. Keats's two historical dramas are among the feeblest efforts of his genius; Shelley's "Cenci," though it has achieved the distinction of being banned by the official censor, is rather suited for the study than for the stage. But the dramas of Schiller and Kleist in Germany, and those of Victor Hugo in France, are not bound by the shackles of individualism, however magnificent, and thus the English Romantics fall behind the French and German in a branch of art in which the countrymen of Shakespeare might have naturally aspired to supremacy.

Before Byron was driven from England, and even, to a diminishing extent, after it, he was capable of pride and affection towards the land of his birth. He says, indeed, in a letter to his mother, written in 1809, just as he was leaving England, that he does so without regret, or a wish to revisit anything it contains, "except yourself and your present residence," but this is not the mood of his farewell poem, "My native land, good night!" He writes of the liberation of Spain, in the first canto of "Childe Harold," in a spirit, though hardly a form, worthy of Wordsworth:

> "When the Almighty lifts His fiercest scourge
> 'Gainst those who most transgress His high command,
> With treble vengeance will His hot shafts urge
> Gaul's locust host, and earth from fellest foemen purge."

Three omitted stanzas express his scorn for the Convention of Cintra, and for the general whom he was to attack, under very different circumstances, years later. Equally scathing is the censure, in one of his letters, on the Walcheren fiasco.

In the second canto he has a description of an English frigate, and the perfect discipline that makes for conquest

and fame, and from which "Britons rarely swerve." Even after his exile, the description of the night before Waterloo, of the mustering of the Highland regiments, and of the Ardennes weeping over the troops, is surely not the work of one wholly cosmopolitan. In the last canto his language is that of solemn affection for the land which had cast him forth:

> "Yet I was born where men were proud to be,
> Not without cause";

if he dies an exile, his spirit will return to England, it is upon her language that he builds his hopes of fame, and should oblivion be his fate, he can at least say of her, like Brasidas, "Sparta hath many a worthier son than he!"

Even as late as 1823 he pauses, amid the satire and cynicism of "Don Juan," to address his country, not in terms of hatred or derision, but of reproachful despair. If she could only know how hated she is, how Europe longs for her destruction,

> "Would she be proud, or boast herself the free
> Who is the first of slaves?"

The system of the Holy Alliance and Metternich had raised the cloud of gloom that darkened all Europe after the fall of Napoleon, but Byron's spirit was one that quailed not before God or man. At a time when every other voice was silent or silenced, his was thundering forth invincible defiance, that kept the spirit of liberty warm, and shook the thrones of despots more than an army could have done. It is thus that Byron flings his glove in the face of the tyrants:

> "And I will war (at least in words, and should
> My chance so happen—deeds) with all who war
> With Thought; and of Thought's foes by far most rude
> Tyrants and sycophants have been, and are.
> I know not who may conquer; if I could
> Have such a prescience, it should be no bar
> To this, my plain, sworn downright detestation
> Of every despotism in every nation."

Upon the sacred heads of the monarchs themselves he heaps contempt and insult; he talks of Alexander, the pillar of legitimacy and the idol of sentimental reactionaries, as a "bald-coot bully"; he speculates as to the results of George IV being dug up; he talks of shipping the "Holy Three" off to Senegal; he ridicules the memory of George III, and he refers to Alexander's sacred grandmother as the greatest of sovereigns and of ——s. Such words Byron alone could or dared use, and to the enchained nations they were as a trumpet-blast sounding to battle. We can understand how it was that Lamartine, who afterwards lectured Byron in terms of characteristic and insufferable priggishness, was proud beyond measure at catching so much as a glimpse of "l'homme."

Byron's hatred of English Toryism knew no bounds. His language about Castlereagh was fiendish; his attack upon Wellington, though more measured, was scarcely less bitter. The name of Waterloo became odious to him, and he had more love for Napoleon than for the restored despots. This sympathy with the cause of the Emperor was shared, in some measure, by Shelley, and upon the same grounds. For the passion for Napoleon's overthrow, with which even Byron had sympathized, had been forgotten amid the petty tyrannies of the Holy Alliance; for it seemed as if one great tyrant had been overthrown only for the benefit of a rabble of petty ones. The martial glory that filled other Englishmen with pride, left Byron cold. At the same time he was an aristocrat to the core, and, with Lara, despised the mob. He defied the tyrants as he defied the universe; like Cain, he would not sacrifice to a cruel God, and still less was he going to pay homage to a stupid king.

It was the Revolt of Greece that called out the latent nobility in Byron's nature, and raised him for ever above the level of Marlowe's egotism. He flung himself into the struggle with unselfish ardour. This vicarious

patriotism, so different from the abstract love of humanity, was characteristic of the Metternich age. The patriotism of Byron had been less choked by his egotism than starved by ill-treatment and despair. It seemed as if there were two contending parties in Europe, those who trampled and those who were trampled upon. Castlereagh and Metternich, the Sultan and George IV, were surely countrymen. The enemy against whom England had fought for the liberation of Europe was now international, and the attempt to rule the world by congresses might well be met by a determination to fight for freedom against any despotism in any nation.

Besides, Greece had a strong attraction for Byron, as it had for Shelley, on account of its associations. He had already spoken of Rome as his country, and Greece was as venerable as Rome, and crying for deliverers. Byron had, years before, talked of enlisting as a mercenary with the Turks, if he liked their manners; but his service with the Greeks was not that of a mercenary, not even that of a Faliero or Lara, but of one who was ready to lay down his life for a cause.

His "Isles of Greece" had expressed his consuming love of Greece, and his contempt for Greeks; incidentally also it expressed his view of the philosophy of Keats, whom even after his death he treated with some scorn. Keats had wished to fly from reality to a world of "joy and soft, delicious warmth," but Byron cries:

> "You have the Pyrrhic dance as yet,
> Where is the Pyrrhic phalanx gone?
> Of two such lessons, why forget
> The nobler and the manlier one?"

and he commits the whole dream paradise to perdition with,

> "Dash down yon cup of Samian wine!"

His last lyric breathes a spirit of heroic resignation. His contempt for the Greeks has ceased, they are awake

now. The world is bitter to him, his youth is gone, nothing but gloom remains, yet this is not the time for such thoughts, death in a noble cause can at least be his :

> " If thou regrettest thy youth, *why live ?*
> The laud of honourable death
> Is here :—up to the field, and give
> Away thy breath ! "

The period of Eldonian Toryism was brief, but it was long enough to make free spirits feel the chill of pessimism that spread over Europe during the reaction. Freedom had been the animating spirit of the war, and it seemed as if England had defeated her own purpose and fettered her own limbs in the attempt to liberate Europe. The seeds of despair had been sown, and their growth was checked, but not killed, with returning prosperity. Benthamite greed, which came to be a popular philosophy about this time, was also fated to survive, like some malignant, fungoid growth, far into the nineteenth century. But it is remarkable that while cold and shallow reasoners like Bentham and James Mill, and human calculating machines like Ricardo, displayed scarcely any symptoms of patriotic feeling, the three great poets, the whole of whose philosophy would logically have made them mere citizens of the world, were forced, in their own despite, into the utterance of sentiments of veneration and affection for their Motherland, sentiments that prove that, in spite of pessimism and rebellion, they were, at heart, proud to be Englishmen. There is no such pride for Germany in Schopenhauer, little even in Hegel. So mighty is the spell that the consciousness of her past glories, and the sense of her present greatness, could cast over the souls of England's most wayward children !

## CHAPTER IX

### THE LIBERATION OF EUROPE—LAST PHASE

THE apostles of melancholy were right in their estimate of the Holy Alliance, but unjust to England, and especially to Castlereagh. It might have seemed that Europe had only exchanged one tyranny for another. The monarchs had been thoroughly alarmed by the Revolution and its sequel, and were determined that such a thing should never happen again. The crowned philosophers, the reforming despots of the eighteenth century, had had their day; even Alexander, the pupil of La Harpe and friend of Capodistrias, dropped his liberalism upon the murder of his agent in Germany, and the disaffection of his beloved guard in Russia.

The original theory of the alliance had been that the sovereigns should combine to preserve peace, and to govern their dominions upon Christian principles. This ideal was first formulated by Alexander, who was probably as sincere as sentimentalists of his type usually are; but it was worse than verbiage for the statesmen of greedy Prussia and crafty Austria. Alexander himself was not the man to adhere to his ideal longer than suited his vanity or convenience, and the Holy Alliance soon became a conspiracy between despots to advance their own interests and to crush out freedom everywhere.

With such principles neither the Tory Government, nor Castlereagh himself, would have anything to do. At

the very time when Shelley and Byron were denouncing him as the arch-enemy of freedom, Castlereagh was elaborating the policy that was destined to wreck the schemes of the liberticides and to loosen the chains of Europe. Another was to bring the policy to fruition and to reap the glory; but the voice of history will, or at least ought to record, that among the architects of European liberty, there was none who did greater work than the Tory Castlereagh.

Not that he was consciously a democrat; he despised the rabble as much as they hated him; but he had the redeeming virtue of being first of all a patriot, and he did not forget that he was the Minister of England, and not of the Liverpool Government. Metternich failed to understand this, and therefore he misunderstood Castlereagh. He perceived the reactionary opinions of the man, but he did not see that the gulf which divided him from the statesman was even broader and deeper than that between Castlereagh and Cobbett.

Mr. Webster's recent researches have thrown a new and most important light upon one side of Castlereagh's policy. As far back as 1812 it had been open to him to join with Spain to suppress the new-won liberties of her South American colonies. The Cortes actually tried to bribe him by the offer of commercial advantages. But Castlereagh was firm, not only that no force should be used, but that Spain should consent to rule her dependencies on what he himself calls "liberal principles," which he defined in 1815 as being: (1) Restriction of the slave trade. (2) Amnesty for the rebels. (3) Equal legal rights for South Americans and Spaniards. (4) Freedom of commercial intercourse with a preference in favour of Spain. These principles he adhered to steadily, and in defiance of France and Russia, who were for making South America another Naples. It thus appears that Castlereagh was the steady champion of freedom in the

New World, and he may fairly claim to be the originator of the policy by which Canning called that world into existence to redress the balance of the Old.

Castlereagh had had an impressive lesson as to the true weakness of the Holy Alliance at Vienna. Had the chiefs of the Metternich system been sincere believers in their own formulas, they might have succeeded in drugging Europe with the opiate of a kindly autocracy, and the gentlest of all deaths would have come upon her from the throne. But the Continental diplomatists of the Restoration were as grasping and selfish as those of the eighteenth century, and there was seldom enough honour among thieves to enable them to work together. It was the work of a few weeks to split up the allies of Chaumont into angry factions; Alexander was abusing Metternich like a pickpocket, and England, France and Austria concerting a plan of campaign against Prussia and Russia. England was the only nation to pursue an unselfish and straightforward policy amid this chaos of intrigue and Machiavellianism.

What had at first been no more than sentiment and verbiage was soon to be translated into a very practical scheme of tyranny. However much they might cheat and mistrust each other on other questions, the "Holy Three" had a common interest in stamping out every manifestation of liberty or nationality all over Europe. It was against this policy that Castlereagh, like Canning after him, made a stand from the first. Metternich was anxious to get the countenance of England for his system, and he believed that Castlereagh was only pretending to differ from him in order to conciliate opinion at home. But any sort of countenance to organized reaction by force, Castlereagh was determined that he neither would nor ought to give, and this as a matter not of policy, but of principle.

At the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle he gave a decisive check to the more ambitious projects of the despots.

Here he occupied a position of peculiar importance, because Metternich was almost as much afraid of Russia as he was of revolution, and was naturally ready to attach great weight to the support of England. Alexander had put forward a scheme for giving a practical turn to the visionary generalities of the alliance, by establishing a universal guarantee for the preservation of all recognized rights, in other words, for holding the combined armies of Europe in readiness to stamp out any revolution anywhere. Castlereagh, with the full support of the Cabinet, made a courteous but firm stand upon the principle of non-intervention, and thus one of the most insidious plots ever contrived against liberty ended, through the exertions of " Derry-down-Triangle," in verbiage. Even Canning can claim no greater achievement.

Nor was this the only effort made by Castlereagh in the same cause. Against the Carlsbad decrees, that destroyed the liberties of Germany, he entered an emphatic protest. When the allies drew up, at Troppau, a definite statement of their intention to resort to forcible intervention, he refused to have anything to do with it, and criticized it in the most uncompromising terms. At both Troppau and Laybach he instructed our representative to hold aloof from the schemes of the allies, and this attitude aroused much ill-feeling against England. However, Alexander and Metternich had now composed their differences, and could afford to dispense with English support at a pinch. In his instructions concerning the Congress of Verona, which he never lived to attend, he outlined the policy of Canning, abstaining from intervention in Italy, discountenancing it in Spain, and foreshadowing the recognition of the belligerent rights of Greece and of the existence of the South American Republics.

It is in no spirit of disparagement to Canning that we vindicate the policy of Castlereagh. While posterity

has rightly agreed to honour the liberator of Greece, to the statesman of Chaumont and Aix-la-Chapelle it has done less than justice. Castlereagh was like Cassandra, whatever he did was fated to be misunderstood. It is characteristic of him that while he delighted Metternich, whose system he overthrew, he was hated by the nation to whom his life was devoted. Canning, on the other hand, died lamented by his countrymen, but Metternich could not conceal his delight. Castlereagh was the most un-English of English statesmen; Canning was an Englishman to the finger-tips, his methods were downright, and he was able to justify them in phrases addressed, not only to the intellect, but to the heart. Such sentences as "I have called the New World into existence to redress the balance of the Old," make as vivid an appeal to the subjects of George V as they did to those of George IV; all that remains of Castlereagh's frigid periods are one or two Irish bulls.

Castlereagh's methods are more likely to appeal to the born diplomatist than those of Canning. The author of the "Needy Knife-grinder" had a faculty of exposition that makes his dispatches almost the classics of their kind. But it is not always the best policy for a Foreign Minister to score telling points, or even to produce masterpieces. To treat Napoleon's overtures with open ridicule was mere diplomatic gaucherie; to incur the hatred of half the Cabinets in Europe was, at best, a necessary evil. While Canning, like Palmerston, was somewhat too prone to display the iron fist in the face of Europe, much to the delight of his countrymen, Castlereagh was earning their dislike by conciliating the very man whom he most opposed. And it is this unostentatious tact with which he cloaked a purpose as steadfast as that of Canning that stamps him as one of the world's greatest diplomatists.

It was his influence that had prevented the alliance

from falling to pieces in 1814, that had cemented the Treaty of Chaumont, and brought decisive reinforcements to Blücher. And after the peace he was not disposed to quarrel with our allies for the sake of flaunting a vigorous or striking policy. He and Canning were equally suspicious of the Jacobin menace; they both supported the Six Acts; both were opponents of parliamentary reform. Above all, the events of the Hundred Days had shown that France was still capable of being a danger to Europe, and in a few years after Waterloo, it was a main object of Castlereagh's policy to keep the machinery of Chaumont still ready for action in case of need. When Canning assumed power the danger was passing away; for Napoleon was dead, and the Bonapartist fiasco during Angoulême's campaign had demonstrated the weakness of the cause.

The successes of Canning's policy were of a more impressive nature than those of Castlereagh. Canning intervened with brilliant success in Greece and Portugal, and he preserved the New World from the aggression of the Old. The warmest admirer of Castlereagh must admit that he lacked the brilliance and comprehensive genius of Canning, a genius that displays itself in almost every sentence he wrote. But then it must be remembered that Canning had opportunities that were denied to Castlereagh. Historians have blamed Castlereagh for failing to achieve the impossible; Spencer Walpole, for instance, accuses him of standing by while Italy was enslaved. But it would have been criminal lunacy, during the distressful years of Peterloo and Thistlewood's plot, to have embarked upon a land war with the Holy Alliance, and to have faced, in Italy, the huge battalions of Austria and Russia. Castlereagh had nothing to do with the crushing of Naples, and he protested against the Carlsbad decrees. Canning himself refused to play the part of Don Quixote, in Don Quixote's own country, after Castlereagh's death. But historians do not blame him for

leaving Riego and his comrades to the mercy of Ferdinand. Castlereagh had acted with decisive effect when he got the opportunity at Aix, and his services there and in 1814 were as valuable as Canning's later triumphs, though less apparent. To take up a strong policy without the power to enforce it is but feeble statesmanship, and both Napoleon and Alexander had found out already that to think of bluffing Metternich on a weak hand was to court disaster. There is a time to act and a time to wait, and these times were not unknown to Canning and Castlereagh. Had they been known to Palmerston, not to speak of more recent statesmen, it might have been better for England.

The strength of the country was twofold. Her sea power, despite perilous reductions of the fleet, was unchallenged. On purely Continental affairs, where sea power did not come directly into play, she only exercised a commanding influence through the divisions of her opponents. Her support was always sought after, but when it was not forthcoming, a united Europe, or even a united Alexander and Metternich, could afford to dispense with it. At Aix, Castlereagh had profited by their dissensions; but when, at Troppau and Laybach, the "Holy Three" were pursuing a common policy, he was justified in prudently instructing our representative to act the part of a courteous though dissentient spectator, thus avoiding both a breach with the allies and a snub for his country.

Canning's American and Portuguese policies owe their success entirely to the fact that England commanded the high seas, and as far as America is concerned, he was only carrying out the policy that Castlereagh had suggested in his circular of 1817. In his Greek policy he made use of both sources of England's strength; for he used the fleet to crush Ibrahim, and he acted in concert, not only with France, but with Russia, since Metternich

was doing everything he could to thwart the new Tsar's policy. Canning accomplished a masterpiece of statecraft, for he kept Russia in check, not by opposition, but by conciliation. The Eastern problem had first become serious for England when William Pitt nearly went to war about the fortress of Oczacow. To prevent Russia getting control of the Bosphorus and access to the Mediterranean has ever since been a main object of our diplomacy, and it has more than once compromised our honour by committing us to the support of Turkish misrule. Canning succeeded in avoiding both the Russian Scylla and the Turkish Charybdis.

When he died he had raised his own reputation, and that of England, to a very high level. Those who dwelt in the darkness of tyranny had seen a great light, and the Holy Alliance had been shaken to its foundations. At his success in wrecking the system of congresses Canning was jubilant, with that frank, boyish exultation that had inspired his famous rhymed dispatch about the twenty per cent Dutch duty. The ideal that had inspired him throughout the war was the keynote of his later policy. He worshipped England with the love of a Milton or a Chatham. He was utterly scornful of the shifts and pettiness of party politicians. Mr. Temperley thus describes his attitude: "Canning professed the better part of both Tory and Whig creeds, and his great popularity in the country was due to this fact, that he really represented the collective national feeling better than either party." Even this estimate falls short of the whole truth, for Canning was one of those rare spirits, those poet-statesmen, who create the spirit they represent, whose belief in their country is so pure as to make her worthy of it. Many and noble have been the eulogies pronounced upon England by her sons, and yet there is none more touching in its devotion, or more sublime in its expression, than the speech delivered by her Foreign Minister at that Devon

seaport, hallowed by memories of Drake and the Armada · " Our present state is no more a proof of our inability to act, than the state of inertness and inactivity in which I have seen those mighty masses which float in the waters above your town is a proof that they are devoid of strength or incapable of being fitted for action. You well know, gentlemen, how soon one of those stupendous masses now reposing on their shadows in perfect stillness, how soon, upon any call of patriotism or necessity, it would assume the likeness of an animated thing, instinct with life and motion ; how soon it would ruffle, as it were, its swelling plumage ; how quickly it would put forth all its beauty and its bravery, collect its scattered elements of strength, and awaken its dormant thunder. Such as is one of those magnificent machines when springing from inaction into a display of its might, such is England herself, while, apparently passive and motionless, she silently concentrates the power to be put forth on an adequate occasion."

We now draw to the end of our comparison of Canning with Castlereagh. Such a comparison is inevitable, the two rivals, and loyal friends, front each other upon the stage of history, as they did long ago upon Putney Heath ; only now it is Castlereagh who is wounded and Canning who escapes free. Castlereagh has been treated, by his contemporaries and by posterity, with more cruel injustice than any other character in our history. He was a great War Minister, a great statesman, and a patriot. His actual achievements are worthy to rank with those of Canning. That Wellington was given a free hand in the Peninsula, that the alliance against Napoleon held together, and that the conspiracy of despots did not, is largely owing to him. He was in power during the most trying period of the war and the lean years of the peace, when there were few trophies to be gained. He played a thankless part with dignity and success, and he outlined

the policy of his more fortunate successor. But though we grant him all this, though we never pass his tomb at Westminster without a thrill of grateful reverence, he must for ever take rank below Canning. For while in almost every respect in which we can definitely weigh the two men in the balances, as the Dionysus of Aristophanes weighs lines of poetry, Castlereagh holds his own, he lacked the fiery genius of Canning, the intellectual beauty that made even dispatches works of art. The one accomplished all that was humanly possible, the spirit of the other was touched with something divine. His very faults as a diplomatist were the faults of genius. Not only did he worthily discharge his high office, but he had the faculty of impressing his personality upon Europe, and of making his acts not only those of the Cabinet, but of the British nation itself. It is the crowning feat of statesmanship when the acts of a Minister are felt to be in fact, and not only in name, those of the whole community.

To Mr. Temperley we are indebted for the following story. Lord John Russell was asked in his old age what was the most impressive incident he had witnessed during his long career in the House of Commons. It was, he replied, when Canning had risen to defend our dispatch of troops to Portugal. "We go to plant the standard of England on the heights of Lisbon. Where that standard is planted, foreign dominion shall not come." As he pronounced these words a shaft of sunlight, piercing through one of the windows, lit upon that noble forehead. It was as if, in this moment of supreme inspiration, the statesman had been transfigured. And thus transfigured let Canning dwell in our hearts, the embodiment of a love as pure and heroic as ever Englishman has cherished for England. Castlereagh was troubled about many things, but Canning chose that better part which the verdict of ages shall not take away from him.

# CHAPTER X

## PATRIOTISM IN ART

IT is a common fallacy that there was no English art that can in any sense be called great before the days of Hogarth and Sir Joshua. Among our cultured class there has always been a tendency to look down upon the work of an Englishman as something "insular" or barbarous. Foreigners like Holbein, Vandyck, Lely and Kneller were allowed to usurp the place that should have been occupied by native artists, and posterity have too readily acquiesced in the verdict of their fathers, with the result that the Dobsons, the Rileys and the Hudsons have been allowed to sink into comparative oblivion.

Even as far back as the Middle Ages, the English character had unfolded in visible form and colour, though as yet we had no school of painting to compare with those of Italy and Germany. But the potentiality of art was there, and even in the realm of painting we have beautiful though primitive work, like the Norwich panel in the Fitzwilliam, or the almost obliterated frescoes in Cornish churches. But though as yet Englishmen had not been taught to paint, their genius for colour found glorious realization in the glowing radiance of the stained-glass window, and a visit to the British Museum will show that our countrymen were second to none in the art of illuminating manuscripts. This it is that determines the form of Elizabethan art, as it takes shape beneath the

hands of Nicholas Hilliard, for the miniature is the child of the manuscript.

It was only to be expected that the outburst of Elizabethan joy should have broken forth in art as well as song. It is as a painter of miniatures that this artist is best remembered, and he had the example of the younger Holbein, as well as the tradition of the manuscripts, for his instruction. We have it on the evidence of his own pen that he was as staunch a patriot in his own art as Shakespeare himself. In a concise and practical treatise on the "Art of Limning," recently published in the "Transactions" of the Walpole Society, and probably the first book of English art criticism, he holds that England is the only country that displays, for the artist's contemplation, beauties equal to those of Italy, "such surely as art must ever give place unto. I say not for the face only, but for every part, for even the hand and the foot excelleth all pictures that yet I ever saw. This moved a certain Pope to say that England was rightly called Anglia, of Angely, as the country of Angels, God grant it."

It is this truly Shakespearean love of England, "this land of such dear souls," that is the necessary motive power for a school of English painting. It is the passionate love of native beauty that induces intense contemplation, and the desire to perpetuate and idealize. As yet their inexpertness in technique gave English artists a restricted scope, and they developed principally along the line of miniature portrait painting. At first their art suffers somewhat from the defect we have noted in so much of the literature of this time, it is rich rather than penetrating, Hilliard's draperies display a more consummate art than his faces. But as time goes on, the tendency to introspection, of which Puritanism is the supreme manifestation, strengthens and intensifies the genius of our limners, and it is not without its significance that

Hilliard's pupil, Isaac Oliver, was of Huguenot origin. From Hilliard and Oliver the progression is continuous through their respective sons and John Hoskins to Samuel Cooper, the contemporary of Milton, and perhaps the greatest painter of miniatures that ever lived. Some of the superficial delicacy of his predecessors may have been sacrificed, but, as befits his time, this is more than compensated for by a strength and an insight into the penetralia of character little inferior, in its own medium, to that of Dürer and Rembrandt in theirs.

The interest in character which was growing all through the first half of the seventeenth century craved expression also in oil painting, and now begins that foreign domination which continues unbroken for a century. Not that we may refuse to acknowledge our debt to these aliens. The education that they had to give was indispensable. The Elizabethan technique had been one of the bright light effects with little attempt at shading, a method eminently suited for the rendering of detail, but inadequate for the subtler and more profound emotions of the dawning epoch. It was appropriate, then, that our schoolmasters should come from the Low Countries, the home of Puritanism. Rubens paid us a fleeting visit, Vandyck and Mytens made a home here for a number of years. And yet we feel, even of Vandyck's portraiture, that there is something lacking that only a native artist could supply. It is beautiful, but it is not English. Vandyck had not the instinctive sympathy with his sitters to enable him to pluck out the heart of their mystery. But of one soul he had real and passionate understanding, and it is probable that the whole compass of England contained none more un-English. He understood the King, and realized again and again that lofty and pathetic dignity, an Eikon Basilike on canvas, which Charles himself hardly attained in practice till that supreme hour when, alone and encompassed by his

enemies, he so triumphed in his death as to render inevitable the restoration of his house.

But in our admiration of Vandyck we are too apt to forget the rich and gracious mastery of his pupil, Dobson, the English Tintoret as Charles I called him, who though he was too much of a disciple to inaugurate an art definitely English, was yet by no means the slave of his teacher.

After the Restoration, the foreign influence ceases to be educative, and, from the point of view of native art, becomes almost wholly mischievous. The names of Lely and Kneller, besides having attracted a wholly disproportionate amount of worship, have served to this day to outdazzle, with their gaudy brilliance, their more sober but, in one case at least, more meritorious English contemporaries. Sir Joshua himself was once reprimanded by a brother artist for not painting in the manner of Sir Godfrey. "Shakespeare in poetry, Kneller in painting, damme!" was the final argument of his admonisher.

And yet the art of these admired foreigners had no root in the soil, and therefore no depth. Even Lely, with all his skill and sense of colour, can do little more than turn out endless reproductions of the animal lasciviousness which was the most obvious feature of the Restoration. Only very occasionally, as in the dark, powerful face of German Rupert, does he suggest greater depths. As for Sir Godfrey, he is certainly one of the most superficial artists that ever lived, and his portraits are so devoid of any penetration, or even interest in the characters of his sitters, as to attain the level of gorgeous fashion plates, turned out with unprecedented and mechanical rapidity.

In profound contrast with the vanity of Lely and Kneller, was the sensitive modesty of John Riley, a name only known to connoisseurs, and yet surely one of

the great neglected names of our art. Riley had not Sir Peter's brilliancy of colouring, though his magnificent portrait of James II, with its inspired dash of crimson giving life to the whole, proves him a supreme master in this department also. But Riley's greatness lies most of all in his penetration of character, a grasp and insight denied to Lely. His vision was less flattering than that of the courtier, who was content to paint voluptuous portraits for people who delighted in voluptuousness. He saw the power that lay beneath that surface of the Restoration, in all its cold and sombre rationalism, its Satanic pride of intellect. This gives to most of Riley's portraits their indefinably wizened appearance, so different from the full, sensuous contours of Lely. Perhaps his insight into the spirit of his age was apt to carry him to an extreme, for there is hardness and cynicism even in his portrait of the great-hearted Ormonde; he endows James II with an intellectual strength that would certainly have prevented the Revolution; and in the poet Waller he sees not at all the author of "Go, lovely rose!" but the double turncoat, him who put into the mouth of our English Pegasus the bit of the rhymed couplet. Charles II showed himself a shrewd critic when, looking at his portrait, he remarked to Riley, "Is this like me? Then, oddsfish, I am an ugly fellow!" Riley was so hurt that, for a time, he gave up painting, and yet Charles could have paid his art no higher compliment. For the real Merry Monarch was the ugliest of fellows, as ugly, almost, as sin.

There was arising, during the lifetime of Kneller, a school of portraiture not only genuinely English, but in the direct line of artistic succession that stretches without a break from Riley to Lawrence. It seldom catches the glow of supreme inspiration; it is a sober and solid art, as befits a prose age; but it is informed with a strength and an understanding of its sitters that no foreigner

could be expected to possess. It is not our purpose to revive the memory of the neglected predecessors of Sir Joshua, to speak of Mrs. Beale, of the Gandys, of Highmore, of Knapton, of Dandridge, of Wilson. *Ex uno disce omnes*, and if any one would realize of what English portraiture was capable, let him go to the Bodleian, and see the portrait of William Jane, by the younger Gandy, with its almost eerie divination of the sitter's personality. And those who persist in believing that nothing great can come out of England, may at least listen to the testimony of a foreigner, Rouquet, who wrote in 1755, just at the end of this period, his interesting and very rare survey of our art. He is speaking of the pictures contributed for charity to the Foundlings' Hospital, Captain Coram's institution, which included some of the best work of Hogarth, Hayman, Highmore and Hudson. "This exhibition . . . has afforded the public an opportunity for judging whether the English are such indifferent artists as the foreigners, or even the English themselves, pretend. For it is customary with them to have their pictures drawn at every turn, and yet to say they have no pictures."

We will confine our attention to the main and direct succession by pupilage from Riley; for Riley begat Richardson, and Richardson begat Hudson, and Hudson begat Sir Joshua. Perhaps, as an artist, Jonathan Richardson is the least of these; his colouring is apt to be cold and his scheme of composition formal, though his work possesses an honest and unpretentious merit that renders it always interesting, and, on occasion, something more. But his main interest for us lies in the fact that he is the first to take up the cudgels for English art against the Dutch tyranny. The most important of his literary works is a plea, in somewhat florid prose, for the due recognition of art in this country. He believes that we may yet found one of the world's greatest schools

of painting, "for the English nation is not accustomed to do things by halves."

"I have said it before," he continues, "and will venture to repeat it, notwithstanding the national vanity of some of our neighbours and our own false modesty, and partiality to foreigners (in this respect, though in others we have had such demonstrations of our superiority that we have learned to be conscious of it) if ever the good taste in painting, if ever that delightful, useful and noble art does revive in the world, it is probable it will be in England." Not only was this prediction to be gloriously fulfilled, but Richardson's influence played no small part in bringing it about. He writes like the inspired precursor of the coming dawn. He appeals to his countrymen to rival in art the pre-eminence they have already attained in science, in literature, in arms. "Let us at length disdain to be as much in subjection in this respect as in any other; let us put forth our strength and employ our national virtue, that haughty impatience of subjection and inferiority, which seems to be the characteristic of our nation in this, as in many other illustrious occasions, and the thing will be effected; the English school will rise and flourish."

The importance of Thomas Hudson lies in the fact that he was the first of our artists definitely to establish the supremacy of English portraiture in the general estimation. The last of our Dutch conquerors was Van Loo, whose pompous and elephantine talent made a brief conquest of the town during the last years of Walpole's supremacy. It was Hudson who unearthed the genius of Joshua Reynolds, and when the time came, he was glad to resign his supremacy into the hands of his pupil. There is that about Hudson's art which renders him eminently fitted to embody what was best in the England of the first two Georges. His portraits are as unemotional as Anson and as massive as Dr. Johnson, and it is no

wonder that Horace Walpole failed to appreciate him, for he was a lover of those stolid and beefy gentlemen whom the sensitive nerves of Sir Horace could not abide. Hudson's portraiture is the counterpart in painting of the Chippendale furniture, a solid and workmanlike strength, and unromantic honesty, which is a source of as lasting a gratification as the more fragile and unsubstantial beauty of Versailles. Place a Chippendale chair beside one of contemporary French workmanship, or a portrait of Hudson beside one of Boucher or Nattier, and you will realize to some extent how the one civilization was swept away in the first swelling of democracy, and how the other stood firm until it had broken the might of a Napoleon.

Of Hudson's greater contemporary, Hogarth, we have already treated in our chapter on the Jeremiads. He is the first of our artists whose supremacy has been acknowledged both in his own time and by posterity, for Hudson's memory has been allowed to go the way of Riley's. Those of us who know him wholly or mainly through prints are apt to forget Hogarth's claim to rank amongst our greatest painters, in the strictest sense of the word. Whistler, the last man from whom we should naturally have expected such a judgment, called Hogarth the greatest of English artists. We suspect that it was the masterly impressionism of such a portrait as the "Shrimp Girl," anticipating the delicacy while surpassing the strength of Whistler's own work, that called forth this tribute of admiration.

We have noticed, in our survey of Hogarth's subject pictures, two distinct and contradictory phases of his art. Most often he is lashing the vice of his time with a ruthless and uncompromising severity that will see no good anywhere, only the greed and cruelty and incompetence that were threatening our existence during the Pelham rule. But there is another mood in which he

gives form to a frank and boisterous pride of Englishry, and shows that whatever he may have thought about our faults, it never entered into his head to doubt our superiority to Frenchmen and every other species of foreigner. It is in his portraits, his masterpieces, that this fundamental love of his countrymen is most revealed. Of how savagely he could treat a sitter we know from his Lord Lovat. A more consummate old villain has never been thrown on canvas than the manifold traitor who sits counting off the clans on his fingers. What a contrast is Hogarth's treatment of his worthy and generous friend, Captain Coram! He has done what Fielding essayed, without a tithe of his success, in Squire Allworthy; he has portrayed a good man. Without the least suggestion of the Romantic sensibility, he has made the old sea-captain as lovable a figure as Sir Roger de Coverley, and there can be no higher praise.

A feat almost greater, in its way, was Hogarth's portrayal of his servants. Here he strikes out a new line in English art, one that was to prove of the highest importance. The picture is in the noblest sense democratic, the most democratic word that had been spoken in England since the "Canterbury Tales." As Fra Angelico painted angels, so we may almost say that Hogarth painted lackeys and kitchen sluts on his knees. We do not wonder that he was the most beloved of masters. For Hogarth does not treat these people, by the remotest implication, as inferiors; he does not look upon them from the standpoint of another class, nor sentimentalize them into creatures whose whole aspirations are bounded by his service; they have an interest and a divinity entirely their own, whether or no they perform their duty towards their employer. It was no small achievement to have executed, in an age of triumphant oligarchy, this apotheosis of the common people, and here, too, we have the

evidence of a spirit, vocal also in Gainsborough's parish clerk and Morland's yokels, that explains why it was that, in spite of manifold injustice, there was no English storming of the Bastille nor burning of the châteaux.

Not only in practice, but in theory, was Hogarth uncompromisingly English. He carried the reaction against the Dutch to an extreme that led him to caricature Rembrandt and denounce the "black old masters." He boldly declared that, given his own time and subject, he was as good a portrait painter as Vandyck. There was, however, as in Dr. Johnson's antipathy to Scotsmen, an element of conscious exaggeration in this attitude, and he confessed as much in private conversation. He had a healthy scorn of the affectation which worships every relic of antiquity, and despises the common things and common people of England. With his great influence and popularity he may fairly be said to have completed the work of Richardson; and finally to have established the doctrine of English art for Englishmen. He is notable for his own sake, and for all time, because he was not ashamed to be thoroughly national by choice and prejudice, to seek truth, not in a devitalized Eden Campagna, but in the very streets and slums of London.

A school of landscape painting had been springing up in the eighteenth century, but in this department, which was to be immortalized by Turner, native genius was sadly handicapped by French and Italian as well as Dutch tyranny. Our artists went for inspiration not to nature, but to

> "Whate'er Lorraine light-touched with softening hue,
> Or savage Rosa dashed, or learned Poussin drew."

The landscape of Lambert in the National Gallery, with its delicate sky colouring and the gentle light that pervades a prospect of utter tameness, shows that Lambert has caught some of Claude's secret at second-hand, but has

not even attempted to fathom the secret of the English country-side. It is the same with Wooton's landscape in the Fitzwilliam, made respectable by the insertion of a ruin, or with any other work of these two talented artists; it is evident that they did not care enough about the country to paint it with either observation or insight, they were not great enough to fall down upon their faces, and kiss the soil of their motherland.

Next we have Samuel Scott, trying to turn London into the insipid Venice of Canaletto; and Wilson, doomed to oscillate between Salvator Rosa, as in his Niobe, and Claude, as in most of his landscapes; yet both of them showing, by irrepressible flashes of genius, that the night is far spent, and that the emotional revival is working its magic in them too. Rouquet is able to pronounce upon them, even at this early and imperfect stage, that "there are few masters in this branch much superior to those landscape painters, who now enjoy the first reputation in England."

The name of Scott is also associated with the sea painting in which England was, at no distant date, to lead the world. There was quite a vogue of this style after the outbreak of war with Spain, for English naval officers liked to have their engagements recorded, though, honest Philistines as they were, they were much more particular about the nautical accuracy of each spar, and the proper station of each officer, than about the artistic merits of the picture. Perhaps the most promising of these early sea painters is Brooking, who had the practical advantage of having been bred in a dockyard. But even he could not escape the Dutch blight. Yet we may accept Rouquet's verdict: "Marine painting, in Vandervelde's taste, is a branch of art in which no one need be afraid to affirm that the English excel."

Hogarth, Richardson and Hudson, by purging the land of foreign domination, had cleared the way for one who

may justly be described as the undisputed sovereign of English eighteenth-century art. Hogarth had given us sturdy and lovable English folk, but it was for Sir Joshua to immortalize a hero, the first Lord Heathfield, defender of Gibraltar. In this portrait, Ruskin, with the mid-Victorian vulgarity that too often mars even his genius, can see nothing heroic, only "an old English gentleman obstinate about keys," just as Zoilus might have described Achilles as "a young Greek gentleman sulking about a wench." And yet, could Ruskin have paid either Heathfield or Reynolds a higher compliment? As we look at the strong, kindly, simple face in the picture, most surely we realize that into the hands of such gentlemen as this God hath committed the keys of England's greatness, and the three corners of the world in arms have not prevailed against it. It was the task of Reynolds and the English portrait painters to depict and ennoble the country gentry who rallied to the cause of England and of Europe in the hour of need. There would have been no place for a Romney or a Lawrence during the Walpole period. It is to the credit of Reynolds and his followers that they were thoroughly English. His beautiful "Holy Family" is the idealization, not of spiritual ecstasy nor of Renaissance pride, but of the family life, which, despite the sneers of emasculate men and disappointed women, has made England great.

It has never been the function of great sculptors or portrait painters to anticipate the art of the photographer by producing likenesses whose excellence depends upon the fact that they are easily recognized as such by every thoughtless observer. There is a faculty of divination in colour by which the artist may be said, in a manner, to create his age, to hold before it its highest hope, and depict what it is striving to become. Compare the Pitts of Romney and Hoppner, or the Lord Heathfields of Copley and Sir Joshua, and you will find hardly

a single point of resemblance, except for a certain similarity of feature. Michelangelo succeeded in fashioning his hero and his thinker out of a pair of undistinguished princelets, and it is difficult to believe that the earliest and grandest of the chiselled Pharaohs had their counterparts in reality. All portraits are windows through which the soul of the artist looks back to ours, and his soul is but a portion of one mightier than he, of which he partakes in a measure directly proportionable to his greatness. In Sir Joshua, then, we see, as we saw in Chatham and Johnson, England at her best.

He stands midway between the eighteenth century and romance, and to some extent embodies what is best in both. He is most fond of the burly strength of men like his Keppel and Heathfield, and his colouring is like the talk of his friend Dr. Johnson, robust and decisive, heartily rejoicing in life. But when he willed to be tender, not even Romney could excel him. The Windham in the National Portrait Gallery is almost too frail, too delicately romantic, even for the disciple of Burke and the champion of distressed aristocracy. There is a portrait of a young officer at Cobham Hall which shows how Sir Joshua could rise to perfect understanding of a poet, a Shelley without a voice and out of his proper element—and here the softness of colouring and sympathy of touch are more reminiscent of Shelley's own verse than what we usually associate with Sir Joshua. When he has a weak subject, his critical faculty is as wide awake as that of Sargent, and in the flabby, indecisive face of Lord George Sackville is written, only too legibly, the burden of his failure as a soldier and a statesman.

The type which Sir Joshua delights to paint, and for which he is most distinguished, is neither that of Windham nor of Sackville, but finds its fullest expression in his Admiral Keppel, and Dr. Johnson, and, above all, in his Lord Heathfield. This type is not introspective,

nor is there any trace of the divided soul of the dawning era, it stands four-square with a magnificent self-forgetfulness, as solid as the stone kicked by Johnson or the rock defended by Heathfield. Perfect it is not, for it lacks the spiritual intensity of the Sistine prophets, and the subtlety of Raphael's Pope Julius, and the deep introspection of Rembrandt, there is something still of the Prose Age about it, but it is unique and immortal, a heroism that performs its duty in silence, a moral fibre in which is neither cowardice nor the shadow of change.

Gainsborough's heroes are as strong as those of Reynolds, and he sometimes gives way to an almost brutal love of burly features and violent colouring, as in his Lord Cornwallis and General Lawrence, and most of all in his Blackstone. Such portraits are what Horace Walpole would have called "beefs." But what Gainsborough is most fond of is a certain clean-cut and reserved strength which is essentially aristocratic; it chisels the features of his "Blue Boy," and attains its most complete expression in the noble, enigmatic portrait of Amherst. It is a face which commands the respect without appealing to the sympathy of the spectator, a greatness which keeps aloof from the populace, and is much less democratic than that depicted by Sir Joshua. It is characteristic of Gainsborough that his last words should have been of meeting Vandyck in heaven. The blue of which he is so fond has none of the soft warmth of Correggio's Antiope, nor the transcendent innocence of Fra Angelico's skies, but breathes an intense haughtiness as of the sweep and rustle of a princess's robe. None the less there is a virility about this pride which distinguishes it at once from that of degenerate Versailles, with its turquoise and apple-green, its delicacy of Sèvres and Fragonard.

Gainsborough could sympathize with the poor and pave the way for romance in his landscape, but where he had to do with a rich sitter he represented the spirit

which was to be that of Castlereagh. The history of his successors is that of the transition to the Romantic ideal. The robustness and reserve give place to tenderness, and even colour changes to the feathery softness of Romney and the more serene gentleness of Lawrence. The golden age of the English gentry is also the golden age of our portraiture, which ranges from the undiminished strength of Hoppner and Raeburn to the delicacy and introspection of the more pronounced Romantics. It was only when the Eldonian blight settled upon them that they ceased to be glorified in art.

The lower class, and the soil from which they sprang, were not to be neglected. All through the period of coldness the people had received scant attention, except from Hogarth, nor was Nature herself tolerated unclothed, or even in native garb. Artists thought it beneath them to pay much attention to the haunts of boors, beasts and cattle. The fearful and wonderful animals that do duty for cows in Lambert's National Gallery picture would disgrace a Noah's ark, and even Wilson is seldom happy unless he can dump down a certain amount of classical stage property upon an English country-side.

It is to Gainsborough and Morland that we must look for the definite break from this clogging tradition. In Gainsborough it is not yet quite complete, his heart had still "yearnings for the buried day." It was not too often that he condescended to real English landscape in his large pictures. He is fondest of the long July afternoons and the blotchy park trees so dear to Watteau and his shepherds in blue silk, and these are as cosmopolitan as Claude's Campagna. Even when he is frankly depicting peasantry or animal life he often harks back to this incomplete conception, but not always. At his best he can be a simple Englishman, loving English life and English scenery. He is a thorough Tory too, and the English village, squire and all, is his rustic Utopia. It

is this conception that inspires his best landscapes, in which he is content to observe and glorify, and not to imitate. But nothing that he ever did is quite so touching and so simple as his portrait of the parish clerk. There he sits, an old man, untroubled by doubt, unruffled by discontent, a smile of perfect trustfulness lighting his face, his honest eyes conversing with heaven. Men feel before works like this, that here is a final refutation of the cynic and the pessimist; the God or world process that can produce such work as this parish clerk—and you may find his like in many an English village even now—cannot be utterly bad.

There can be no mistake about the hearty English sentiment of that fascinating reprobate, Morland. He accepted the life and scenery around him with frank affection, and set himself to paint the everyday life of ordinary folk in the spirit of the later Dutch school. Though there is little evidence of his having been inspired by Hogarth, he is his direct successor, but there is this important difference between the two men—Morland always painted the people because he loved them, Hogarth most often because he well-nigh despaired of them, and wished to reform them. Lambert's bovine grotesques, Scott's Thames Canal, even Gainsborough's hastily drawn park backgrounds, were not for Morland. He loved rough sports and rough men, the very animals of the country-side fell within the scope of his sympathy and minute observation, and surely never has the spirit of the brute creation been so tenderly displayed to man as in those two big cart-horses and the sturdy little pony "inside of a stable." The peasant that Morland draws is the "Johnny Bull" of Gillray, a great, sturdy fellow, usually in a smock-frock, with a stupid, almost childlike expression, and yet an able man with his hands, and a contented, kindly fellow, of a stock that was to defeat the "Sacred Guard" at Waterloo. Morland was under no

sentimental illusions about Johnny, he had seen too much of life for that; wreckers and poachers and deserters were no strangers to his art. But his opinion was on the whole favourable, and he had made Hogarth's discovery, that modern England was more worthy of an English artist's love than the relics of any ancient civilization.

The period of the great war coincides with an almost passionate cult of the English country-side, and one has only to spend a few hours in a gallery to notice how many landscape painters of mark begin their careers about this time; men as opposed in their methods as Ward, with his huge canvases and huge cattle; Crome, with his dreary Norfolk solitudes; and Cotman, with the delicate grace which takes us back to Japan, and forward to the Impressionists.

The use of water-colours provided a new and powerful medium for the interpretation of landscape, especially in its lighter and brighter moods. And as the fortunes of England rose to victory, so the elements of laughter and glory began to be perceived in her landscape. There had always been something sombre and depressing about the Dutch paintings, the long stretches of flat, monotonous country had cast a gloom over the spirit of the inhabitants from which not even the fleshly glories of Rubens were altogether free; there was heaviness in the mirth of these men, and they saw nature through a glass darkly. It was for Englishmen to teach the Western world how to "love the earth and to laugh."

Constable is the English master whose work resembles most that of the Dutch. His genius was formed during the Napoleonic wars, and the essence of it is its intense patriotism, which made him love "every stile and stump and lane" in his native village, and declare that he would never cease to paint them. For him these things wanted no added glory, no embellishment, it was enough to paint them in all their homeliness and sim-

plicity. He does not require serene skies and pouring sunlight to make his Suffolk landscape beautiful, he seems to despise such things, like companies who act Shakespeare's plays without scenery. He was a native of those eastern shires, the British Low Country, which had given birth to Cromwell and his Ironsides, and which is the stronghold of Puritanism. The austerity of the Suffolk painter is only equalled by that of the Norfolk painter, Crome. These men loved their country soberly.

It was not so with the supreme genius of Turner. His career as an artist begins just before the war, and it blossoms with the national spirit, just as did Shakespeare's. For during the first dreary years his work is comparatively formal; the glorious light effects and glowing colour schemes are not yet. There is something hard, almost cold, about his early work. To some critics it will seem both fanciful and Philistian to connect the budding of Turner's genius with political or military events. Yet such a connection is what we should most naturally, almost necessarily, expect. The greatest of men is also the most sensitive to spiritual influences, and the English painter, who is not unworthy to be named in the same breath with Michelangelo and Velasquez would be the first to take the impress of the stupendous forces that were visibly moulding the destinies of the universe; the greatest of Englishmen would surely feel most keenly England's awakening to greatness. So it had been with Shakespeare, so it was with Turner.

Great artists can paint nothing but what they see. This is none the less true because these men see quicker to the soul of things, because they dwell rather upon the inward and spiritual grace than upon the outward and visible sign. Italian painters did not paint Jewish Madonnas, and the Christ of Velasquez is different in form and spirit from the Christ of Fra Angelico, even as imperial Spain differed from medieval Italy. Men have

become great, not by breaking away from their age, but by frankly and reverently accepting its tendencies and making them divine. That is why it is so important for the artist to be born into a noble age, for a man who sees only petty, loveless things around him may indeed struggle nobly towards the light, but he starts with a crushing handicap. Turner was in this respect the most fortunate of men; he, a Londoner and a lover of ships, must have shuddered at the deadly peril when, only a few miles down the river, the English fleet was lying, cut off from the shore, in open mutiny; he certainly felt the thrill that went through England on the news of the victory of the Nile, for this is the subject of one of his pictures; he watched the body of Nelson borne up the river to lie beneath the great dome of St. Paul's, and in his mind's eye he saw the hero sinking into the darkness of the unknown amid the smoke and thunder of his last victory; he heard the cannon roar to celebrate the overthrow of the tyrant by British arms, and this, too, inspired him, but not with thoughtless joy or braggart pride. Like all eagle spirits who have not feared to gaze upon the white light of truth, he was full of the thoughtful sadness that is at the heart of things, and as the central figure of his Trafalgar is the dying conqueror, so at Waterloo he must weep, like the Iron Duke himself, over the thousands of brave fellows who lay there, heaped together, with silent, upturned faces, that their country might live. It was a noble sadness, and not the bitterness of despair or irony, that inspired this picture, for beyond that night of horror and agony, there is a wonderful light, as of that ultimate victory in which Death shall be swallowed up, and we may almost hear a voice, as of a great nation mourning for her warriors—"Well done, good and faithful servants!"

Here was a Motherland indeed, fit for the worship of her noblest sons! Turner felt this, and felt it more and more as his genius developed. He was no bigot, and like

all true patriots, could feel the glory and loveliness of other lands; but England had never so much as a rival in his affections, she was his bride and his mother and his queen. The greatest of his critics has already shown how, even when the kingdoms of Europe and their glory had been displayed before him, he still clung to English landscape; how he never succeeded in entering so intimately into the spirit of other lands; and how, even into his foreign scenery, the distinctive characteristics of his native land are constantly intruding themselves.

Foremost among the distinctive traits of our art has been the love and sympathy with the sea which we find in such full measure in Turner. The sea had hitherto been almost neglected, the Venetians, who might have been expected to love it, leaving it alone as an enemy, the Dutch stopping short at the oily calms of Vandervelde and the fluffy storms of Cuyp and Ruysdael, and the English, as we have seen, content to drift in their wake. But England had long been acclaimed by her sons the mistress of the waves; the tradition of the Armada, of Blake, of Hawke, of Rodney, the pride of commerce which in the eighteenth century had sometimes overshadowed even the pride of power, and the bold seafaring habits of so many Englishmen had all combined to turn men's thoughts to the bulwark of our defence and the highway of our prosperity. Almost without exception, the landscape artists of the Napoleonic period are sea painters. Morland had already set the example with those boiling and crashing seas of "The Wreckers" and other of his pictures. But here, too, Turner stands pre-eminent. He loved the sea, and was ready to face the most extreme peril that he might study her in her grandest moods. His treatment of her was essentially serious; he aspired to render the awful fury of the tempest as well as the divine peace of the calm. That is why he sometimes fails where inferior men would have succeeded by aiming less high.

It is hard to believe that the big waves washing against Calais pier have no element of solidity, and the confused medley of colours in at least one of his pictures in the Tate Gallery gives the idea that he is trying to express the inexpressible. But even his failures are nobler than other men's successes, for he has learnt wisdom from the sea-god Poseidon himself, while they were content to hold converse with tritons and nereids: he is master of the waves in as true a sense as Nelson.

That his spirit is as it were intoxicated with this idea of England and her power is evident from indirect as well as direct evidence. Many of his greatest non-English pictures suggest this idea in one way or another; Dido founding Carthage, Ulysses, the seafaring adventurer, deriding Polyphemus, and that other Queen of the Waves, the favourite of all his foreign cities, Venice. Grandest of all was his farewell to the old order when, years after the struggle, the aged artist painted the fighting "Temeraire" being towed to her last resting-place. The indescribable dignity of the gliding three-decker, and the crimson glory of sunset that streams across the unruffled water, are a fitting epilogue to a great epoch and a great career.

Turner was a child of his age in another sense; though born and bred in London he is fondest of painting seafaring and rustic folk; vast solitudes and happy countrysides appealed to him more than streets and slums, and his spirit was the very opposite to that of an old Kent shepherd, whom we once heard say after a visit to Lancashire, "It be a beautiful place, I could stand on a hill and count as many as two hundred chimbleys." This preference for wild life is even more marked in Turner's contemporaries, who all seem to concur in the opinion that God only made the sea and the country. It is easy to attribute this idea in an offhand manner to the Romantic influence, as if that settled the question, but in

this country, at any rate, it seems to depend mainly upon the fact that it was especially rural England, Johnny Bull and his Squire, who maintained British honour against Napoleon.

It is remarkable how this spirit of patriotism swept into its net even Bonington, who passed most of his life and painted nearly all his pictures abroad. Yet such was his passion for the country and the sea, that he was one of those whose work first induced the French painters to follow in the footsteps of the English, and to turn their attention to landscape. There is a picture in the Wallace Collection, "Henry III of France and the English Ambassador," which shows his subconscious pride of race in another form; the contrast between the frivolous, effeminate Frenchman and the grave, burly ambassador is just such a one as would have rejoiced the heart of Shakespeare.

Nor was Scotland neglected in art any more than in literature; not only did Turner and other Englishmen dwell lovingly upon her solemn and savage beauties, but she had her own artist in Robson. His picture of a dark mountain tarn, with the Cuchullin Mountains looming behind, is one of the most impressive of our many landscape paintings, and has a grandeur peculiarly its own; and Scotland had her portrait painter, too, in Raeburn. The grave and deliberate strength of his interpretations, and the austerity of his colouring, with its predominant grey, are characteristic of the nation which could produce such warriors as Duncan and Abercromby. Those endless expanses of heather, and mountain solitudes still alive with the memories of Graeme and Lochiel, could at last send forth sons as rugged as their own fastnesses, to fight and die in a common cause with Englishmen. Scotland and England no man shall put asunder—alas, that neither God nor man should have joined together Great Britain and Ireland!

# BOOK IV

## THE MODERN AGE

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## CHAPTER I

### THE MIDDLE-CLASS ASCENDANCY

IT is Canning who bridges over the transition between the Tory régime of George III and the middle-class régime of Victoria. The change that had been taking place in social life was bound to reflect itself, sooner or later, in the distribution of political power. The Industrial Revolution was creating a plutocracy that was gaining ground every year, in numbers and influence, upon the landed class. The Mr. Millbank of "Coningsby" is typical of the best of these men, whose headquarters were in Lancashire and the manufacturing districts. Their outlook and ideals were widely different from those of the country gentry. The squires had retained many of the characteristics of their feudal ancestors; they were essentially a fighting and governing class; though often stupid, they were never cowards; and though they may sometimes have been tyrants, they were not addicted to pettiness. They had an ideal of service, which made them expect obedience from those below them, but which made them the most efficient unpaid magistracy, and their sons the finest officers in Europe. They had formed a solid and unwavering support to the Government in the long war, grudging neither blood nor treasure.

But the men of business, who, with the great houses, were the main support of the Whig Party, were an essentially peace-loving and material class. They would certainly have stopped the war and starved the services

if they had got the opportunity. It was they who had sought to impeach Wellington; who had opposed votes of thanks to our leaders; who had cavilled at the Peninsula campaign; and who furiously attacked the renewal of war during the Hundred Days; they were not free from the meanness of being willing to wound and yet afraid to strike, as when they "slunk away" from their vote of censure after Talavera; their Ministry of All the Talents was a curse to the country. But the Whigs were by no means ready to adopt the sweeping doctrines of the Benthamites. They were despised by the Radicals even more than they were disliked by the Tories. They played with social reform without the enthusiasm of genuine reformers. They were patriots, and yet, like George Bubb Dodington, they loved their country "not with too intense a care." They had the phrases of liberty on their lips, but in their hearts they despised the masses. They were a party of trimmers, and Jeffrey, their champion of the "Edinburgh Review," rejoiced in the title.

We find Brougham, that most unstable orator, prostrating himself before the middle class while he proclaims his contempt for the mob. Mackintosh, the converted vindicator of Gaul, and afterwards the embodiment of cautious and scholarly Liberalism, would have combined the upper and middle classes against the masses, a distribution of forces that the nineteenth century was destined gradually to bring about. The reforms about which the Whigs were most sincere were political and religious, but even here they were trimmers. The Reform Bill was intended by its authors to be a final settlement, and Lord John Russell earned the nickname of "Finality John," though he belied it towards the end of his career. And as for religious reform, the Nonconformist community, always Whig, were able to drop their tolerant principles at the cry of "No Popery."

The fundamental doctrine of the nineteenth-century

Whigs was expediency. Brougham, at the beginning of a long and weary treatise on Political "Science," makes expediency the foundation of all government. It was the guiding principle of the Whig Cabinets of Melbourne and Russell. Such schemes as those of Bentham were too visionary and absolute for them. They were men of the world, Laodiceans, who were neither hot with Burke nor cold with James Mill. They aimed at being practical, which may account for the wonderful inefficiency of their administration.

But these tendencies were not confined to one party in the State. The most important feature of party politics after the war is the partial capture by the middle class of the Tory Party itself. For as the rigid statesmen who had conducted the war began to drop out, they were replaced by such men as Peel and Huskisson, of bourgeois antecedents and business instincts. The Reform Bill was not so much a constitutional revolution as the formal recognition of a change that had already taken place. The usefulness of the old system of pocket boroughs and unequal representation had passed away before its destruction. During the war, it had been the means of ensuring a steady administration by the class best fitted to be in power. It imposed an artificial check, not only upon the fluctuations of opinion, but upon the shifting of influence from the landed to the business class. It was therefore only natural that the Whigs should want to upset a system which worked so unfavourably to themselves. But the failure of Wellington's Ministry, the forcing of his hands over the question of Catholic Emancipation, and, finally, the majorities in an unreformed House of Commons in favour of reform, showed that the old system had ceased even to do the work its supporters had intended. The Reform Bill is therefore not the decisive break in English politics that some have imagined it to be. The legislation of the last years of Liverpool's

Government effected at least as much, in the direction of benefiting the people, as the whole record of the Grey and Melbourne administrations.

The distress that followed the war was succeeded by a period of prosperity in the early 'twenties, and this did more than anything else to dispel the gloom that had been so conspicuous a feature of the lean years. Our commercial supremacy was assured; the tide of invention was flowing strong; and the mood of the middle class became one of optimism, coarse and robust. The man with the muck rake was delighted at the prospect of raking in an unprecedented number of straws. About the golden crown he had not time to disturb himself, at any rate during weekdays. And now arose the strange modern belief in "progress," the superstition that provided you keep on moving, all roads will eventually lead to Utopia.

In fact the relaxation of the strain, and the flow of material prosperity, were combining to produce a second prose age. It may seem far-fetched to use such a term of the epoch that was to produce a Tennyson, a Browning, a Swinburne, the Rossettis, the Brontës. But these exceptions are more apparent than real. The Victorian literature is of a colder and more sedate order than the corresponding Romantic developments, and what is most poetic in it is in more or less conscious opposition to the spirit of the age. Here we shall find a similar state of things to the one we have already surveyed during the Walpole era. We find the same robust materialism, the same swaggering jingoism, the same forgetfulness of the unseen and spiritual. And we shall find just the same despair and striving against the age, on the part of its finer spirits, that we met with in the authors of the jeremiads.

Such are the parallels between the two prose ages, but the contrasts, if more subtle, are not less important.

The process of materialization was more gradual and masked in the second case than in the first. For before the Hanoverian dynasty, England had never been quite free from dangers that visibly threatened her existence, and kept the heart of the nation from waxing fat in security. It was only between the Peace of Utrecht and the Seven Years' War that the conscious and urgent necessity for national effort was really in abeyance. But after Waterloo, it may fairly be said that the patriotism of our countrymen has never, except in India during the mutiny, been put to the supreme test. So magnificent had been the results of England's great unselfish struggle with Napoleon, that for generations afterwards her citizens had every encouragement to think themselves invincible and invulnerable. Such a period of relaxation is one of the most dangerous that a nation can experience; in the case of communities, as of single souls, the text holds good, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." There are more dangers to mankind in the soft skies of perpetual summer than in the driven clouds and cutting gales of a Northern shore. The materialism of the Restoration had been checked, though not destroyed, by the wars with Louis XIV, and when it did burst the barriers after the peace, it was more sudden and absolute from having been dammed up so long. But the long peace of the nineteenth century, broken only by distant and half-realized struggles, was far more gradual in its operation.

The symptoms of the second prose age were naturally less obvious than those of the Walpole era, because of the overthrow of the classic tradition. The Muse had stamped her foot, and said she would be free, and after Wordsworth, Coleridge and finally Shelley had become classics, it was impossible to revive the smooth couplets and frigid diction of Goldsmith and Dr. Johnson. The sovereignty of Pope and Boileau was gone, never to be revived, and

critics were compelled to crush poetry with other weapons than those of Rapin. Even those who loved letters had to make a pretence of being free. It was like the period of the Terror, the same tyranny as before, but all in the name of liberty. For the Romantic doctrines were themselves allowed to crystallize into dogma, and the martyrs of one age were the fetishes of another. There was to be that most monstrous of orthodoxies, an orthodoxy of heresy, a pursuit of singularity for its own sake, under penalty of critical damnation.

England may be likened to an athlete who has been victorious in a long contest, and is induced to rely upon the reputation he has gained, and to live in luxury and ease. But the soul of a nation, like the body of an athlete, is only kept strong by unremitting effort, and woe to the nation that in the hour of need has only its laurels for a defence against the sword!

The change that was taking place was as pronounced in our international policy as in the internal life of the nation. To realize its nature we have only to compare Castlereagh and Canning with their successor, the pampered hero of early and mid-Victorian Liberalism, Lord Palmerston. He had served with them both, and was one of those Canningites who passed, by an easy transition, into the ranks of Whiggism. There was never a statesman who succeeded in voicing so thoroughly the opinion of his countrymen; his personal popularity was great enough to enable him to defy his colleagues, and even his sovereign, with impunity. He passed for a genial, sportsmanlike, bluff, manly, typical Englishman (he was an Irishman), and even his opponents were fain to confess that all were proud of him. At first sight his policy is identical in method and principle with that of Canning. There is the same proud insistence upon the dignity and authority of England, the same support of freedom and nationality, the same resistance to despots, the same

buoyant frankness. And there was no doubt that Palmerston was sincerely patriotic. But granting the utmost that can be claimed by his warmest admirer, what an immeasurable gulf is there between Palmerston and Canning, or between Palmerston and Castlereagh! The greatness and dignity of the former policy have passed away; strength has given place to bombast, firmness to officiousness, satire to impertinence, nay, sometimes the challenge of the deliverer to the swagger of the bully.

Castlereagh and Canning had been animated with a common sense of their country's honour, and they were determined that she should never be exposed to the chance of humiliation in the eyes of Europe. Terrible she ought to be in restraint, as well as action, like one of those stately three-deckers "reposing on their shadows in perfect stillness," to which Canning had likened her. When her voice was heard, it was to be listened to with awe, and when her arm was raised, it was to launch and not to brandish the spear. But Palmerston scarcely knew the meaning of restraint, either in word or deed. He wanted his voice, which was the voice of England, to be heard everywhere and on every subject. He was never tired of reading lectures and giving advice to the representatives of other countries, and he could not hold his tongue concerning the most delicate and controversial problems in their domestic affairs.

Had Palmerston continued as he began, there would have been little cause for complaint in respect of his foreign policy. When he came into office, he was confronted with the two problems of Belgium and Poland. In respect of the Low Countries, the key of our European position, he acted with firmness and success. He had the good sense to recognize frankly the new situation created by the revolt of Belgium, and although a United Netherlands had been the creation of English policy at Vienna, he predicted that a free Belgium, supported by national

feeling, would be a more effectual arrangement, from our point of view, than that of 1815. The main object of his policy, like that of Castlereagh, of Pitt, and of William III, was to prevent the aggrandizement of France upon her north-eastern frontier, and in this he succeeded. As for Poland, he was wise enough to see that this was a cause in which England was helpless to do more than sympathize, and despite his love of oppressed nations, he sent the Polish envoy empty away. But it was after the revolt that his weakness first revealed itself, when he joined with France in making representations to triumphant Russia, which exposed himself and England to a contemptuous snub.

After this, the Whig foreign policy becomes devoid of coherence and dignity, and this not only during Palmerston's tenure of the Foreign Office, but down to the day of his death. The landed interest, with their restrained courage and temperate firmness, had slipped from power even before the Reform Bill, and it was the bourgeois interest that was behind Russell and Palmerston. The worthy merchants and capitalists liked nothing better than a vigorous, bustling policy, they liked to hear their point of view asserted and, if possible, attended to, they were no niggards of advice. It was a fine thing to be a citizen of the greatest and richest country in the world, provided only that all this could be attained without too much risk to skin or pocket. Loss of prestige or dignity did not affect them to the same extent as the scions of a class with military and aristocratic traditions. Palmerston and Russell were aristocrats by birth and manners, but their policy was bourgeois, and it is their influence that gives its tone to the period between the first and second Reform Bills, the heyday of middle-class rule.

It was the one period of our history when we could safely afford such a policy. The prestige of the war and our immense resources had made us overwhelmingly

strong, and we could afford the luxury of a few gaucheries now and then in the eyes of Europe. While other nations were working out their salvation by deeds, England assumed the attitude of a well-meaning busybody, and talked without ceasing. When, as in the Italy of 1859 and 1860, events happened to move as we advised or predicted, we plumed ourselves mightily upon the deeds of MacMahon or Garibaldi; when, as in 1848, we sent Lord Minto to give his opinion, without greatly influencing the operations of Radetzky, we merely continued to talk upon other subjects. To every important country in Europe in succession, we gave public exhibitions of our ineptitude; to Spain we supplied an unwelcome and useless English legion; our ambassador was turned out of Madrid for gross impertinence; we alternately offended and cringed to France; we bullied Greece on behalf of a foreign swindler; we insulted the Emperor of Austria by ostentatious verbal patronage of rebels, and by ill-concealed official delight at the mobbing of Marshal Haynau; we drove Russia into a war that she would gladly have avoided; and we exposed ourselves to woeful humiliation over the affair of Schleswig-Holstein. No one was more conscious of the poor figure we were cutting than the Queen herself, and her dislike of Palmerston and his ways is plainly indicated in her letters, in which she complains that the honesty and dignity of her Government are being exposed in the eyes of the world by her Foreign Minister.

Nor was Palmerston consistently Liberal. To no Government did he show more favour than that of the Sultan, and he lost office by openly approving of Napoleon III's *coup d'état*. He was not a strong man, in the sense that Canning and Castlereagh were strong. The blusterer of Downing Street actually capitulated to the gasconade of the French colonels in the affair of Orsini, and had to resign the Premiership in consequence. He and Russell

succeeded, during their last Ministry, in forcing their country to eat the leek on two conspicuous occasions. After an ineffectual attempt to influence the destinies of Poland, they tried a fall with no less an opponent than the Iron Chancellor, who treated their representations with as little respect as he treated the Liberals of his own country. And England did nothing.

The policy of Sir Robert Peel and Lord Aberdeen, though less impressive, was more calculated to maintain our dignity. There never was a time when a wise inaction was so conducive to the honour and interests of England as in the middle of the last century. No vital interest was imperilled, our prestige was assured, the condition of the people demanded the utmost energies of our statesmen. Peel himself was of the middle class, and he shared to the full their horror of war, but he was also alive to the dangers of too openly pacific a policy. Speaking in 1830, he urged the Government to let there be no doubt of their determination to take up arms in case of necessity, nor of their conviction that in so doing they would have the ancient spirit of the country behind them.

The second quarter of the nineteenth century was remarkable for the same partial fusion of political parties as had marked the middle of the eighteenth. "Tory men, Whig measures" was Disraeli's scornful summary of Conservative policy after the Reform Bill. The break-up of the Tory landed interest began very soon after the peace. The orthodoxy of the Eldons and Castlereaghs was undermined within the very confines of the Ministry; the new members of the Liverpool Government, Peel, Huskisson, Robinson, were themselves sprung from the middle class, and saturated with middle-class ideas. These new men grouped themselves round Canning, and though some of them were eventually merged into the Whigs, it was their policy, and not that of Wellington or Eldon, that

moulded the Tory Party. Wellington combined with Peel in a desperate effort to stem the tide, but his failure was complete, and the task of adapting the old party to the new conditions fell to Peel.

It is difficult to conceive of a man less representative of the class that had chosen him for its leader. By birth, by temperament, by outlook, he was a man of the middle class. Business men trusted and esteemed him, and the bulk of the squires ended by hating him as a traitor. He was the most talented man of his day, without possessing a spark of genius. He was versed in every detail of business and finance, cautious to a degree, and rather a shrewd adapter of other men's ideas than a constructive statesman. His virtue, which he never forgot nor suffered others to forget, was of that kind to which we naturally apply the epithets " worthy " and " respectable." There have been few statesmen whose righteousness exceeded that of Peel, but there have been many more attractive. He was an admirable party leader for the dark days of Toryism, when the policy to be pursued was the negative one of giving as little as possible to the triumphant Whigs, but it was for the genius of Disraeli to endow the party with constructive principles, and a creative policy. Peel justly prided himself upon his exertions in raising an insignificant minority to a compact majority, and he defined his policy to be the maintenance of our ancient institutions of Church and State, and readiness to adopt any change that the lapse of years and the altered circumstances of society might require. To combat the materialism of the Whigs, some ideal was required more inspiring than this rather vague compromise between progress and reaction.

It was under Peel that the Tory Party adopted the style of Conservative, turning their backs upon their own principles, and indeed upon any constructive principles whatever, and appealing to the distrust that is

awakened in the average man's breast at the prospect of something new. General Johnson's tactics in front of Atlanta, holding a series of positions until they became untenable, and finally abandoning the town itself, may have been justifiable from a soldier's point of view, but they hardly lend themselves to imitation by a great political party.

In foreign affairs, this negative aspect of Conservative policy was especially manifest. To avoid the mountebank feats of Palmerston, and to live on good terms with our neighbours, was all that was required by the circumstances of the time, and all that Peel aimed at. Lord Aberdeen, his Foreign Minister, was even more peaceable than his leader, and as neither of them had the least taste for the vicarious support of freedom without incurring expense, their tenure of office in the 'forties was uneventful, as far as the rest of the world was concerned.

It was by a cruel irony that Aberdeen should have been dragged into the most foolish war of modern times. He had consented to form a heterogeneous Ministry, in which Palmerston was included, and which drifted into the Crimean adventure. It was not the first time that Palmerston's principles had brought the country to the brink of war over the Eastern question. As early as the 'thirties, the Russian advance in Central Asia was felt to be a source of danger to our Indian Empire. It was of the utmost importance that she should be prevented getting control of the Euphrates valley, and this Palmerston was shrewd enough to perceive. It also seemed to him, and to Lord John, that the French had designs upon Egypt, and that their support of the Pasha was merely a stepping-stone to the possession of the Pashalik. But how far they furthered this policy by co-operating with Russia, and risking war with France, is not apparent. Russell, before the Crimean War, was troubled with qualms lest, if we did not fight Russia in Europe, we

should have to fight her on the Indus. But the situation in the Far East was scarcely affected one way or the other by the campaign in the Near East.

It was another motive that was driving the country to clamour for war. The danger to India was not understood by the public, and it was assuredly not the primary consideration with Palmerston or Stratford Canning. The war was the natural outcome of the Whig foreign policy. It was generally agreed that the Tsar was a tyrant, and an active enemy of freedom all over Europe. He had crushed Poland brutally and Hungary officiously, and he certainly did not conduct his home affairs upon the principles that Palmerston had taken such pains to impress upon weaker States. There was also a feeling that Turkey was a little State being bullied by a big one, and the Tsar's rather brutal frankness about the sick man made this assumption not unreasonable. "God's just wrath," thundered the Laureate, "shall be wreaked on a giant liar," thus voicing the noblest element in the desire for war. There was also the old anxiety about the advance of Russia towards Constantinople. But we might at least have waited until the danger had taken a more concrete form, or at any rate have limited our efforts to the expulsion of Russia from the Principalities, an object in which we could have availed ourselves of the assistance of Austria.

But the country wanted to have blood. The circumstances of the quarrel were in every way convenient. The enemy were a long way off, and if the worst came to the worst, they could not imperil the safety of our shores or commerce. Besides, the only European Power who might conceivably do both was our ally, to say nothing of Turkey, and the active sympathy of Austria. We had thus the advantage of being at least three to one, on the offensive, and perfectly safe from retaliation. Every effort was made in the Press to vilify Aberdeen, who was

doing his best to secure an honourable settlement, and to glorify Palmerston, who was known to be in favour of strong measures. "Punch," which succeeded with wonderful fidelity in expressing the views of the average well-to-do City man, depicted a huge and rampant British lion, being held back by a puny and contemptible Aberdeen. Again, the Premier appeared on his knees, blacking the boots of a towering Tsar, or even as a thief, remanded till next sessions. "All that remains of him," sneered another detractor, "now is pure womanly."

The nation went to war with as light a heart as the French in 1870. Palmerston, whose policy had been that of Ancient Pistol, supported it in an after-dinner speech worthy in sentiment, if not in brilliancy, of Falstaff. He treated the whole affair as if it were a huge joke, as Southey had treated the retreat from Moscow. His biographer attempts to defend him, upon the ridiculous plea that it was necessary to keep up the spirits of the nation. The laughing valour of Drake, and the lofty satire of Canning, are indeed worthy of a great people, but the humour of Palmerston was the contemptible levity of a buffoon. The expedition to the Baltic, which began in froth and ended in smoke, besides provoking this outburst upon the part of Palmerston, was the inspiration of such cheerful ditties as:

> "England and France will soon pull down
> The Eagle and Imperial crown,
> And his bearlike growls we soon will drown
> With 'Let us give it to him, Charley.'"

"The people are wild about this war," writes Greville, "and besides the general confidence that we are to obtain a very signal success in our naval and military operations, there is a violent desire to force the Emperor to make a very humiliating peace, and a strong conviction that he will soon be compelled to do so." A state of things similar to this had obtained during the Spanish

War fever, that had proved fatal to Walpole; the same swaggering confidence, the same choice of a safe enemy, the same capricious arrogance in negotiation, the same jingo majority in the Ministry, dragging in its train a reluctant Chief Minister, the same criminal unreadiness for war. Another feature of resemblance consists in the fact that materialism and consequent inefficiency tainted the upper ranks of society, and left the lower, so far, almost untouched, and that the one ennobling feature of the Crimean War was the heroism of the soldiers, who recalled the feats of Picton's villains and Oliver's saints. The infantry of Inkermann and the cavalry of Balaclava stand upon the topmost pinnacle of martial glory, their fame may be equalled, but it can never be surpassed. The only great poetic legacy of the war is Tennyson's "Light Brigade." But our prestige was shaken. Horrors like those of the trenches, leaders like Simpson and Codrington, Lucan and Cardigan, administrators like Newcastle and Panmure, were a demonstration to Europe of how much we had degenerated as a military power since Waterloo. Even Palmerston lost a little of his cocksureness.

We have seen how the early Victorian method of conducting the affairs of the nation stood the test of action. To understand the theory of the time, let us glance at the classic debate of 1850, when the whole of the Whig Government's foreign policy was called in question as a result of the Don Pacifico affair. It lasted for four nights, and not only did such giants figure in it as Palmerston, Russell, Peel, Cockburn, Gladstone, Disraeli, Cobden and Roebuck, but the discussion turned upon general principles, to an extent almost unprecedented in parliamentary annals.

Palmerston made the speech of his life. All through a June night he was on his feet, and one who was witness of the scene has described to us how, speaking very rapidly and with scarcely a note, he held a crowded

house, from twilight to twilight, in rapt attention. It is hardly possible to believe that sentiments so generous and dignified could emanate from the vulgarian of the Greenwich dinner. Here we have the Whig policy at its best. Palmerston's object was twofold; he wished to establish once and for all the claim of every Englishman, however remote, upon the watchful eye and strong arm of his country, and he wished to vindicate the patronage of freedom that was involved in Whig foreign policy. Upon the first point he was triumphantly successful; his "civis Romanus sum" will live when all his other utterances are forgotten, and he has set up a standard for those who come after him, which may be neglected in practice, but will not easily be disputed in theory. For Empire is a mystical bond, by virtue of which no Englishman is too poor, or too isolated, to walk a blameless path, without the support of fleets and armies; and the sword that strikes him unjustly shall, if need be, set free the very demons of Armageddon, that the wrong may be made right.

It is a pity that truths so noble should have been vindicated in so base a cause. Palmerston had spoken like a hero, but he had acted like a bully. To assert the rights of Englishmen, it was not necessary to press, by force of arms, the fraudulent claims of a Portuguese Jew upon a little State, nor to quarrel with our neighbours in so doing.

In support of freedom, Palmerston is not less impressive. He complains that those who, like himself, have stood up for temperate reform, have always been run at as the fomenters of revolution. "They are such plausible men," say the supporters of despotism. "Now," says Palmerston in a burst of splendid eloquence, "there are revolutionists of two kinds. In the first place there are those violent, hot-headed and unthinking men, who fly to arms, who overthrow established governments, and

who recklessly, without regard to consequences, and without measuring difficulties or comparing strength, deluge their country with blood. . . . But there are revolutionists of another kind; blind-minded men, who, animated by antiquated prejudices and daunted by ignorant apprehensions, dam up the current of human improvement, until the irresistible pressure of accumulated discontent breaks down the opposing barriers, and overthrows and levels to the earth those very institutions that a timely application of renovating means would have rendered strong and lasting."

Canning himself uttered no nobler words than these, but with Canning they would have translated themselves into a firm and steady course of action, instead of evaporating, as with Palmerston, into talk and swagger, into humiliation and a useless war. The fact is that Palmerston looked upon his interferences as a sort of luxury, and wanted England to exert her moral influence, as leader of Europe, without the inconvenience of honouring words by deeds. Palmerston was thus a Launcelot, who was determined upon no account to enter the lists, "using argument alone."

That this is no exaggeration may be seen from the speech of his most brilliant supporter in the debate, Alexander Cockburn. Cockburn somewhat naively defines the Whig policy as "a middle policy, between absolutism and republicanism, seeking to encourage constitutional government, but not interfering to establish it by force of arms, using argument alone—taking a broad attitude at the head of the free nations of the earth." "Continental nations," he cheerfully admits, "may detest us [he might have said "despise"], but such nations as are freed will be thankful. Furthermore [and here we strike up against the inevitable Whig materialism], such a policy is essential to our commerce, our food supply, and our great manufacturing interests."

Sir Robert Peel opposed Palmerston in his last and weightiest speech. Voicing the pacific spirit which he and Aberdeen had displayed when in office, he read the Government a homily upon the need for minding their own business. Their policy was that of the French Convention offering to aid revolutions everywhere, or that of the Duke of Brunswick threatening to destroy Paris. Diplomacy was "a costly engine for maintaining peace." If it was to be used for maintaining angry correspondences with every Court in Europe, or recklessly promoting every supposed British interest, it was an instrument not only costly, but mischievous. He appealed to Castlereagh and Canning, to Pitt, Fox and Grenville, against such tactics, and solemnly warned the Government that they were incurring difficulties of which they could scarcely conceive, while not in any way helping the cause of constitutional freedom.

He had been preceded in the debate by one of his supporters, whose fame was to surpass even that of his chief—William Ewart Gladstone. How profoundly influenced was the Gladstonian foreign policy by the ideas of Peel, much more so than by those of the Whigs, is apparent in this speech. He proposes the principle of non-intervention as a definite substitute for the policy of Palmerston, and denies our right to impose even a sound policy upon other nations. As for the "Civis Romanus," it is a title inapplicable to the citizens of a Christian State. The cosmopolitanism which Disraeli detected in Peel's later utterances finds no uncertain voice in this pronouncement of his follower, in which we catch the first notes of a national idealism, to which Disraeli did not attain, and which Gladstone could not support. Disraeli spoke on the same side of the debate, but not on the same grounds. To his mind, the fault of Palmerston's policy lay in the danger it involved to England. Fourteen years earlier, in the Runnymede letters, he had said, addressing

Palmerston, that if there was a war to-morrow, it would be one against English supremacy, and that we should have no allies. He now takes up the same position, and fears that the result of our diplomatic antics may take the form of some modern League of Cambray, in which England will play the rôle of Venice. Moreover, he regards European problems from a standpoint almost brutally national, being ready to countenance, in the interests of England, even Austrian domination in Italy.

The last speech which we have to notice in this battle of the giants is that of Cobden, for Lord John Russell's is but a perfunctory defence of a colleague, with whose services he had just then the wish, but not the will, to dispense. Cobden stood for the best type of Northern business man, able, upright, and hungry for improvement, but somewhat deficient in grasp of the larger issues of international policy. However, his sturdy good sense was admirably calculated to pierce through the shams of orthodox Whiggism. He sees that Palmerston is no more democratic than Peel, he likes protocols and conventions, and the smaller the State, the better it suits his taste. "I believe," he says, "that the progress of freedom depends more upon the maintenance of peace, the spread of commerce, and the diffusion of education, than upon the labours of Cabinets and Foreign Offices." He believes that moral influence is about to replace physical force. We do not go about armed; duelling is abolished; in domestic life, in schools, in asylums, even with animals, we see influence taking the place of coercion, and why not among nations too? The long peace may have helped to put such dreams into Cobden's mind, and it is piteous to think that he was speaking on the eve of a period which was to inscribe upon its scroll the names of Inkermann, of Cawnpore, of Solferino, of Gettysburg, of Sadowa, and of Mars la Tour. Cobden was the opposite of Cassandra, in that he prophesied smooth things, and

the event falsified them. Be these things as they may, nothing can detract from the sincerity of this speech, and those who dissent most passionately from the conclusions of the statesman must stand reverently uncovered before the character of the man.

Such, then, was this historic debate, conducted on more philosophical lines than, perhaps, any other debate of an English House of Commons, and furnishing us with the best clue to the labyrinth of mid-nineteenth-century foreign politics. We have the Palmerstonian doctrine of the rights of Englishmen and the moral leadership of Europe, magnificent in precept, but shrinking in practice to a "middle policy," enforced "by argument alone"—except in the case of little States like Greece; then there is Peel, only anxious to preserve a dignified neutrality and to let other nations work out their own salvation, and Gladstone with his plain principle of non-intervention; then Disraeli, cautious and peaceable, but with a single eye to the interests of England; finally Cobden, with his ideal of an industrial Utopia, in which everybody shall lead a busy, righteous and sober life, untroubled by dreams of national and military glory. With the exception of Disraeli's speech, all these represent different versions of a middle-class philosophy; in Palmerston it is active and militant; in Peel it is passive, seeking only to leave and to be left alone; in Cobden it rises to the ideal, the frock-coated perfection of the nineteenth-century industrial apprentice, brought up on the teachings of Samuel Smiles. One cannot wax ecstatic over such a consummation, but something very similar has been the creed of worthy burghers all over the North of Europe, sturdy, peaceable, unimaginative men, giving God and man their dues and not a farthing more nor less, keenly conscious of their rights, wretched statesmen, but often the backbone of States.

We have selected Palmerston, rather than Lord John

Russell, as the representative of Whiggism in action, because Palmerston was the greater and more popular man of the two. The little dyspeptic "Johnny," to whom the most friendly pencil could never impart dignity, was in every way a less impressive figure than the burly "Pam," with the straw wagging at his mouth and his fixed expression of rakish good-humour; blame him as you will, it is impossible not to like the man, while, however much Lord John may command our respect, he is too cold, and perhaps too mediocre a figure, to excite any warmer feeling. At this distance of time, his speeches seem formal and tedious; they lack the spaciousness of Peel and the racy lucidity of Palmerston; his writings are forgotten; his Italian dispatch of 1860 is perhaps his best title to literary fame. He was endowed with the conscious and prosaic virtue that is so characteristic of his time, and his dying words, "I have made mistakes, but in all I did my object was the public good," are no more than the truth. He was of the straitest sect of the Whigs, and civil and religious liberty were the objects that he set before himself and the nation, although he was a rigid Protestant, with a hatred, that sometimes amounted to intolerance, for Rome and Ritualism. He was also a staunch, though not a dogmatic individualist, and had scant sympathy with what our own age knows as Social Reform, except perhaps in the matter of Education. He was an ideal leader for those who did not want to go the whole way with Bentham and the orthodox economists, but were on the whole desirous of as free a field as possible for competition and profits. The Radicals, who advocated the more drastic policy, formed the left wing of his party —a minority too small to govern, but sometimes large enough to make their influence felt as a goad or stimulus to the more slow-moving Whigs. It must be remembered that the word Radical has altered its meaning since the days of Roebuck; then it signified a destructive

individualist, now it is more often applied to the exponents of a somewhat tentative social reform.

Lord John was a staunch upholder of what he conceived to be the dignity and interests of England. He uttered the memorable words, "Let us be Englishmen first and economists afterwards"—which show that he was, at least, able to estimate Ricardian principles at their proper value. His foreign policy was fashioned after the same model as that of Palmerston, but on a less ambitious scale, and, indeed, Palmerston's vagaries during the Ministry of 'forty-six were altogether too much for him, especially when his fussy remonstrances were put aside with indulgent firmness, and a curt "There is a limit to all things." But the stronger nature of Palmerston ended by dominating that of his colleague, and they were associated in the Polish and Schleswig-Holstein fiascos. The language of "the Nestor of European politics," about the subsequent policy of Gladstone, is couched in terms of the most emphatic disapproval. "He has tarnished the national honour, injured the national interests, and lowered the national character." This terrific indictment is brought, not against an opponent, but against Lord John's friend and colleague, his successor in the leadership of the party. It is, moreover, used long before the more conspicuous failures of foreign policy associated with the name of Gladstone, and shows the gulf that divides the statesmanship of the Gladstonian Liberals from that of the Palmerstonian Whigs.

There is a feature of Palmerston's rhetorical masterpiece, which we have hitherto left out of account, but which is most important of all as expressing the spirit of his time. This is the robust optimism of his outlook upon things in general, and upon English affairs in particular. "This country has presented a spectacle honourable to the people of England, and worthy of the

admiration of mankind. We have shown that liberty is compatible with order; that individual freedom is reconcilable with obedience to the law. We have shown the example of a nation, in which every class of society accepts with cheerfulness the lot which Providence has assigned to it; while at the same time every individual in each class is constantly striving to raise himself in the social scale—not by injustice and wrong, not by violence and illegality—but by preserving good conduct, and by the ready and energetic exertion of the moral and intellectual faculties with which his Creator has endowed him." And this cheerful confidence that all is well with England, and growing better still, is echoed by all prominent Whigs, and not a few Tories of this period. Tennyson talks of freedom broadening down from precedent to precedent, and speaks of England as a land of settled government, seldom troubled by faction, where a man may speak the things he will. Worthy Eliza Cook, the very Pangloss of doggerel, turns her pedestrian muse into such paths as:

> "The Briton may traverse the pole or the zone,
> And boldly claim his right;
> For he calls such a vast domain his own,
> That the sun never sets on its might,"

and there is a Palmerstonian ring in her lines on the flag:

> "In the cause of the wronged may it ever be first,
> When tyrants are humbled and fetters are burst;
> Be 'Justice' the war-shout, and dastard is he
> Who would scruple to die 'neath the flag of the free."

It is, perhaps, too much the fashion to laugh at poetesses like Eliza Cook and Mrs. Hemans, who were at least healthy, readable and sincere, qualities seldom distinctive of the Corinnas of our own day. Eliza Cook's rhymes are superior to Young's dithyrambs about commerce, and the Spanish War jingoism of the Walpole age; her John Bull is no grasping tradesman, but a good

knight, whose privilege it is to ride abroad redressing wrong.

Robert Browning is, indeed, the one example of a great poet, thoroughly on the side of the orthodox Whigs. Macaulay could have found little to quarrel with in his few references to politics, though he would probably have found everything to censure in his style. Browning is as bustling and optimistic as Palmerston, and his optimism goes much deeper. Never, from Pippa's cry of cosmic rapture to the sunset hymn of Asolando—such a hymn, one fancies, as that of the dying Blake, "making the rafters ring"—does he waver for an instant from his ideal of cheerful manliness, from his belief that God and the world are very good, and that the good man is, by nature, a fighter in a winning cause.

Browning's answer, late in life, to the question "Why am I a Liberal?" is one that Lord John might have given, had he been a great man and a poet, instead of a talented mediocrity and a poetaster.

> "But little do or can, the best of us:
> That little is achieved through Liberty.
> Who then dares hold, emancipated thus,
> His fellow should continue bound? Not I,
> Who live, love, labour freely, and discuss
> A brother's right to freedom. That is 'Why.'"

His patriotism is as robust and unquestioning as that of the staunchest Palmerstonian. In lyric poetry there is nothing more sublime than his few lines off Gibraltar, with Cadiz, Trafalgar, St. Vincent and the Rock itself, monuments of England's greatness, all around, and Jove's planet rising silent over Africa.

> "Here and here has England helped me, how can I help England, say?"

Short as this is, there is a depth of thought, and a variety of suggestion, that elevate it to the rank of a classic. Every important word is an inspiration, a door

opening out upon an infinity of suggestion. The few touches which visualize the scene—the glory of sunset; the grandeur of the distant fortress; the triumphant pride of Trafalgar, throned on the burning water—reveal the living presence of the Motherland, a presence only dwarfed by that of God Himself, and the cosmic mystery hinted at by Jove's planet, rising silent over Africa.

There are other short lyrics of his, of which patriotism is the keynote of the inspiration; the yearning for an English spring, of the Englishman in Italy, with its loving minuteness of detail, and the toast of Nelson in good English beer. An early play, "Strafford," is literally intoxicated with patriotism, and achieves that in which the English Romantics had conspicuously failed, the ideal of an historical drama, in which the interest is social and patriotic. Here Browning treats of the fathers of the Whig Party, Pym, Hampden and their friends, and depicts them as men given body and soul to their country. Vane describes them as

> "A stealthy gathering of great-hearted men
> That take up England's cause—England is here,"

and when Rudyard sneers at Hollis for lack of zeal, arising from his brotherly affection for Strafford, Hampden replies:

> "Time to tell him that
> When he forgets the mother of us all."

By such a spirit, the duel between Pym and Strafford is ennobled and sanctified. Pym loves Strafford, but he loves England more, he is prepared to sacrifice friendship and remorse upon the altar of his country:

> "England, I am thy own, dost thou exact
> This service? I obey thee to the end,"

is his cry upon the eve of the final tragedy, the spilling of a friend's blood. Browning has emphasized, what he believed was the issue at stake at the time of the rebellion,

the principle of personal loyalty against public spirit; he has even exaggerated it, by making the authors of the revolution more consciously patriotic than they really were. The last scene of the play, between the two rivals, owes its beauty and pathos to the fact that both are lifted high above the pettiness of merely personal enmity; as a man, the heart of Pym yearns towards Strafford, as an Englishman, he must kill him. He hints that, should England require it, even the life of the Lord's anointed will not be held sacred. Strafford, doomed and defeated, also loves England after his fashion, and is above petty resentment towards the man who is sending him to the block.

This much may fairly be conceded to the Whigs, that Browning was of them, a poet and a patriot. But it must be remembered that his poetry was, in choice of subject, essentially un-English. His muse was seldom brought into contact with the march of events at home, despite "The Englishman in Italy," and he loves the vineyards of the South more than the fields of England. Even the three patriotic lyrics to which we have referred are the songs of an Englishman abroad. And after these early pieces, the note of Whig patriotism is seldom heard. There is a passing reference to the iniquity of the Corn Laws, but this comes from Sorrento. Patriot and Liberal Browning remained to his dying day, but after his early work, his poetry is almost entirely individual and cosmopolitan. So that if we must regard him as an exception to the general tendency to separate poetry from a prose age, the exception is robbed of much of its significance by the circumstances of his life.

Lord John, reviewing his long life, speaks of his age as "a period of happy progress" and like a good Whig congratulates England on being in "the complete enjoyment of civil and religious freedom." Even John Bright, who could be as fervent as any one in the praise

of middle-class England, finds the optimism of the orthodox Whigs too much for him: "There is nothing for me to do but to say 'What a happy people we are, and how delightful it is to be under the Government of Lord Palmerston and his Whig colleagues.'" Readers of Matthew Arnold's works will remember his denunciations of the mid-Victorian bourgeois optimism of Mr. Lowe and the "Daily Telegraph." It is certain that under the Whig régime, Englishmen allowed themselves to drift into a state of dangerous self-complacency.

That the citizens of the first nation in the world should be sensible of her greatness and conscious of their own proud responsibility is natural and noble. There is no more fatal symptom of decay than a tendency to sneer at the flag, and recklessly to decry everything national. Nobody was more conscious of his country's high mission than Wordsworth, but it was a pride tinged with humility and the fear of God; it disdained to boast. But the pride of middle-class ascendancy tended to become that of Nebuchadnezzar: "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the honour of my majesty?" The spirit in which we entered the Crimean War was not that in which we had faced Napoleon. The grossness of utilitarianism was making itself felt in every department of national life; standards of value were based more and more upon material calculations; the higher manifestations of enthusiasm were coming to be distrusted as sentimentalism; even religion was frozen over with formality. And it was too often the mere progress of our machinery, and the vastness of our resources, that made our mid-Victorian Pharisees thank God that we were not as other nations. The Exhibition of 1851 went a long way towards increasing the satisfaction of Englishmen with themselves. The ostensible pretext was that of promoting the brotherhood of nations, and inaugurating an era of friendly rivalry, but the spectacle of the richest nation in the

world inviting all others to a display of industries could only tend to enhance the pride of wealth, and make us in fact, as well as in satire, a nation of shopkeepers.

Conscious and heavy respectability was the order of the day. Platitude flourished to an extent never equalled before nor since; men gravely hailed Martin Tupper as an inspired prophet and boomed him through edition after edition; while the Laureate himself confessed that his idea of King Arthur was taken from the excellent Prince Consort. At the same time, Charlotte Brontë was called to account in our foremost literary organ, upon the score of impropriety; the authors of "Essays and Reviews" narrowly escaped being drummed out of the Church for heresy; and the divines who hailed Paley, that Bentham of theology, as a defender of the faith, were not likely to shrink from the reckless folly of attacking biologists and geologists upon their own ground. Art had almost ceased to exist before the pre-Raphaelite revival; colouring was without delicacy, drawing generally without grace or observation. In every department of life, we were drifting into the ice of a frozen age.

The aristocratic Whigs would probably have agreed, in taking "civil and religious liberty" as their ostensible watchword. But their fundamental doctrine might be more accurately described as one of compromise and expediency. The careers of these men were chapters of contradictions. Palmerston, who was agitating the Continent in the cause of liberty and progress, was ready to resign his seat in the Cabinet, rather than concede the least measure of reform; he was as much the friend of Napoleon III and the Sultan as he was of Kossuth and Garibaldi. And Palmerston, the reactionary who chalked "No tyranny" on the door of Bismarck, was colleague of the naughty boy who chalked "No Popery" on the door of Wiseman—the subsequent tactics being the same in both cases. The intentions of the Whigs were excellent,

but as long as Palmerston and Russell remained in office, their home policy was sterile, timorous and uninspiring, favouring capital at the expense of land, tinkering gingerly at great problems like reform and education, with which it lacked the courage to grapple, disliked by the squires, distrusted by the workers, and relying for its support upon the Mr. Gradgrind of Dickens, and the Mr. Bottles of Matthew Arnold.

Compromise and expediency had been advocated, to a greater or less degree, by Jeffrey, by Brougham and by Mackintosh. But the Whig Party included in its ranks a philosopher, or rather a danger of philosophy, whose life was a perfect expression of the principles that inspired its policy from 1832 to 1866. To understand Macaulay is to understand Whiggism His mind was just great enough to comprehend, and to expound with unexampled lucidity, the views of those about him, but he was not, like Disraeli, the man to reach at truths that lay beyond the grasp of his ablest colleagues. He was the man of his age and party, and an exhaustive study of the spiritless platitudes of Lord John, of the brilliant shallowness of Brougham, and of the heavy pronouncements of Jeffrey, is rendered unnecessary by the author, who said, so much better than they, what they were all aiming at.

Much has been written about Macaulay's style and methods of thought, and perhaps the tendency is to do him somewhat less than justice. If the principles of his creed led him logically to materialism, his temperament and training prevented him from following them out to the end. He was certainly a poet, and though never in the first rank, his poetry sometimes reaches a very high level, especially in his "Armada," and the two stanzas describing the final rout at Lake Regillus, with their thunder-roll of names and rush of imagery. He almost shed tears upon first entering St. Peter's, and despite his Essay on Bacon, he passed his leisure in the perusal, not of ephem-

eral treatises on physical and social science, but of the masterpieces of all time. However much he might rail against the light, he could never be the dupe of such absurdities as rejoiced the early utilitarians. He hardly needed to bare his arm for the dissection of "Mill on Government." With equal facility, he could impart to history the glow of fiction, could dust the jacket of Johnson's biographer, quote Warburton and Chillingworth against Gladstone, and detect the rhymed plagiarisms of Robert Montgomery. As for patriotism, whether he is describing Chatham's devotion to England or that of Horatius to the City of the Seven Hills, there is no mistaking the warmth of his sentiment, nor the singleness of his enthusiasm. His history is a very apotheosis of England and her institutions, and spread their fame far and wide over the Continent. His patriotic Utopia, the golden age of Rome, when none was for a party but all were for the State, must be the ideal of every true patriot in every age. "He was," says his biographer, "a patriot, if ever there was one. It would be difficult to find anybody, whether great or small, who more heartily and permanently enjoyed the consciousness of being an Englishman."

In all this Macaulay was a Whig of the Palmerstonian age. Nobody ever said finer things about England and Englishmen than the Whig chiefs. Macaulay's Whiggism was as thoroughgoing as that of Lord John himself. "I entered public life a Whig," he says to his constituents, "and a Whig I am determined to remain." In his eyes the party is transfigured, he sees in the Melbourne Government the worthy representatives of the party which had resisted Elizabeth, overthrown Charles I, passed the Habeas Corpus Act, the Bill of Rights, and the Toleration Act, established the Hanoverian dynasty and resisted the war with revolutionary France. "While one shred of the old banner is flying,

by that banner will I at last be found. . . . The good old cause is still the good old cause with me."

But delve beneath the surface of this brave show of enthusiasm, and we shall find upon what insecure and material foundations it reposes; Macaulay's education should have made him an idealist, but he assimilated only too well the spirit of his surroundings and associates. Bentham himself might have applauded the Essay on Bacon, and the criticism of Southey's "Colloquies." Macaulay's style is only too sure an index to the soul, or rather the soullessness, behind it. As clear-cut and hard-hitting as Bentham's, it is devoid of shade and delicacy, it has the efficiency of a machine, not the beauty of life. Never are we startled by the hint of some truth too deep for language, nor teased with any indefinable apprehension of loveliness, it resembles rather some gloriously apparelled woman of the world, whose outward shell is divine, but whose heart is ashes.

A foolish review of a still more foolish book ends with the words, "Thus is Shakespeare brought to earth." It is Macaulay's aim to bring everything and everybody to earth. He has all the pride of practicality which induced Palmerston, during his tenure of the Home Office, to go out of his way to extol the merits of drainage above those of devotion. It is apparent to him that the age of romance is dead, and that poetry cannot breathe in an atmosphere of civilization. In an enlightened age there will be little poetry; "Perhaps no person can be a poet, or even enjoy poetry, without a certain unsoundness of mind." "Truth, indeed, is essential to poetry, but it is the truth of madness." It is not wonderful that Macaulay failed to appreciate the poets of his own age. He propounds a theory not essentially different from that of Bentham, for whereas one had openly classed poetry with pushpin, the other treats it as a childish pleasure fit for unsound minds. That Macaulay's practice was different from

Bentham's is due to the fact that he was no "philosophical Radical," but a scholar and a trimmer, one of the Whig leaders.

His assault upon philosophy is even more crude than his assault upon poetry. In the Essay on Bacon, the bludgeon that had already settled the account of poor Robert Montgomery falls with merciless severity upon the heads of Plato, of Aristotle and of Seneca. It is our old story of the man with the muck rake. The philosophers of all ages had gone astray, by looking to spirit rather than matter, by preferring ideals to experiment, and Macaulay would fain set this right, by making a clean sweep of philosophy, by turning creators into inventors, and dreamers into doctors. Here he comes into line with the rising school, whose philosophy was to deny the possibility of any philosophy, and in this essay he is as uncompromising as Comte himself. It is easy to see, reading between the lines of his Essay on Ranke, that this is the view he takes about religious doctrines. The human mind may improve infinitely in scientific knowledge, but it is subject to the same gross errors in theology as obsessed even so clever a man as Sir Thomas More. Neither genius, nor the growth of knowledge, is a guarantee against gross fallacy. The obvious inference is that theology is all vanity and vexation of spirit, a bottomless pit of error, that wise men will avoid like philosophy or the devil.

Macaulay's idea of the State is what we should naturally expect from his views on art and philosophy. He regards it as a business transaction, and the standards by which its success are to be measured are, in the main, to be derived from statistics of material prosperity. In his review of Gladstone, he falls into an error that his knowledge of Burke might have taught him to avoid, by arguing upon the assumption that there is no essential difference between politics and business. The State is the

result of a tacit agreement between its members, for the purpose of protecting life and preserving property, the social contract, as interpreted by that other apostle of Whig compromise, John Locke.

Macaulay has all the Manchester distrust of State action. His governing company ought to confine itself strictly to the objects for which it was constituted. But he compromises, by allowing the directors to promote these aims indirectly, as well as directly. Thus, while he is opposed to the principle of Church establishments, he admits that it may be as well to continue the Church of England upon its present footing, for utilitarian reasons. On the question of education, one about which most of the Whigs were ready to advance beyond their habitual laissez-faire, he falls into inconsistency. In his Essay on Southey, he talks of Governments as blind leaders of the blind, and asks whether they are any more likely to lead the people into the right way than the people are to lead themselves. And yet, in his Essay on Gladstone, he allows the State to instruct the people "on those principles of morality which are common to all forms of Christianity," in other words, on those principles to which Macaulay himself would have subscribed, had he ever formulated a creed. Beyond the inculcation of this Cowper-Temple religion, the State is to remain neutral on religious questions, and indeed, on as many other questions as possible. Laissez-faire had almost as great an attraction for Macaulay as it had for the classical economists.

He is robustly confident in progress. World-weariness, such as that of Schopenhauer, he could not even have understood. His residence in India left him insensitive to the allurement of Buddhism, and he can see nothing evil in the disappearance of the country-side, provided he can justify it in terms of statistics. A beautiful passage, in which Southey had contrasted the old weather-beaten

cottages and their pretty rose-plots, with the ugly, monotonous tenements of the factory hands, he scoffs at as the merest sentimental idiocy. Why should the fields of Kent and Devonshire be preferable to the soot and chimney-forests of Salford? Ever since the Middle Ages, the world has been getting better at an amazing rate—if you doubt it, you have the statistics of what people once ate, and what they now eat. National greatness counts for little in such computations; Macaulay points with obvious complacency to the fact that the Spain of 1830 is probably richer than the Spain of Charles V. She, like Holland, has been positively, though not relatively, "advancing"! The end of the Essay on the "Colloquies" is a very panegyric of Mammon—John Bull slapping his pockets and roaring out that all is for the best, in the best of all possible worlds. And in the true spirit of M'Culloch and James Mill, the Essay ends with an admonition to the Government to let everything, especially capital, alone, to achieve still better results.

In religion, in art, in politics, in philosophy, we are thus driven back upon materialism, unashamed if not yet naked; the army of mankind is to advance upon its stomach towards Utopia. It is now only too easy to guess the reasons that Macaulay will be likely to assign for being patriotic. He deals with the subject, incidentally, in the Essay on the Jews, and he says: "The feeling of patriotism, when society is in a healthful state, springs up by a natural and inevitable association, in the minds of citizens who know that they owe all their comforts and pleasures to the bond that unites them in one community." Comforts and pleasures! Thus are the passion of a Chatham, the sacrifice of an Horatius, brought to earth indeed! Patriotism is a business payment for value, material value, received. This is in keeping with the doctrine which we have traced through Macaulay's works. Luckily he was a Whig, and not a logical material-

ist; he could, on occasion, rise above statistics to poetry, and talk of facing fearful odds, not for "comfort and pleasure," but for

> "The ashes of his fathers,
> And the temples of his Gods,
> And for the tender Mother
> Who dandled him to rest,
> And for the wife who nurses
> His baby at her breast."

And he was not thinking of England as a pleasure-store when he spoke of

> "Our glorious Semper Eadem, the banner of our pride."

In unravelling the thought of Macaulay, we have at the same time unravelled the essential principles of those aristocratic Whigs of whom he was a type, the men whose policy dominated England after the Reform Bill. There is an ominous similarity about these men. All of them had high phrases on their lips, and high ideals in their hearts, freedom, reform, patriotism. And yet they were all marred, to a greater or less degree, by an unimaginative materialism, which darkened their counsels, and vitiated their policy. Men like Palmerston, who had served with Canning and Castlereagh, and Russell, who had dined with Wellington, beneath the walls of Burgos, were not likely consciously to subscribe to the shameless dogma of Bentham. But Bentham, and the trend of thought of which he was the embodiment, gained ground daily; the transition was very gradual, like the progress of a glacier, imperceptible to the eye, but more devastating in its results than the booming onrush of an avalanche.

## CHAPTER II

### THE FOUNDATIONS OF MODERN TORYISM

TO erect barriers against the swelling tide of "liberal" thought was, to a greater or less extent, the aim of spiritual imagination during the middle-class ascendancy The word "liberal" is perhaps an unfortunate one, for it has come to be associated, in the average understanding, with something vaguely good and progressive; it has become a party sign, and even the members of the opposite party are constantly professing themselves to be the true Liberals. But liberal thought, as it was understood in early Victorian times, represented a very definite opinion, none the less dogmatic because its dogmas were mainly of a negative order. It included an arrogant denial of authority, and a wish to extend the empire of human reason, in the same spirit as Napoleon had extended the empire of France, beyond all hitherto recognized limits. The simile is strangely apposite, for the results were bound to be the same—war and chaos in the intellectual world, until the legions were rolled back behind the old frontiers, and a great awakening had taken place among those whose sloth and formalism, rather than the violence of their foes, had prepared their own overthrow.

Newman has drawn up a detailed statement of the liberal dogma, in a series of propositions, from which the following are a selection:

"No religious tenet is important unless reason shows it to be so.

" No one can believe what he does not understand.

" No theological doctrine is anything more than an opinion. . . .

" Christianity is necessarily modified by the growth of civilization.

" No revealed doctrines or precepts may reasonably stand in the way of scientific conclusions.

" There is no such thing as national or State conscience.

" The civil power has no positive duty, in a normal state of things, to maintain religious truth.

" Utility and experience are the measure of political duty.

" The people are the legitimate source of power."

This philosophy, or rather cult, of liberalism was by no means the monopoly of the so-called Liberal Party, nor, until the rise of Disraeli, was it from among the parliamentary ranks of the Conservatives that the Opposition was to arise. Like all parties that put their trust in expediency, the Tories were miserably weak. Wellington was an aristocrat who was perpetually compromising with the bourgeoisie, Peel was essentially a Liberal compromising with the aristocracy. The result is that when, owing to the sheer weariness of the country with the Whigs, the Conservatives were returned victorious, their power was shattered for a generation, by the defection of their own leader.

Wellington's object was to make the best of a bad situation. He was too great a man not to tower above most of the politicians with whom he came into contact, but he had not the constructive genius of a statesman of the first rank. He had a greater fund of common sense than any man of his time, but not the imagination to confront the materialism of the Whigs with a policy reposing upon definite principles. As a soldier and a patriot, he considered it his duty to sink his own opinions

for the sake of carrying on the King's Government. But of this policy, the statesman who was to succeed, where Peel and Wellington failed, in leading his party out of the wilderness, truly says, "The principle laid down by His Grace may be an excellent principle, but it is not a principle of the English Constitution. To be prepared to serve a sovereign without any reference to the policy to be pursued, or even in violation of the convictions of the servant, is not the duty of the subject of a monarchy modified in its operation by the co-ordinate authority of estates of the realm. It is a direct violation of the Parliamentary Constitution of England. . . ."

The fact is that the crabbed Eldonian Toryism, the political creed with which Wellington was most in sympathy, was a lost cause, by reason of its own narrowness and inhumanity. Wellington's remark that Peel had abandoned Protection because he got frightened about a few damned rotten potatoes, is as brutally obtuse as any doctrine of the classical economists. Perhaps the most masterly exposition of this bastard Toryism is that of Sir Archibald Alison, in the last chapter of his History of Europe. Alison's chapters are as long as, and much heavier than, the books of other men, and this is the ninety-sixth of his History and his matured judgment upon the lessons of the other ninety-five. It is a strange mixture of reaction and statesmanship. He has no sympathy whatever with nations struggling to be free, and writes with equal disapproval of the revolt of the South American Republics, the French Revolution of 1830, the "perfidious" attack upon the Emperor of Austria, in 1848, by the King of Piedmont, and the rising of Poles and Hungarians. He is thoroughly distrustful of the people, and believes that to put the Government into their hands is to court ruin.

This view is derived from a philosophy of human nature, which is as ancient as it is profound, and is the

most valuable part of Alison's teaching. He consciously accepts the Christian doctrine of original sin, and applies it to States. He is thus able to account for the failure of the Utopian schemes of men like Rousseau and Condorçet, who imagine all men to be good by nature. Alison's point of view, for the confirmation of which he appeals to history, is the Christian doctrine that the inclinations of mankind are naturally biassed in the direction of evil, and that the strongest religious influence is required to turn the scale in the right direction. Thus the voice of the people is, under normal circumstances, likely to be the voice of the devil.

It may seem as if this theory of human nature is no great improvement upon that of Bentham. But there is this difference, that while the Christian holds that there is a definite standard of right conduct, which with God's help it is possible to attain, the Benthamite cheerfully accepts selfishness as the inevitable condition, and an enlightened calculation of interests as the highest aim of man's existence.

Alison is honest enough to admit that despots and aristocrats are subject to the same frailties of nature as the poorest beggar. He is particularly severe upon the folly and selfishness of the French noblesse of the eighteenth century, and blames them for having brought about the Revolution. But a variety of practical reasons go to confirm the lesson he has learnt from history, that the best form of government is an aristocracy. The first and weakest of these is the argument from self-interest; aristocrats will be likely to uphold the rights of property because they have great possessions themselves; an argument that might just as easily be useful to the bourgeoisie as to the aristocrats, and which may be countered by the suggestion, that however chary they may be of their own property, they may, as in the case of the Common Lands, make very free with that of the poor

and of the nation. Other and stronger reasons are derived from the distinctive qualities of aristocrats; they are in a position of greater public responsibility than the transient creatures of democracy; they have fewer inducements to corruption; they are able to make a special study of political questions; they will exercise greater foresight than the masses; and it requires, according to Alison, several generations to turn out a first-class statesman. Another advantage, and this was the most likely consideration of all to appeal to an early Victorian Tory, was that aristocracy tended to neutralize the undue predominance of the towns over the landed interest.

It will now be seen how Alison's conclusions differ from those of the eighteenth-century Tories. He still stands for the landed interest, and he believes in the English Constitution; but he pays little heed to the throne; he regards the Constitution as "the government of property, veiled under popular forms, and watched by a vigilant and fearless democracy." The practical meaning that he puts upon this plausible arrangement may be judged from the very next sentence: "The counties and rural burghs secured the influence of landed estates; the close and venal let in by purchase the influence of colonies and commercial wealth; a few safety-valves were preserved in the seats for great cities, for the noisy and ambitious mob." This ideal balance had, as he holds, been upset by the Reform Bill.

It is not always easy to pluck the heart out of Alison's long-winded theories, but in this view of the Constitution, we have Toryism in its unloveliest and most decadent phase, shorn of sentiment, and reposing upon the selfish interests of a privileged class, the economic aristocracy of James Mill. It would be most unfair, however, to treat Alison as if he were rigidly consistent in this, or any other, political doctrine; he is a man of large heart and deep religious feeling, and he can condemn selfish aristo-

crats like those of the English Reformation, the men who had robbed the English Church, the "patrimony of the poor," and thus caused almost all the social evils under which the Britain of his own day was suffering.

Alison is, in fact, a Tory of the Peel régime. He sees the old order giving way all round him, he is dimly conscious of new and vast problems demanding solution, he is distrustful of advance, and yet unable to stand still. He lays his foundations on a rock, but he erects the house with old, crumbling bricks, and without a plan. But with the men of the past, with the heroes of the great war, he is at home. He, at least, appreciated Castlereagh, and he has written a noble panegyric upon the heroism and unselfishness of England during the war, virtues which he assigns, in part, to the Protestantism of her sons. The further he is from the present, the deeper is his understanding of events. The Tories of his own day were as sheep without a shepherd, they were waiting for a man —for a Beaconsfield.

Alison, and the leaderless Tory politicians, were not the men to offer any decisive resistance to the swelling current of Liberal ideas. The constructive opponents of materialism stand apart from contemporary politics; they are poets, divines, men of letters. Conspicuous among them are the three singers of the Revolution period, the veteran Lake Poets. There is a strange fitness in the fact that these men should have survived that other brilliant trio of a younger generation, the eldest of whom died upon attaining his thirty-sixth year. Meet it was that Keats and Shelley and Byron should have died young, for they were surely, in a special sense, poets of youth, and one can hardly think of them as old men. But there was always about the Lake Poets, even in Coleridge, something of the serenity and blessedness that are the peculiar beauties of age.

All three, when the fires of youth had died down,

turned to the consideration of those social problems, which they had once approached in such a different spirit. The war had taught them its lesson, that it is not by violent changes and easy formulas of rights and progress that freedom is best served. And yet theirs was no selfish or unenlightened Toryism, and if Browning meant Wordsworth to be the "lost leader" of his poem, he cruelly slandered him. None of them, even Southey, immeasurably inferior in thought and imagination to his two friends, ever wavered from the sympathy with the poor, and the cult of true liberty, which had inspired them from the first. The development in the case of Wordsworth is easily traced. In his early youth, he had worshipped at the shrine of Liberty, the goddess of Rousseau and Robespierre; in his prime, he wrote the sonnets to "Liberty and Independence"; in his declining years, he wrote to "Liberty and Order"—it was reserved for another to introduce the even grander conception of "Imperium et Libertas." Wordsworth did not forsake Liberty, because he came to know her better as he grew older.

Southey is one of the most unfortunate of authors, as regards his reputation with posterity. He had the misfortune to incur the hostility of the two most formidable critics of his day, Byron and Macaulay. Byron, who was not altogether unbiassed by personal considerations, held him up to odium in some of the greatest satire in our language; Macaulay gladly seized the opportunity of pillorying a Quarterly Reviewer and blasphemer of Whiggism. It is safe to say that nine out of ten people who have heard of the "Colloquies on Society" have derived their impression of them through Macaulay, and are convinced that the book is a farrago of nonsense. Such readers will be pleasantly or unpleasantly surprised to find the book itself to be a thoughtful and interesting survey of the state of society, written in faultless prose.

It is open to the assault of a special pleader, for its weaknesses are on the surface and easy to detect. Southey is unconscious of his own limitations, and apt to lose himself in the maze of finance and detail which Coleridge had threaded with success in his articles on taxation; his lack of humour prevents him from seeing the occasional clumsiness of his supernatural machinery. But, take him for all in all, he has a truer insight into his subject than Macaulay.

He fixes his attention upon the vital changes that have accompanied the Industrial Revolution. The average Whig or Radical had hailed them with unmixed satisfaction, and was content to prostrate himself reverently before the fetish of progress. "Keep things moving, and trust to luck and statistics," would have been no unfair summary of the bourgeois philosophy. But Southey was wise enough to perceive that mere change is not necessarily for the good, and that the increase of wealth or machinery is no criterion of national well-being. "God is above," says the spirit of Sir Thomas More in "The Colloquies," "but the devil is below . . . your notion of the improvement of the world has appeared to me to be a mere speculation, altogether inapplicable in practice, and as dangerous to weak heads and heated imaginations as it is congenial to benevolent hearts." The idea that the children of the latter days are appreciably happier than their ancestors is therefore an illusion, albeit Rousseau's cult of the savage is expressly repudiated by Southey.

The problems raised by the manufacturing system are treated with a sympathy and breadth of view that would have been unintelligible to Wellington, and would have left even Peel cold. The huge towns, the reckless pursuit of wealth, the loosening of all social and religious ties, the monstrous abuse of child labour, Southey regards with unqualified alarm. Man does not live by bread

alone, and the stunting and monotony of human lives are a heavy price to pay for commercial success.

Southey does not commit himself either to optimism or pessimism. He believes in free will, and holds that the destinies of society are in its own hands, merely indicating the chief dangers that beset it, and the means of remedy. He forebodes the contest of religion with impiety (and by "impiety" Southey means much the same as Newman means by "liberal thought"), which is destined to shake all Christendom; the conflict of Papist and Protestant, which will especially affect Ireland; the levelling principle of democracy; and the manufacturing system, which will produce "a class of men aware of their numbers and their strength, experienced in all the details of combination, improvident when they are in receipt of good wages, yet feeling themselves injured when these wages, during some failure of demand, are so lowered as no longer to afford the means of comfortable subsistence; and directing against the Government and the laws of their country their resentment and indignation for the evils which have been brought upon them by competition and the spirit of rivalry in trade." A remarkable prophecy, considering that this was written in the early 'twenties.

Southey is full of solicitude for the people, and an ardent social reformer. He is even in sympathy with Owen's schemes of co-partnership, the only objection he has to urge against them is their lack of religious enthusiasm—an exceedingly practical objection, in his view, for without religion it is not even possible to get people to subscribe funds. He advocates reform of the criminal law, abolition of slavery, universal education, especially religious education, colonization, improved parochial organization, better sanitation, and the diffusion of cheap literature. He hopes to see the labouring classes, in a few generations, "within the reach of moral

and intellectual gratifications, whereby they may be rendered healthier, happier, better in all respects, an improvement which will not be more beneficial to individuals than to the whole body of the common weal." Such are the dreams of a man whose opinions posterity has agreed to ignore, as those of a crusted reactionary.

Southey loves his country with the ardour of a man who has lived through the supreme crisis of her destinies. Sir Thomas More explains to him that, even after his death, he can still be a patriot. "You have escaped," he says, "from the imminent danger of peace with a military tyrant, which would inevitably have led to invasion," but he holds the dangers of internal strife to be as formidable as those of war. Southey desires to see England enlightened and reformed, but with him reform means something more than destructive, or even constructive, legislation Religion is, to his mind, the key to national greatness, and violent changes are likely to do more harm than good. The life of England has its roots in the past, and it is by strengthening and quickening our old institutions that it may best be preserved. An age that babbles evolution, and holds Bentham and James Mill to be serious thinkers, can ill afford to scoff at Southey.

Wordsworth has left us no connected treatise upon social philosophy, but there are scores of passages, both from his prose and his poetry, that show him to have been inspired by the same ideals as those of Southey. If Southey's reputation has been tarnished by Macaulay, Wordsworth has suffered from Browning's "Lost Leader," magnificent as a poem, but an absurd caricature of Wordsworth. How should the mountaineer, who never wavered in his passionate attachment to his native lakes and mountains, have ceased to feel sympathy for the kindred of Lucy and Ruth, of Matthew and Simon Lee, of the old leech-gatherer and of the Cumberland beggar? To love English folk one need not hate English

institutions, nor does the tree of our liberties flourish on the blood of aristocrats.

It would surprise some of our more advanced modern thinkers could they know to what an extent Wordsworth anticipates doctrines that even nowadays are scouted as dangerous. He was opposed to the Whig Poor Law, that triumph of "scientific" legislation, on the ground that it failed to recognize the *right* of every citizen to a living. "It proceeds too much upon the presumption that it is a labouring man's own fault if he be not, as the phrase is, beforehand with the world"—and again, "Sights of abject misery, frequently recurring, harden the heart of the community." His idea is that parochial relief will be best administered under the care of the gentry. He is also in favour of combination among workmen, by which means combinations of masters to reduce wages may be held in check. One of the noblest passages of the "Excursion" is a plea for universal education, for the poet of nature is not satisfied with nature's untamed child, the ignorant ploughboy. "Merry England" and "Old England" are to him not only dreams of the past, but ideals for the future. He writes, in 1828, of

> "The beauty and the bliss
> Of English liberty."

Champion of liberty to the last, he wished to make his country great and prosperous, not by violent change, but by maintaining and strengthening her venerable institutions, the Church, the Throne and the Nobility. He was a believer in the power of the Church, and wished to see her usefulness extended, particularly in the large towns, some of which were almost in a state of heathenism. As the Church existed for all, it ought to be maintained by all, and he wished her to be responsible for educating the masses. For education, to these Lake Poets, meant something very different from the diluted secularism that

obtains to-day. The Church was, in their eyes, the symbol and means of social continuity, a mighty force, sanctioned by every dictate of policy, and ordained by Christ Himself, welding together the shifting elements of national greatness, humanizing power and uplifting weakness, steadying throughout the ages the regard of Albion, and fixing it upon a star.

The social theories of Southey and Wordsworth exist rather in isolation and by suggestion than as parts of a completed system. It was for Coleridge, who united the imagination of an English romantic poet with the subtlety of a German metaphysician, to gather together these scattered stones, and fit them into their places in the stately temple of patriot philosophy with which his name is, or ought to be, associated. Coleridge has not escaped the fate of his two friends, in being the victim of a great man's unfairness; what Macaulay and Browning did to them, was done to him by Carlyle. The snuffling sage of Highgate, with his "ommject" and "summject," is the figure that rises up before most of us, at the mention of Coleridge the philosopher.

This is the more to be regretted, because of the reproach, so frequently brought against our countrymen, that we are lacking in metaphysical capacity. We may not have produced the equal of Kant or Schopenhauer, but it is a pity that such second-rate work as that of Locke and Bentham should be continually cited, as if it were the best of which Englishmen were capable, while Coleridge, a man in every respect their superior, should be tacitly ignored. Certainly he is the most irritating of authors; even the intricacies of the "Critique of Pure Reason" and Hegel's "Logic" are as nothing to the endless digressions, halting-places and false starts of the "Friend," or the metaphysical part of "Biographia Literaria." One has to dig deep for the treasure of Coleridge, but the mine is rich. It is fortunate that the most complete of all his

works is a treatise upon "Church and State," one which it is difficult to obtain, for Bohn's edition, which includes the "Friend," the "Lay Sermons," and the "Theory of Life," omits, for some reason best known to its editors, the most important and easiest work of them all.

We have said that Coleridge is the superior of Locke and Bentham, not in order to air a capricious preference, but as a definite and demonstrable fact. For Coleridge comprehends the instrument, the cold rational faculty, which these men had employed in the construction of their systems, but he sees it, as they did not, in perspective; he has command of other and more potent instruments for the attainment of truths which lie outside the Kingdom of Urizen, the calculating and classifying realm of the scientist.

Here we are brought up against a difficulty in language. The English tongue is far from rich in the expression of metaphysical distinctions. We do not hold up as a model the cumbrous and specialized terminology of certain Germans, a clumsy barbarism that only has the effect of making good work seem obscure, and bad work profound; for any idea that is worth expressing is capable, if it is grasped, of being put into as clear and beautiful words as those of Plato; the defect of our language is not that we have not enough words, but that the sense of such words as we have is so variable, and that the same expression is liable to be used by different authors to express divergent, or even opposite ideas.

Such is the difficulty that confronts us in dealing with the first principle of Coleridge's philosophy, the distinction between the reason and the understanding. Throughout this book we have taken the word "reason" in the usual sense, one different from that of Coleridge. When we speak of rationalist, we mean one who believes in solving all questions that are capable of solution by the method of the scientist, that is to say, by the forms of

logic moulding the materials of experience, by the operations of the thinking, as distinguished from the emotional or spiritual faculty. This is the means which Locke, the philosopher, and Bentham employ to the virtual exclusion of all others, and it is known to Coleridge not as "reason," but as "understanding," that which concerns itself with "the quantities, qualities and relations of particulars in Time and Space."

The master faculty of reason, which is capable of deciding upon the materials suggested to it by the understanding, deals with the universal; understanding says that a thing *is*, or *should* be, reason says that it *must* be. "The reason, without being either the Sense, the Understanding, or the Imagination, contains all three within itself." Thus we travel, in an ascending scale, through sense to understanding, understanding to imagination and thence to reason. We have now reached the supreme knowing faculty, the key to ultimate truths. But these sublime abstractions of universal philosophy are, by themselves, profitless and shadowy, reason, "taken singly and exclusively, becomes mere visionariness in intellect, and indolence and hard-heartedness in morals." The philosophy of pure reason, says Coleridge, is that of the French Revolution, the Jacobin notion of sacrificing each to the idol of All. It is also the science of cosmopolitanism without country, of philanthropy without neighbourliness, or consanguinity.

We have therefore to get back from the abstract to the particular, but this does not mean that we must sacrifice the universal, and revert to the Benthamite Understanding. Rather let us rise to Religion, which considers the Individual as it exists and has its being in the Universal, and therefore unites the excellencies of the Reason and of the Understanding. Religion is thus the parent of art, which is the all as seen through the medium of the one, the flower suggesting thoughts that lie too deep for tears, the

world seen in a grain of sand. It is the voice of God, the sovereign principle of our nature, the parent of the ideal.

Human nature consists in a trinity of the Religion, the sovereign ; Reason, the lawmaker ; and Will, the fighting force of the little kingdom which is Man. In unity lies their strength, Religion by itself turns into superstition ; Reason into the worship of abstract rights, humanity, and " la sainte guillotine " ; Will into the pride of a Satan, or the ambition of a Napoleon. It is Conscience that tells us when all three are working in unison, and it is the sense of this spiritual harmony that gives the " peace of God which passeth all understanding." Such, in broad outline, is Coleridge's theory of human nature.

We have entered upon these somewhat abstruse paths, not only in order to show not only how Coleridge differs from, and soars above, thinkers like the utilitarians, but also as a necessary prelude to the consideration of his political views and his conception of patriotism. For the most dogmatic of materialists will hardly level the stock accusation of bigot stupidity and sentimentalism against one of the foremost philosophers of the golden age of philosophy. The old republican, the man who had once prayed for the defeat of British arms, increased in patriotism as he increased in wisdom, and came to love England as passionately as Nelson, and with as profound a philosophy as Burke.

It is, therefore, hardly surprising to find that his attitude towards the " sophisters, economists and calculators " is one of contemptuous hostility. He saw that the facile generalizations upon which they founded their systems were the phantoms of uneducated minds. " What they truly state," he says of the new school of economists, " they do not truly understand in its ultimate grounds and causes," and he dismisses the whole of their teaching as " solemn humbug." With the cult of cheapness, of buying in the cheapest market to sell in the dearest, he

makes short work. You may reduce the price of an article from 8d. to 6d. in the market, " but suppose, in so doing, you have rendered your country weaker against a foreign foe; suppose you have demoralized thousands of your fellow-countrymen, and have sown discontent between one class of society and another, your article is tolerably dear, I take it, after all. Is not its real price enhanced to every Christian and patriot a hundredfold ? " To substitute, for the outlook of the Economic Man, that of a Christian and of a patriot would have brought a sneer to the lips of a Benthamite, but it is characteristic of Coleridge. He had looked too wisely into the nature of man to say in his heart that there was no God.

To understand Coleridge, we must realize in what respect his social outlook differs from that of his opponents. They had endeavoured to regard human affairs with frigid impartiality, Coleridge could hardly write a paragraph without enthusiasm; they deified scientific methods, to Coleridge, Science was helpless without Religion and Philosophy; they would have dismissed God from their systems, that of Coleridge is based upon the consciousness of His presence; they regarded England with the impartiality of strangers, Coleridge loved her with the devotion of a son. " Christianity " and " patriotism " are no idle phrases upon his lips, they are conceptions upon which his social philosophy is based; he wished to see his country established for ever in the blessing of her Maker and the love of her children.

He therefore takes a standpoint that enables him to dispense with the constitutional doctrines of lawyers and happiness-mongers. The idea of legal sovereignty, of the absolute omnipotence of Parliament, was one that appealed strongly to the utilitarians, and was the foundation of the Austinian theory of jurisprudence. This fallacy was one which Burke had long ago enforced, that of regarding government as a business arrangement

between those members of a State who happened to be alive at any given moment, instead of a mystical compact between the dead and the living and those yet unborn. Accordingly, an act, passed by enormous majorities in both Houses and with the assent of the Monarch, might yet be unconstitutional, because the Constitution is the heritage not of one generation, but of all.

Something similar to this had been the ideal of Canning, for it was only natural that the first practical statesman of his time should be of the same mind as the philosopher. But Coleridge had little in common with Eldon and Sidmouth, and their following of blind reactionaries. Like Canning, he was as much a friend of improvement as of order, and with the selfish dominance of a class he had no sympathy. This will be apparent if we examine more closely what he understands by the word Constitution. His method is not to consider the nation as it appears in any particular form or period, nor yet to make a generalization from a number of successive forms, but rather to find out its ultimate aim, the steadfast ideal upon which, through all its changes, its gaze is fixed. This Coleridge calls the Idea, and the Idea of a State is its Constitution.

We are now confronted with an ambiguity of meaning, such as we have already encountered in the consideration of Coleridge's philosophy. The word State is used in two different ways. When we talked of its Constitution we were referring to the whole nation, taken in the broadest sense; but there is another and more restricted meaning we can attach to the State, by speaking of it as opposed to the Church. For by this harmonious antithesis, this treble and bass, as it were, of a nation's music, is its life sustained; by this means does the Constitution live and move and have its being. And thus we pass to the Idea or Constitution of the twin components of the Nation, considered separately.

The Constitution of the State, as distinct from that of the Church, is based upon yet another antithesis, that of Permanence and Progression. The element of Permanence is represented by the Landed Interest, that of Progression by the mercantile, manufacturing, distributive and progressive classes, the "Personal Interest." Our institutions are so cunningly contrived as to produce an exact balance of these interests,

"Between whose endless jar justice resides."

The House of Lords consists entirely of the greater landowners, the Commons of a majority of the Personal Interest, and a minority of representatives of the smaller landowners, the "lesser barons," who stand midway, in interests and sympathy, between the great landlords and the bourgeoisie. We must remember that this does not purport to be an exact description of Parliament, but rather of the ideal, more or less dimly realized, which has justified its existence.

Thus the State reposes upon a balance of classes, and not upon the rights of individuals, as in the Utopia of Rousseau. Any attempt to upset the balance as it existed before the Reform Bill, Coleridge views with profound distrust, since it leads to the predominance of one class rather than a harmony of all. But the democratic principle, which is held in subordination by the Constitution of the State, finds expression in that of the Church, which is concerned not with classes, but with men, and in whose eyes all men are equal and brothers. The Church is the complement of the State, and the welfare of the one as vital to the community as that of the other.

The Church had always occupied a prominent place in the hearts of Tory thinkers, and especially in those of the Lake poets, but never since the days of Hooker had she found a champion at once so devoted and original as Coleridge. He starts by showing how the

idea of a Church is by no means necessarily connected with that of Christianity, but was inherent in the social system of our Gothic ancestors, before ever Odin and Tuisco had lost their worship, or Augustine crossed the narrow seas. It had been the custom to recognize two kinds of property, the one owned in privacy by different individuals, the other set apart to be administered by a special class for the benefit of the nation. This national property Coleridge calls the Nationalty, and the class that administers it he calls the Clerisy. This Nationalty, or Church property, cannot be alienated without the foulest wrong to the nation.

Modern Socialists will find no less food for sympathy in this doctrine, than modern Tories. For Coleridge here faces the very problem which they are trying to solve, the inadequacy of individual property to satisfy the needs of the community. But whereas the Socialist would make a more or less clean sweep of the whole institution, Coleridge would deal with it after a fashion more subtle, but less drastic. The evil lies, not in property as such, but in the undue preponderance that the Propriety, as the sum of all private property is called, has gained at the expense of the Nationalty. The Church was basely despoiled at the time of the Reformation, and hence has been prevented from fulfilling her functions. On this point Coleridge is at one with Cobbett, and indeed it is curious to note how many a prominent thinker of this time has his own theory about the Reformation, a theory often none too favourable to the bluff monarch.

For Church and State, Propriety and Nationalty, are necessary to each other, and can no more prosper by themselves than the body can live apart from the head. It is the function of the Church to deal with just those problems that the system of property creates and leaves unsolved. For as she existed before Christianity, so now the maintenance of theology is but one of her functions.

She is the leaven of the nation, the alchemy that transmutes human atoms, cityless men, into the children of one dear Motherland, her citizens and defenders.

The chief functions of the Church are to educate the nation and to care for the poor. It is her duty to organize the universities, the centres of learning, and to maintain a parson and a schoolmaster in every parish. Education is to be no mere acquaintance with the three R's, with a smattering of "useful knowledge," crammed hugger-mugger into the brain of the unwilling ploughboy or guttersnipe, but a national and organized effort to "form and train up the people of the country to be obedient, free, useful, organizable subjects, citizens and patriots, living for the benefit of the State, and prepared to die for its defence." Moreover, she is to deal with the problem of poverty on the most comprehensive scale, not only by providing honourable relief for those who need and deserve it, but by furnishing a ladder up which the poorest child of genius can climb to the highest distinction.

But though the idea of a Church does not necessarily involve the acceptance of any particular creed, the religion of Christ has been a blessed godsend, and any separation of the Clerisy from Christianity would be disastrous. Coleridge points out, what was afterwards expounded in detail by Newman, that theology is the highest form of knowledge, knitting all the rest together; the keystone of the arch of truth, whose removal would cause all the rest to fall into a shapeless pile of rubble. It is thus that the Church is able to act, not only as a department of the Government machine, but spiritually. Her system brings her into sympathetic contact, through her parish priests, with the most intimate needs of the people, and enables her, by the alleviation of distress and the inculcation of an exalted morality, to become, as it were, the Bride of the State and the Mother of Englishmen.

This ideal, for we must remember that it is an ideal and not a description, is essentially and fervidly patriotic. It is therefore necessary to find safeguards to prevent the Clerisy becoming a priestly caste, out of touch with national life, and with aspirations in conflict with those of the State. First, then, they must own no allegiance to any foreign authority; the Bishop of Rome hath no authority in the Church of England. Again, there must be no ordinance enjoining celibacy; for the existence of a married priesthood is the surest guarantee that the clergy shall be of, and not apart from, the people. Such, in brief, is Coleridge's vision of a great Christian nation, a united and merrie England.

How entirely he loved her, how little sympathy he had with the cosmopolitan ideal, may be judged from an essay in the "Friend," written during the height of the war. "He [the patriot] knows that patriotism is a necessary link in the golden chain of our affections and virtues, and turns away with indignant scorn from the false philosophy or mistaken religion, which would persuade him that cosmopolitanism is nobler than nationality, and the human race a sublimer object of love than a people." And presently, rising into a very ecstasy of universal patriotism, he continues: "Here, where the royal crown is loved and worshipped as a glory round the sainted head of freedom! Where the rustic at his plough whistles with equal enthusiasm 'God save the King' and 'Britons never shall be slaves'; or perhaps leaves one thistle unweeded in his garden, because it is the symbol of his dear native land! Here, from within this circle, defined as light by shade, or rather as light within light, by its intensity, here alone, and only within these magic circles, rise up the awful spirits, whose words are oracles for mankind, whose love embraces all countries, and whose voice sounds through all ages."

There is sometimes heard a foreboding note, pre-

monitory of the sadness that was to overshadow the best thought of the new age, and becoming more frequent as Coleridge draws towards the grave. He says in 1834, "What between the sectarians and the political economists, the English are denationalized. England I see as a country, but the English nation seems obliterated. What could reintegrate us again? Must it be another threat of foreign invasion?" Such is the bitter cry of the idealist, who sees his ideal fading before the cheerless dawn of Whig rule and materialist philosophy.

## CHAPTER III

### THE PROPHETS

AFTER the passing of the Reform Bill, it became impossible for any thinking man to be blind to the magnitude of the changes that were taking place in the order of society. Many honest folk anticipated the speedy overthrow of the established order, the Church, the Aristocracy, and the Throne itself, and on the other side there were violent spirits who delighted in such a prospect, and doubted not of the advent of a Jacobin Utopia. The more serious thinkers rejoiced or despaired at this illusion, for indeed the formidable and riotous upheaval of democratic forces was calculated to stagger the most impassive judgment. Even the fame and firmness of Wellington were not proof against the rage of the mobs who thronged the streets shouting "To stop the Duke, go for gold!" The elections that followed the Bill almost swept the Tory party from the country, men noted with alarm that an ex-prize fighter, and even the author of the "Weekly Register," were among the members of the new Parliament. The final catastrophe might well seem within measurable distance, for if these things were the first results of the new régime, what might not be expected when the mob had once got fairly into the saddle, with only a puppet monarchy, and a beaten and humiliated House of Lords, between them and Pandemonium?

Nothing is so dangerous in history as too rapid

generalization. Ancient institutions are hard to overthrow. It might have seemed, during the sixteenth century, as if the Papacy were to be swept from Europe, and no one would have dreamed, when Napoleon's Empire was at its height, that the Bourbons would be back in three years. Violent changes are often superficial, and men who see only the surge and foam of the tornado, know not of the silent, unfathomable spaces beneath. A few years after the Reform Bill, the Whigs were a distracted, moribund party, with a majority for which they had to thank the precipitate blunder of the King; the Radicals were described with some plausibility, by Macaulay, as consisting of Grote and his wife; and the more violent democrats, in their rage and disappointment at seeing all their hopes baffled, turned against Whigs and Tories alike, and took refuge under the banner of Chartism. The fate of Cobbett was typical—he had scandalized old-fashioned respectability by getting himself elected member for Oldham, and he naturally expected to wield as great an influence on the floor of the House, as in the "Twopenny Register." Cobbett was not the man to succeed in the Commons. He had a just contempt for the shifts and subterfuges of party politics, and more than a suspicion that the real battle was between the possessing class, the "thing," as he called it, and the mass of the people. But to advance such a view, required not only absolute fearlessness, such as Cobbett possessed, but a temperance and fairness to which he was a stranger. Before the most critical, the least sympathetic of audiences, he could not afford to be caught tripping. The House of Commons is the grave of many a reputation, and Cobbett soon found that the society of English gentlemen exacts a standard of manners unknown to the taproom and the street corner. After having endeavoured to create an impression by his bluffness, and only succeeding in disgusting the House by his rudeness,

he provoked Peel so far, as to make himself the victim of one of the most scathing rebukes in our parliamentary history; and four members were all who could be found to oppose the motion, that Cobbett's very resolution should be expunged from the Journals of the House.

But the fact that the Constitution was not smashed to pieces by the Reform Bill, ought not to blind us to the deep and gradual changes of which the Bill was rather a symptom than a cause. Their nature we have already had occasion to investigate; the shifting of power from the landed to the middle class, and the ominous murmur that heralded the coming of democracy. Problems were beginning to cry for solution, about which old Whigs and Tories had troubled themselves but little, and, along with an attack upon everything which men had held venerable, there arose an ever-growing demand that the condition of the people should be investigated and improved. Their professed friends, the philosophic Radicals, were, of all men in the world, the least interested in any vital reform; bitter indeed was the venom they spilled upon the aristocracy, but while they were designing ideal ballot-boxes and babbling of annual parliaments, the people were perishing. We must, indeed, give them credit for helping to simplify the Criminal Law, to reform the Corporations, and to promote sanitary legislation, but, on the other hand, the heartless Poor Law of 1834 was a triumph of their principles, and their "science" of middle-class Political Economy was a worse opponent than Lord Eldon or Lord Hertford to the claims of the dispossessed. Those who were loudest in their praises of happiness, sought it through the starvation of children and the brutalization of men, through the weakening of England's defences and the degradation of her manhood. It is natural that these gentlemen should have found more support among the employers than among the employed.

Among the ruling middle class, the dismal science had assumed the dignity of an established and bigoted orthodoxy. On minor points, a certain latitude of difference was allowed, but any essential disagreement with the main principles was outside the pale of discussion. John Stuart Mill displeased his father's circle by venturing to recognize some merit in Coleridge, and to throw doubt upon the infallibility of Bentham. When Ruskin made his attack in the pages of the "Cornhill," he was bidden to return to his pictures and his stones—the series of articles was actually cut short, in deference to this new unholy inquisition.

How strongly the misery of the times had moved the poets of Romance, it is unnecessary to repeat; their work was carried on by the writers of a younger, a less brilliant generation. Hood's "Song of the Shirt," and Mrs. Browning's "Cry of the Children," both impassioned protests against the sinister aspects of our commercial system, pointed to facts that the economist might conveniently ignore, but which he could not explain away; they taught, in no uncertain voice, that a society, in which such horrors were part of the ordinary course of affairs, must be mended at all costs. The new generation of novelists was also beginning to treat the condition of the people very seriously. Dickens, Charlotte Brontë, George Eliot, Kingsley, Mrs. Gaskell, Charles Reade, were only a few of those who turned their attention to social problems, with an insight keener and more human than that of the M'Cullochs and Ricardos.

It was easy for the optimists to say to the working men, that science had pronounced, that whatever is right for the capitalist is necessary for the well-being of society, and that the man who thinks otherwise is a fool; writers like Dickens content themselves with giving a true picture of society, and then letting the reader judge for himself whether such things ought to continue. Floods of ink

might be spilt over the benefits of the Whig Poor Law, but even the name of science could not justify the spectacle of Mr. Bumble and his victims. Dickens went further than this, for in "Hard Times" he pilloried a typical product of the Benthamite doctrine, in the person of Mr. Gradgrind. Righteous indignation against heartlessness and pedantry lifts his portrait of the old manufacturer to the region of great satire, for it is the system rather than the man that moves our hatred.

What philosophic Radical of Bentham's circle could have questioned the essential fairness of this rendering of his creed: "It was a fundamental principle of the Gradgrind philosophy that everything was to be paid for. Nobody was on any account to give anybody anything, or render anybody help without purchase. . . . Every inch of the existence of mankind, from birth to death, was to be a bargain across a counter. And if we did not get to Heaven that way, it was not a politico-economic place, and we had no business there." And there is awful irony in the reply of Bitzer, the product of the Gradgrind system, to his benefactor's heartrending appeal for mercy: "I was made in the cheapest market, and have to dispose of myself in the dearest." A maxim, which Richard Cobden had explicitly held up to admiration, as the essence not only of Political Economy, but of Christianity itself.

The work of these novelists, valuable though it was, was, of necessity, of a desultory and unsystematic nature. Individual character was what they naturally aimed at describing. Kingsley and Disraeli are certainly exceptions, and Disraeli's greater novels were a demonstration that in fiction, as in drama, it is possible to treat of man primarily as a political animal, and not merely as an individual. But when we read "Diana of the Crossways," or "Oliver Twist," we do not think so much of the statesmanship of Percy Dacier, or even of the

iniquity of Bumbledom, as of the kaleidoscope of a woman's moods, of those few, unforgettable lines that make up the portrait of a Fagin or a Grimwig, of a Sikes or a Bumble.

It is the character of the age, more than any necessity of nature, that gives its individual or social bent to fiction; for man's life cannot be divided into compartments, and in certain states of intense social activity, that part of a man's life which connects him with the history and politics of his country is the most important, and to understand the one is to understand the other. Thus, in Victor Hugo's "Notre Dame," those unforgettable figures of Esmeralda and Chateaupers, of Gringoire and Quasimodo, would be meaningless shadows out of their setting, which comprises the whole wickedness and idealism of medieval France, from Louis XI and the silent eloquence of Notre Dame, down to the very slums and stews of old Paris. The fiction of the first half of Queen Victoria's reign was, in the main, individual, the masterpieces of its chief exponents were, always excepting Disraeli's, of this nature—but we must not forget that the author of the "Egoist" also wrote "Beauchamp's Career," and she of "The Mill on the Floss" created "Felix Holt." Indeed, so deftly may the two elements be compounded, that it sometimes becomes a task of extreme difficulty, and small profit, to say which preponderates.

We are on firmer ground when we come to the works of Carlyle. Here, at least, the message is direct, and unalloyed with extraneous matter. Carlyle had little love for fiction, and wrote of it in terms of disparagement. He went a long way towards giving practical proof of his belief, that the truth was better and more wonderful than any figment of the imagination. His business is almost exclusively with man, the political animal, or rather, god in the germ. Once or twice, indeed, we catch

beautiful glimpses of the human soul, shorn of all association other than those which may fall to mankind in any or no State, and few are the love stories more tender than that brief one of Teufelsdröckh and Blumine. But Carlyle is no revival preacher or Oriental mystic, to bid men seek out salvation for themselves and by themselves. The times are out of joint, and he, the inspired prophet, is rather concerned to set them right for a whole people, than to point out to any isolated pilgrim the way from destruction to the Celestial City. To such a pilgrim he would appeal, as to a soldier in a mighty, disciplined army.

The word prophet, as a description of Carlyle, is one that may be used deliberately and with accuracy. It is strange to reflect, that in a country where the Bible is still held in some reverence, the very name of prophet has come to be treated with contemptuous incredulity. It may seem reasonable enough for Isaiah or Jeremiah (whose name has become a synonym for "lying alarmist") to warn Israel of the destruction that awaits nations who forget God; but the men of our latter days have decided that prophecies, like miracles in Matthew Arnold's dogma, "do not happen." A state of mind, curiously enough, familiar not only in modern London, but in ancient Jerusalem, where, with the Babylonian tempest-cloud visibly glooming upon the eastern horizon, sage critics were commanding the prophets to prophesy smooth things, and the reading or listening public was saying in its heart, "Tush! God hath forgotten, there shall no harm happen unto us."

Truly, it is a fearful thing when men would rather explain away greatness than do it reverence. Seldom has a more degrading spectacle been exhibited to the world, than the treatment which modern England has meted out to Carlyle. The stiff-necked people of old had at least the advantage of us in this respect, for they did not scruple to

accord to their prophets the only honour that bad men can confer upon the righteous—the martyr's crown. Better had it been for us, had we sawn our prophets asunder, or crucified them publicly upon Tower Hill; for then, at least, we had taken their message seriously, even in a bad sense. It has been reserved for our own age to treat God's word and the Devil's indifferently as phenomena. Hardly had the tomb closed upon the grey head of Carlyle, than prurience and vulgar curiosity were at work besmearing his memory, and for one man who cared about Teufelsdröckh and the heroes, there were ten to whom the sordidest details of domestic life at Chelsea and Craigenputtock became matters of absorbing interest. But Carlyle would have considered it small dishonour, to share the fate of Oliver. Not what becomes of his body, but his message, is the concern of the prophet, and Carlyle's message is of importance, because its substance is that which has been preached by seeing men of all ages—the reality of God and of God's law, the call to repent and turn to Him while there is yet time; "it will be better for you." There is no more foolish notion than the modern one, that it is the function of genius to be constantly inventing new codes of morality—codes of diabolic no-morality. The attraction earthward, the spiritual gravitation, which theologians call original sin, is enough to make God's law sufficiently startling to men of all ages, even those who mumble its formulas most glibly.

Whether we look up to Carlyle as a sage, or down upon him as a phenomenon, there is at least no blinking the fact, that from the beginning to the end of his life, this unspeakable or platitudinous theism was, to him, a fact of supreme practical importance. Christian he was not, but man of God he certainly was. The foundation of his belief was, that there is an almighty Being of Whom this universe is the visible garment; that His law is

engraven upon every man's heart, and is discoverable by him who takes the trouble to seek it; that accordingly as nations have obeyed or disobeyed has been their ultimate success or failure; that men who have perceived and acted upon its precepts are heroes, the best and most venerable of men; that the next best thing to being a hero is to recognize and loyally obey one.

In opposition to this stands rationalism in general, and the utilitarian doctrine in particular, the theory that regards the universe as a huge pig-tub, and the human race as so many porkers competing for wash, the whole duty of pigs being, by one means or another, to increase the contents of the trough. For the new "science" of political economy, Carlyle can hardly find a polite term; it is a godless and gloomy sham, fitter for beasts than men, and he has branded it with the designation of "dismal science." This was a surprising, and almost unheard-of blasphemy, in the heyday of the Classical Economists and Benthamite philosophy, and it was not easy for the man who uttered it to find a hearing, or even a living. It is to the eternal credit of John Stuart Mill that he could appreciate Carlyle as he did.

It must already be apparent, to what an extent Carlyle was carrying on the work of Coleridge, and it is a thousand pities that he should have exercised his keenest satire upon the memory of the elder philosopher. He had one besetting sin, which to his dying day he never shook off—an impatience or jealousy of greatness in his contemporaries, or, indeed, in people who lived anywhere near his own time, provided they were not Germans. Thus, all he could see in Disraeli was a cynical charlatan; in Charles Lamb, a despicable sot; in Byron, a noisy egotist; the whole of English romantic poetry left him cold; the younger Pitt was insignificant, and, of course, Castlereagh came in for the customary sneer. All this is doubly unfortunate, since Carlyle had naturally no war against these men,

and in dealing with the men of another age, he was not only just, but generous. His war with the Benthamites was one of principle, a holy war, but when he disparaged men of his own kidney, often heroes whom he might have worshipped, he was false to his message. It was a grievous fault, and grievously has he answered it at the hands of his detractors. But though he perversely refused to be just in these particular instances, he never wavered as to the main principles of his philosophy, and though he may not always have recognized the good when he saw it, he never had the least doubt as to the difference between good and evil.

Thus his aversion from Coleridge was only personal, for, as far as their philosophies go, both drew their inspiration from the same sources, and worked upon the same lines. Of the two, Coleridge had more subtlety of intellect and delicacy of imagination, he moved at ease amid regions of thought and poesy which Carlyle only surveyed afar as from a high mountain. Thus, for good or for evil, Carlyle never had the patience or aptitude for advancing from theism to theology. Most of his teaching with respect to society had been anticipated by Coleridge. But the balance is more than redressed by the overwhelming advantage possessed by Carlyle, in his will-power and capacity for work, the energy that triumphed over neglect and pain and ill fortune, and made him carry to a conclusion even the toughest undertakings. This is probably the secret of his intolerance for the opium slave, who was weakest where he himself was most strong, and whose life was so largely an obituary of golden resolutions.

The enemy against which Coleridge had contended was the enemy of Carlyle. "As to the present use of the word (idea), Dr. Holofernes, in a lecture on metaphysics, delivered at one of the Mechanics' Institutes, explodes all ideas but those of sensation; and his friend, Deputy

Costard, has no idea of a better flavoured haunch of venison than he dined off at the London Tavern last week." This is not a quotation from "Sartor" or "Latter Day Pamphlets," but from Coleridge on Church and State. But the intention, and even the diction, are characteristic of Carlyle. The problem to be solved, and the enemy to be conquered, were common to both; it is as to the method of solution that they differ.

This difference may be accounted for, to a very considerable extent, by the changed circumstances of Carlyle's time. Coleridge had lived through the war, and watched the high courage and patriotism of the governing classes; he had seen our institutions challenged and tried by fire, and they had not been found wanting; he had trembled for England, struggling alone against desperate odds; he had seen her emerge at last, as the smoke drifted away from the plateau of Mont Saint Jean, the deliverer of Europe and the first of nations. For all their faults, Pitt and his successors had done this thing, or seen that it was done, and it was only natural that Coleridge should have leant rather towards their ideas and policy, than towards those of the party which had proved itself inefficient and obstructive in the hour of need. He believed that the landed gentry and the Church were fitted for a leading part in the life of the nation, and though he was no advocate of selfish privilege, he held their existence to be essential to the idea of the Constitution. But there is a qualification in his theory, which bridges over the transition to that of Carlyle. He had admitted that no system of government would work which involved "a gross incorrespondency in relation to our own country, of the proportion of the antagonist interests of the body politic in the representative body, in the two Houses of Parliament, to the actual proportion of the same interests and of the public influence exerted by the same in the nation at large"; from which it

follows that if the landed or any other class palpably fails to justify its place in the Constitution, that class must drop out. This is just the position that Carlyle takes up in respect to the Church and landowners. He concedes the essentially Tory doctrine, that what the people want is leaders whom they can love and obey, but he denies that any man can, or ought to, follow squires whose whole idea is to preserve game (Coleridge himself had classed the game laws with the evils prayed against in the Litany), or parsons who would fain have confined God within the limits of their "small nine-and-thirty articles." "The Church," he says, through the mouth of Teufelsdröckh "fallen into neglect and apoplexy; the State shrunken into a Police Office, straitened to get its pay."

Carlyle had begun his career, amid circumstances little calculated to inspire him with very ardent attachment for any of the recognized parties. The period between the peace and the Reform Bill was not one during which the Tories appeared to best advantage. It is true that the last years of the Liverpool ministry saw the passing of some sound legislation, but the party was in a state of transition, and the desire to retain privileges, coupled with the willingness to sacrifice principles, was more fatal to Toryism than any Reform Bill could have been. The Whig record of compromise and inefficiency might inspire the respect of a Macaulay, but was beneath the contempt of a Carlyle, and the Benthamite Radicals represented all that he hated most. So Carlyle remained unattached to any party, a voice crying in the wilderness.

Yet there can be small doubt that he would gladly have embraced an enlightened Toryism, could he only have found the men to carry it out. The formulas of Liberalism he abhorred; the serfdom of a Gurth and the slavery of a Quashee were by no means intolerable grievances in his eyes. For the feudal system of the Norman kings, which honestly aimed at providing

valiant and able leaders for the people, he had more respect than for laissez-faire democracy. He was a disbeliever in the appetite for change, and compared venerable institutions to a ready reckoner, which it is waste of time to be continually verifying. But all this, he went on to say, depended upon the reckoner being moderately correct.

The test that he would apply to ascertain national well-being, is one neither of happiness nor of natural rights. He was profoundly convinced, that at every moment there was one thing, and one thing only, that a man or nation ought to be doing, and the problem was, how to get this thing done. To find out the will of God, and to do it, was the whole duty of man, and beyond this, it was a matter of indifference whether the doer was happy or miserable. This is the source of all heroism, for the hero, the man of genius, is but he who is in closer communion with God than his fellows. This religion, which Carlyle holds to be of supreme importance, is one of nature, and does not depend upon revelation, except in so far as the acts and writings of heroic men everywhere are a revelation. God reveals himself internally through the moral consciousness, and externally through the system of nature. Men like Arkwright and Brindley, who have seen into the workings of nature, are, in their way, seers; and the readiest way to understand God is to get into touch with facts. Hence the undying hatred that Carlyle has for every sort of cant or sham; sham-worship he holds to be rank atheism. This is the secret of the clothes philosophy, for "Sartor Resartus" is nothing more nor less than an exposition of the second commandment.

That Carlyle was a patriot in the fullest sense of the word, must be evident from the most superficial consideration of his work, and like a true lover of his country, he could appreciate patriotism in other lands, as well as in

his own. What tenderness is there in his description of the citizen volunteers, who rallied around the tricolour in 'ninety-two at the cry of "Patrie en danger!" Even in his tribute to that heroic Swiss guard, who perished on the steps of the Tuileries, he dwells, with reverent compassion, upon the fact that these men were dying for no king of theirs. Of all heroes, he gives the most honoured place to kings, "canning" men, builders and leaders of nations, like Frederick, who turned the Mark of Brandenburg into a first-class power, and Bismarck, who contrived that "noble, patient, deep, pious and solid Germany should be at length welded into a nation, and become Queen of the Continent."

A nation is to Carlyle what it was to Coleridge, a living soul, a body of men welded into one by allegiance to an idea. This he explains in the "Essay on Characteristics," that baffled the intelligence of John Mill, and is, perhaps, the most brilliant of all his writings. Here he applies to patriotism that doctrine of Silence, which is so conspicuous a feature of his teaching. He likes best the patriotism that is so much a matter of course that it is inarticulate, that of the early years of Rome, when men sacrificed their lives naturally without any "dulce et decorum" strains to inspire them. As Lao Tse had written centuries ago, "All things in nature work silently . . . they fulfil their functions and make no claim."

It is for this faculty of Silence that, in spite of all his faults, he chiefly admires John Bull. A rugged Brindley, who retires to bed for three days to solve a problem in engineering, seems to him the type of his race —Shakespeare he regards as a glorious exception. With the curious perversity that is his besetting sin, he takes a positive pride in trying to represent the British people as illiterate and inartistic, a people who did great things, but who could not express themselves except in deeds. The theory is so much the opposite of the truth, that it

must always remain as the classic warning of the danger to which men of genius are exposed, who, seeing part of the truth, rush recklessly upon conclusions that patience, or even an eye for fact, would have taught them to avoid. Inarticulate! The nation that has produced a literature greater than that of Greece; whose very men of action have been, not silent Moltkes and Metternichs, but Drake, of the Armada dispatch, Raleigh, Chatham, Nelson—nay Oliver himself, was *he* silent, who, at the supreme crisis of his life, after the burst of torrential eloquence with which he dissolved the Rump, stood protesting like a child that he had rather the Lord had slain him, than put him upon the doing of this work? It is a curious instance of Carlyle's lack of appreciation for his own contemporaries, that he should have pitted Raphael against Sir Joshua, in order to demonstrate the inferiority of Englishmen in the sphere of painting, and this at the time when Turner had produced his most glorious canvases. Neither in his daily life, nor in his literary method, is Carlyle himself altogether a type of the strong silent man.

But if we look past what Carlyle said to what he was trying to say, we shall find that he was big with a truth of fundamental importance, and that Mr. Bull (as he calls him) may be proud to accept a genuine, though clumsily framed, compliment. What Carlyle really meant by the silent man, was the man with no shams about him, whose service to his Maker did not consist in froth and protesting, to be seen of men. It is the doctrine of the Sermon on the Mount, and indeed in the very "Essay on Characteristics," to which we have referred, he quotes the counsel, "Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth." To every sort of formalism, cant and sentimentality he is an enemy; the distinction between the false man and the true is that which he himself draws between the rhetorician and the orator, not that between the speaking and the silent man. Silence is often the deepest form of hypocrisy.

Metternich, we may suppose, was more silent than Christ. Heroic natures are the most childlike, and healthy children have not learnt the world's art of concealing what is in them.

Carlyle's admiration for England is based upon the fact that she is the great *doing* nation, "canning," to use an expression which, in any one but him, we might suspect of being a singularly happy play upon words. "Nature alone knows thee," he cries, "acknowledges the bulk and strength of thee: thy Epic, unsung in words, is written in huge characters on the face of this Planet—sea-moles, cotton trades, railways, fleets and cities, Indian Empires, Americas, New Hollands; legible throughout the solar system." Happy is the nation of whom such things can be written, even though the half of her worth was not revealed to the writer!

There is another side to the picture, for Carlyle came to England not to praise but to prophesy, and it is not when all is well with a nation that a prophet can arise. He had a conviction, which became more settled the longer he lived, that England was allowing herself to slip away from God, from facts, that she was becoming the victim of every sort of sham, platitude, mammonism, in fact of devil-worship. This process had begun, according to his theory of history, at the time of the Restoration, and as he could see little that was noble either in the Napoleonic war, or (despite his appreciation of John Paul, Tieck and Novalis in Germany) in the English Romantic writers, he was forced to the somewhat sweeping conclusion that it had been going on ever since, culminating in Benthamite philosophies, Hudson Statues and "shooting Niagara" Reform Bills. The distance we have travelled may be measured, he thinks, by the difference between Oliver and Lord John Russell.

The essential point of his teaching is not his philosophy of English history, but his diagnosis of what he

saw with his own eyes. And his conclusion was, emphatically, that all was not well with England. He was no blind reviler, for he honoured and hoped for her down to the end of his life ; even if the worst came to the worst, and some fiery catastrophe, like the French Revolution, were needed to purge away her dross, he had no doubt of her ultimate, phœnix-like resurrection. His indictment was that the ruling classes had forgotten their responsibilities, that the Church had ceased to guide, that the masses were leaderless and disorganized, so that the country was in a fair way to become the Benthamite-Ricardian nightmare of human atoms, instead of a living soul. England was, in fact, a nation departing from God and following idols, a breaker of that second commandment of which Teufelsdröckh had given so original an exposition. It was the mission of the modern prophet to call upon her to return, to cast out her shams, to hate the cult of happiness and to despise success, and above all to get a religion, whereby she might worship the God of Truth and Fact, and His heroes whom He hath sent. He wanted to see every Englishman, whatever his station, doing the portion of work for which he had been sent into the world, and doing it, not for reward, but for conscience' sake.

His being a prophet did not prevent him from being thoroughly practical, though he did not share the detailed exactitude of Ezekiel or Daniel. The root of the matter was that England must be born again in spirit, but Carlyle had a definite enough idea as to what the heroic ruler, who took in hand the reformation, would set himself to do. His ideal was the exact opposite to that of the Whigs and economists, who believed in letting things alone as much as possible. The nation must be in a bad way, he thinks, when the utmost that men ask of their rulers is not to rule them. The " canning " man will have a nobler and more ambitious conception of his

duties, he will, in fact, undertake the organization of the nation. He will be as a good general upon the field of battle, who sees to it that infantry, cavalry, guns, commissariat, are so disposed, that every man is doing the utmost that in him lies, towards securing the final victory. His people will be one living, working soul, striving for God's cause against the Devil's, doing with all their might such honest work as their hands find to do.

We must avoid giving countenance to an error that is all too common about Carlyle's teaching, that of representing him as a somewhat brutal militarist. Exactly the reverse of this is the case. He did indeed see, as any one not blinded by sentimentality must see, that there are certain supreme issues between nations that must be tried by battle, and that, in the end, the nation that is fittest to win, that has most heroism and true religion, will come off victorious. But the notion of men killing each other is, in itself, "hideous, scandalous, infernal, and under these two conditions only can it be justified: firstly, that the war be for a just cause, and secondly, that the warrior do comport himself upon the field of battle, not like a savage or a pirate, but like a devout chevalier. Here too thou shalt be strong of heart, noble of soul; thou shalt dread no pain or death, thou shalt not love ease or life—in rage thou shalt remember mercy, justice; thou shalt be a knight and not a Choctaw, if thou wouldst prevail."

Man is indeed created to fight, but fighting "against the hallucinations of poor fellow-men" is only one phase of his never-ending warfare, and not the phase in which Carlyle is most interested. Other things man has to fight, "necessity, barrenness, puddles, bogs, tangled forests, unkempt cotton." It is a fact of evil omen, in his eyes, that the one efficient English institution is the army. Occasions for wars, with improved communication and a properly managed Foreign Office, are becoming ever less

frequent, "have in a manner, become superfluous." In one place, he even suggests that the whole of the British Navy should be put to some practical purpose in transporting emigrants—a proposal startling enough to stagger a Quaker! It is noticeable how, in his "Latter Day Pamphlets" and elsewhere, he anticipates notions of Social Reform which cruel necessity is at last impressing upon the intelligence of our own generation. A Minister of Education (now a member of every Cabinet), Minister of Works (the Labour Minister of the Poor Law Commission Minority Report), Minister of Justice, are officers he would fain see appointed to the staff of his national army—his Salvation Army, as he might quite accurately have described it.

He would have dealt with industry on lines opposite to those of the dismal professors. He held work to be no necessary evil, to be extracted from a grudging economic man in terms of pounds, shillings and pence, but as something noble and Godlike, essential for every man. As for reward, the utmost the true worker had the right to claim was the opportunity to work, and the means to continue working. The idea of regulating men's labour as a matter of business, by demand and supply, was abhorrent to him. It was as bad to be a mercenary workman as it was to be a mercenary soldier, and there ought to be leaders and captains of industry, occupying as honoured and responsible a position as officers in an army. Industrial ties should be permanent, and not dependent upon the fluctuations of the market, nor the interest of the moment. As for the huge mass of vagrant unemployed, he would have collected them, put them under competent leaders, sent them wherever there was soil to be tilled or work to be done, and flogged and shot them without mercy in case of refusal. Sentimental philanthropy formed no part of his creed, life must ever be full of woe and grim to hero and knave alike, and his

ideal people was not one that troubled itself about happiness.

Carlyle was thus a Social Reformer in an age of laissez-faire, but he was more than this, in that he was almost alone among the great men of the early Victorian age, in thinking imperially. He is fully alive to the importance of the colonies, at a time when it was fashionable to think of them as a rather bad business investment. "As for the colonies, we propose, through Heaven's blessing, to retain them awhile yet! Shame on us, for unworthy sons of brave fathers, if we do not." The utilitarian view of colonies he describes, with withering scorn, as the gospel of McCroudy, an imaginary professor of the dismal science. Colonies are not to be picked up every day, nor can we afford to cast them away, because McCroudy grudges a little money for their administration. For Carlyle believes, unlike modern imperialists, in administering the colonies and abating no jot of our imperial rights. Purge the administration of red tape, is his counsel, send out true men as governors, and above all let the gallows, and not concession, be the reward of rebellion.

Whether imperialists agree with this view or not, they can find nothing to quarrel with in Carlyle's vision of Empire. "Here are lands and seas, spice-lands, corn-lands, timber-lands overarched by zodiacs and stars, clasped by many-sounding seas; wide spaces of the Maker's building, fit for the cradle yet of mighty nations with their sciences and heroisms. Fertile continents still inhabited by wild beasts are mine [it is England here, speaking through the mouth of Carlyle] into which all the distressed populations of Europe might pour themselves, and make at once an Old World and a New World human. By the eternal fiat of the gods this must one day be; this, by all the Divine Silences that rule this Universe, silent to fools, eloquent and awful to the hearts of the wise, is incessantly at this moment, and at all moments, com-

manded to begin to be. Unspeakable deliverance, and new destiny of thousandfold expanded manfulness for all men, draws out of the Future here. To me has fallen the godlike task of initiating all that: of me and of my colonies the abstract Future asks, Are you wise enough for so sublime a destiny? Are you too foolish?"

We, who have seen this dream of Empire realizing itself in a wonderful manner, and the finger of God visibly pointing England forward upon her imperial mission, may read and re-read this passage, and put to ourselves, not without trembling, the prophet's question: "Are you wise enough for so sublime a destiny? Are you too foolish?"

The social and commercial possibilities of Empire did not escape him, for in his eyes work and commerce were only base, when they were deliberately regarded from a greedy, or as Professor McCroudy would put it euphemistically, from an economic standpoint. He, who despised Malthus, would have solved the problem of over-population, by setting men to work upon Manitoba wheatfields and Atlantic Pacific Railways, and using British seventy-fours to take them out there. Finally, he was among the first to embrace the idea of a commercial union, as a means for ensuring a market for British labour. The following passage, written in the early 'forties, speaks for itself:

"England's sure markets will be among new colonies of Englishmen in all quarters of the Globe. . . . Hostile Tariffs will arise, to shut us out; and then again will fall, to let us in: but the Sons of England, speakers of the English language were it nothing more, will in all times have the ineradicable predisposition to trade with England. Mycale was the Pan Ionian rendezvous of all the tribes of Ion, for old Greece: why should not London long continue the All-Saxon home, rendezvous of all the 'Children of the Harz-Rock,' arriving, in select samples,

from the Antipodes and elsewhere, by steam and otherwise, to the 'season' here. What a future, wide as the world if we have the heart and heroism for it—which by Heaven's grace we shall." May that grace be with us now, for we have need of it.

It is by an easy transition that we pass from Carlyle to Ruskin. Both were fighting in a common cause, and their philosophy of life was essentially the same, but Carlyle was the greater of the two. It would be ridiculous to say that Ruskin was a prophet, or even a hero. All his virtues, and they were many, were marred by that most insidious of faults, which theologians know as spiritual pride. He could never, for long, forget his personality in his message. His ostentatious modesty, in calling attention to the opinions of his earlier works, which he had altered since, is one symptom of this weakness; another is his entire lack of humour. Despite his command of language, he is one of the most tiresome of writers, and those who, like Bunyan's pilgrims, go to him for the truth, must be content to sift it laboriously out of a pile of rubbish —the views, virtues, and confessions of John Ruskin. Herein he was, what Carlyle was not, the victim of his age. The self-conscious virtue, which we have already met with in Peel and Russell, which attained to its very apotheosis in the character of Gladstone, was the hall-mark of the early Victorian bourgeoisie. Priggishness, pomposity, cant and arrogant humility, were everywhere rampant, and of these Ruskin had his full share. When we have allowed for this, and it is a heavy indictment, we shall be better able to appreciate the wisdom and insight of the true Ruskin, and the genuine services that he performed for his country.

As far as his general principles are concerned, he has little to add to Carlyle, and he treats art in much the same manner as Carlyle had treated literature. He regards it as the visible manifestation of what a people

is thinking and feeling, and just in proportion as a nation's life is sound and healthy, will its art be admirable. Carlyle, it is true, admits the possibility of a hero coming to battle *against* his age, but, on the whole, he is of the opinion that nations get the leaders they deserve, that pre-revolutionary France will have her Voltaire, and modern England her Hudson. His contempt for Pitt and Castlereagh is intimately connected with the fact, that he ignored Wordsworth and underestimated Scott. But, with all his bitterness against contemporaries, he pays full tribute to "The Stones of Venice," a "Sermon in Stones," as he calls it.

Whether he is dealing with stones or pictures, with the Ducal Palace or Mount Jura, Ruskin seldom fails to remind us that these things exist not for themselves, but as manifestations of eternal principles—fraught with application to modern England. We cannot, therefore, draw any line between the æsthetic and social parts of his work. "Munera Pulveris" and "Unto this Last" are the more detailed application of principles, already laid down in the earlier works on architecture and painting, and indeed, for the most part, in the works of Carlyle. Ruskin's idea throughout his career is that of Blake—to regenerate England. To this central purpose everything else is subordinate. Thus his first important book, "The Seven Lamps," deals with the question of unemployment in the true spirit of Carlyle. What causes the revolutionary feeling in Europe, he tells us, is idleness, which is responsible for "the recklessness of the demagogue, the immorality of the middle class, and the effeminacy and treachery of the noble." In "Modern Painters" we have another idea of Carlyle's, stated in almost the same words. In "Past and Present" we read that Howell Davies may dye the seas with blood, but all in vain, since he is fighting for no cause. Ruskin tells us that for the love of country, for Nelson's last signal,

men will fight; for the black flag they will not. And he proceeds, like Carlyle, to show that the same law holds true in commerce as well as in war. The economic man is as ineffectual as his more attractive comrade of the "Jolly Roger."

It is in the "Stones of Venice," especially, that the way is prepared for the subsequent formal declaration of war upon the materialists. The chapter on "The Nature of Gothic," belauded by William Morris as one of the most important works of the century, is an assertion of the labourer's personality, against the soulless doctrine of Adam Smith and his successors, who regarded with cheerfulness the turning of a man into a machine, for the manufacture of the twentieth part of a pin. In one of the appendices, there is a note on education, which should be not only religious, but political; a boy ought to know at least as much about the Peninsula War as the Peloponnesian, and generally to fit himself to be a good citizen and statesman. But apart from these instances, the analogy between Venice and England is obvious all through the book, and the chapters on the fall of Venice are but warnings of the danger to which England is exposed. Infidelity (here again we find agreement with Carlyle) is the enemy. "In politics," we read in "Modern Painters," "religion is now a name; in art, a hypocrisy or affectation"—England's lion heart is becoming an iron heart. The three other causes of the fall of Venice, pride of science, pride of state, and pride of system, are but branches of this upas of infidelity. Finally, in "Modern Painters," that tremendous vindication of Turner, or, rather, of so much of Turner as Ruskin was able to comprehend, the disciple did at least grasp the essential fact of the master's patriotism—and the patriotism of all great artists.

Thus, when he came, as was inevitable, to meet the economists "manful under shield," he entered the lists

with all the virtues, and all the deficiencies, of his training as a critic of art. As it was, his keen intellect, his patriotism, his historical insight, his admiration for all that was pure and noble, his contempt for what was base and grovelling, made him more than a match for the hardest-headed champion of his opponents. So much was this the case, that with the superstitious bigotry with which the priests of the golden calf guarded their idol, the very publication of his economic heresies was stopped in the "Cornhill Magazine." We shall not follow Ruskin in detail through his crusade, Carlyle had pointed the way, and since he had exposed the heartlessness of McCroudy, it was a work of comparative ease for Ruskin to demolish in detail his intellectual absurdities. One effect of his teaching was to strike a blow at the capitalist dogma, on which the economists had been reared, and which they invested with a kind of mystic sanctity, as if the Laws of the Universe had been enacted by a Whig Parliament. Even greater would have been the force of his attacks, had he not set so many readers against him by his own waywardness and unconscious egotism; as it was, he succeeded in showing that, reduced to plain English, these abstruse-seeming propositions of Mammon were not only inhuman, but, for the most part, founded on childish confusion of thought.

His plan for the regeneration of England is, in all its main outlines, that of Carlyle. Duty and not interest is its guiding principle, and honest work is to be recognized as sacred and necessary for every citizen. Ruskin goes further than Carlyle, in laying emphasis on the quality of the task; every labourer, as far as possible, ought to impress his individuality on what he produces, and have free scope for the development of his nature in doing it. This is the merit of Gothic, as distinct from Greek or Renaissance art. Ruskin would have the nation organized under competent, hard-working leaders; venerable

captains of reverent soldiers. He would have a complete system of moral and technical education, pensions for the old, work state-provided and state-enforced, and a standard of excellence in certain staple commodities, to be maintained by State Workshops. These are but a few of the suggestions he made in his later works, towards the reform of society, applying in detail the principles of Carlyle, and of his own earlier works. He even tried to give practical expression to his scheme in the stillborn Society of St. George. But for such a project he was hopelessly unfitted, and one trembles to think of the output of prigs that would have been the inevitable effect of his proposed rule of education. Ruskin thought too much of his own dignity to understand children.

Both he and Carlyle were, in principle, Tories. They believed in authority and reverence, in seeking proper leaders, instead of liberty and equality. In the sight of God, Jack might be as good as his master, but that was no reason why Jack should be disobedient. Nor should the leader of industry be less dignified and responsible than the owner of land or the colonel of a regiment. The real insulters of the poor man are those who regard him, and appeal to him, as a calculating self-seeker, without love or loyalty, seeking only to do the minimum of work for the maximum of wages.

But this involves no assent to the selfish snobbery with which Toryism is too often identified. The fact that the nation wanted leaders, did not prove that those, who were actually entrusted with the duty, were fit men. It is indeed a terrible thing for a nation to overhaul its social system from top to bottom, and to dismiss its whole staff of unjust stewards, but there are times when this must be done. Such a change actually seems to have been contemplated by Carlyle, at the time of "Sartor Resartus"—the nation following the example of the French and making a bonfire of its social system (its old

clothes) to rise phœnix-like out of the ashes. The economic squires, who pass their time preserving game, the economic manufacturers, whose motto is "Business is business," are ruining the nation; though it is not the system that is amiss, but the man.

Towards the end of his career, Carlyle softened considerably towards the gentry, and even the clergy. He seems to have thought that for the upper class there was at least more ground for hope than for any other; the aspirations of the masses were base, those of the middle class material. He administers a scorching rebuke to that typical exponent of American democracy, Editor Jefferson Brick. Dukes and bishops may not be perfect specimens of humanity, but there are at least much better men than vulgar millionaires, rich horse-sausage sellers and stump orators. "Our ugliest anomalies are done by universal suffrage, not by patent. The express nonsense of old Feudalism, even now, in its dotage, is as nothing to the involuntary nonsense of modern Anarchy called Freedom, Republicanism, and other fine names, which expresses itself by supply and demand!" In his last important pronouncement, "Shooting Niagara," he speaks in terms of hope, almost of affection: "Aristocracy, by title, by fortune and position, who can doubt but that there are still precious possibilities among the chosen of that class?"

Ruskin's position is substantially the same as his master's (for such a term is not inapplicable to "the friend and guide who has urged me to all chief labour"). He is justly severe upon the idleness and frivolity of the aristocracy, and asks them bluntly, "Of what use are you?" He points out that ownership of land is a trust, and that if the landlords can show no better title to it than the robbery of some remote ancestor, they have no right to complain if their lordship goes the way it has come. Ruskin had not come to engineer a revolution, any

more than Carlyle, who found some consolation for the many evils of democracy in the fact that the people were, at least, not given to dreams about a "new era" and so forth. He had not come to overturn, but to exhort the natural rulers of England to make themselves fit for the office with which they had been entrusted. Thus he pleads with them, "Will they be lords indeed, and give us laws—dukes, indeed and give us guiding—princes indeed, and give us beginning, of truer dynasty, which shall not be soiled by coveteousness, nor disordered by iniquity? . . . To them, be they few or many, we English people call for help to the wretchedness, and for rule over the baseness, of multitudes desolate and deceived, shrieking to one another, this new gospel of their new religion, 'Let the weak do as they can, and the wicked as they will.'"

Little sympathy indeed had he for the levelling demagogues who would have abolished all ranks and all respect for rank. He rebukes the Radical carpenter, who considers it degrading for a poor man to bow to the parson. One of the chapters of "Time and Tide" enforces "the inevitable distinction of rank, and the necessary obedience to authority." Ruskin honoured his countrymen too much to appeal to their baser passions. The Royal Military Academy, the "Shop," at Woolwich, has this motto, "Through obedience learn to command." For such is the law of every heroic nature.

Ruskin was a lover of his country in the best sense of the word, he loved her soil, he loved her people, he loved her art and literature. Even when he was writing of other lands and other times, she was always first in his thoughts, and when he wanted to give practical realization to his teaching, he did so under the ægis of her patron saint. He forsook his service of art in order to fly to her aid, like a burgher to the ramparts, in what he considered a time of national crisis. He gave

his money and services to the vindication of Governor Eyre. His very prejudices were English, there was nothing cosmopolitan about him.

His patriotism was not limited to the shores of these islands. Like Carlyle, he was an imperialist, for his soul was too great to be limited by formulas and pinchbeck calculations of profit and loss. Student of Venice, he not only perceived, but felt the possibilities of Empire, and the splendour of our destiny. The following passage, taken from his Inaugural Lecture at Oxford,* speaks for itself, and is so memorable as to demand full quotation:

"There is indeed a course of beneficent glory open to us, such as never was yet offered to any poor group of mortal souls. But it must be—it *is* with us now, 'Reign or Die.' And if it shall be said of this country, 'Fece per viltate, il gran rifuto,' that refusal of the crown will be, of all yet recorded in history, the shamefullest and most untimely.

"And this is what she must either do or perish: she must found colonies as fast and as far as she is able, formed of her most energetic and worthiest men; seizing every piece of waste ground she can set her foot on, and there teaching these her colonists that their chief virtue is to be fidelity to their country, and that their first aim is to be to advance the power of England by land and sea; and that, though they live on a distant plot of ground, they are no more to consider themselves therefore disfranchised from their native land, than the sailors of her fleets do because they float on distant waves. So that literally, these colonies must be fastened fleets; and every man of them must be under the authority of captains and officers, whose better command is to be over fields and streets instead of over ships of the line; and England, in these her motionless navies (or, in the true and mightiest sense, motionless *churches*, ruled by

* "Lectures on Art."

pilots on the Galilean lake of all the world), is to 'expect every man to do his duty,' recognizing that duty is indeed possible no less in peace than war; and that if we can get men, for little pay, to cast themselves against cannon-mouths, for the love of England, we may find men also who will plough and sow for her, who will behave kindly and righteously for her, who will bring up their children to love her, and who will gladden themselves in the brightness of her glory, more than in all the light of tropic skies."

## CHAPTER IV

### THE OXFORD MOVEMENT

THE passage with which we concluded our last chapter was delivered to students of Ruskin's own University. It was not unreasonable that an apostle of art should have hoped to kindle, amid her quadrangles and cloisters, the spark that should illumine all England. It would be hard to overestimate the service rendered to English thought, throughout the nineteenth century, by great-souled, reverent, deep-thinking Oxford. From all the sophisms of the new thought, from all the gongs and cymbals of progress, with a proud indifference that did not even condescend to scorn, she turned her regard to the truth that alters not with years, and the beauty that endureth for ever. Even as the disciples were first called Christians in mockery, so it was her detractors who conferred upon her that grandest of all titles, "The home of lost causes."

It was at Oxford that the most determined resistance was offered to the growing materialism of the age. Ruskin with his Political Economy of Art, Matthew Arnold with his "geist," Pater and Oscar Wilde with their strange earthy cult of beauty, Froude with his imperialism, were all, in their varying degrees, trying to hold out something better than the vulgar license of thought and politics, that was coming to be identified with progress. But the most important of all these forlorn hopes was that movement whose very name is Oxford, which counts among its

leaders a man worthier far than the Master of St. George—him whom the successor of Peter invested with the proud title "Cardinal of St. George."

It was to the Church of England that thoughtful and enlightened men naturally looked for leadership in a time of difficulty. It was upon her, purged indeed of her dross, and restored to her proper dignity and functions, that the Lake poets, and especially Coleridge, had built their highest hopes. But whatever she might have been, the Church was proving as inefficient a bulwark against the new spirit, as the landowners who followed the lead of Peel. It was not that she was corrupt or vicious, but merely deficient in spirit and enthusiasm, a respectable Laodicea.

In the country villages the parsons went on performing their functions, and doing more or less good in their unostentatious way, but the old organization was unfitted to cope with the new conditions of the industrial revolution, and masses of men were left in a state bordering on heathendom. Something more than common sense and scholarship was needed to bring into the fold those vast, bewildered flocks, that wandered in the wilderness of civilization. There was, indeed, a party in the Church which had felt the influence of Wesley and Law, and affected a more intense spirituality than the comfortable Erastianism of the majority, but time had shown that the Low Church could be as sleepy and formal as the High. The initial vigour had departed, and the expressions of enthusiasm and devotion had hardened into formula.

The leaders of ecclesiastical thought were men who appealed rather to the brain than to the soul. Such a one was the logician and economist Whately, for all his trouncing of the Higher Criticism and Hume. But the spiritual bankruptcy of the Church may best be gauged by the honour which was accorded to Paley, perhaps the most cynical and un-Christian of all apologists for

Christianity. His philosophy is a barefaced attempt to marry the teaching of Christ to that of Bentham. He would repose faith upon syllogism, and conduct upon interest. His "Moral and Political Philosophy" is little different from that of Bentham, except as regards its blasphemous travesty of religion. The only ground that he can assign for doing right, is that we shall be punished by God or the hangman if we do not. A saint or martyr is thus only an economic man, who has made a more businesslike calculation of his own interests than the sinner next door. All this is thoroughly in the spirit of the celebrated hymn :

> "Whatever, Lord, we lend to Thee
> Repaid a thousand times shall be,
> *Then gladly will we give to Thee.*"

"Whatever is expedient," says this extraordinary theologian, "is right."

Paley's political philosophy is a dull and pompous application of these principles to the government of states. He is unable to look beyond the interests of the moment, "constitutional" and "unconstitutional" have no other meaning to him than "legal" and "illegal." Government is an affair of interest, and statesmen are advised, very characteristically, "never to pursue national honour as distinct from national interest." Hardly, in the whole book, shall we discover a single sentiment worthy either of an Englishman or a Christian, all is false and hollow, though Paley's tongue does not drop manna. Traitor to his profession, and not even frank in his own materialism, we leave him to the homage of dons and the bewilderment of freshmen at his own University.

It has been necessary to notice him, in passing, in order to show how unspiritual must have been the taste of a Church, one of whose honoured and erudite divines could coolly propound doctrines so monstrous as those of

Paley. It was at this very time that she was entering upon one of the most critical periods of her history. The Whig Party, who were to govern the country, were notoriously unfavourable to her claims, and it was confidently predicted that both peer and parson would share the fate of the rotten borough holder. Even before the Reform Bill, Peel had made the first of his great surrenders in the matter of Catholic Emancipation in Ireland, and the repeal of Tests. It was therefore to be expected that these two causes, the growth of materialism and the peril of the Church, should call forth champions, if any were to be found, to reform her from within, and to protect her from without. Such men were the leaders of the Oxford Movement.

But now, though perhaps never definitely formulated, arose an important question. Was the Church to remain, in fact as well as in name, the Church of England, working in harmony with the State, and animated by a common ideal, that of sustaining a great and Christian nation? Such had been the hope of Coleridge and the Lake school. Or was she to withdraw herself as far as possible from the aspirations and patriotisms of the world, and become an independent power, acting rather as the rival and opponent than as the bride of the State? This was the solution towards which, as years passed, the leaders of the Oxford Movement more and more inclined.

The nineteenth century is remarkable, and increasingly remarkable as it gets older, for the number of its leading men who seek to withdraw altogether from the main stream of life, and moor their boats in some quiet back-water. We have seen how the exhaustion after the war, and the gloom of the Metternich system, had produced a poesy of despair and Nirvana, and just as Shelley had sought in the shadow of the tomb a refuge from the world's bitter wind, so it might almost be said (if the comparison be not irreverent), that the cry of the Oxford

Movement came to be "Seek refuge in the shadow of the Cross," and not "Sub hoc signo, vince."

Herein lies the gulf between these men and Coleridge. For much as his system anticipated that of the Tractarians, it differed from it in being thoroughly national and patriotic. And at the start of the Movement, there was every reason for believing that it would have proceeded upon the same lines. For Keble, from whose sermon on National Apostasy it may be said to date, was bent on reclaiming not only individual souls, but the nation, as a whole, by means of her Church.

Keble had nothing like Coleridge's scope of intellect. Though a brilliant scholar and a modest and lovable man, he had not the breadth of view to qualify him for a national reformer. His famous sermon, preached before His Majesty's judges, is a strange mixture of the sublime and the insignificant. In one sense it may be regarded as a solemn appeal to the British nation to turn to the Lord while there is yet time, in another, for which we have the warrant of Keble himself, it is a protest against the suppression of certain sees of the Protestant Irish Church, a body that was unrepresentative of the Irish nation, in a notoriously unsatisfactory condition, and whose subsequent complete disestablishment has proved an unmixed blessing to her and to Ireland. It was a pity that such a pronouncement should have been delivered in such a cause. For if we set aside the triviality of its immediate object, we shall find much in Keble's sermon of the deepest importance. He takes, like most of his comrades, the gloomiest view as to the state and prospects of the nation. He applies to modern England the story of Saul and Samuel, Saul being represented by the State. The English Government and people are treading the downward path, that was trod by one of the most attractive characters of Old Testament history; they are laying sacrilegious hands upon the apostolic

Church; they are ready to extend sympathetic toleration to the worst forms of irreligion; they are lapsing into impiety and practical atheism.

The question that Keble propounds is how, in such times of decay and danger, a good man can reconcile his allegiance to God and his Church with his duty to his country. And the answer is that he should imitate as far as possible the conduct of Samuel; he can pray to God for England's conversion; he can on all occasions offer remonstrance "in public and in private, direct and indirect, by word, look and demeanour"; he can make his own life a protest and an example to a backsliding people. Keble's counsel is one rather of resignation than of encouragement, he is more of a pessimist than Carlyle, and he plainly hints that it may be the duty of the Church to withdraw herself, like Samuel, altogether from the affairs of the nation, and to mourn for her aloof, while she is going to the Devil.

In his extreme hatred of Liberalism, Keble allows himself to indulge in excesses of an opposite kind. His attitude is not so much that of a patriot, as that of an intransigent Royalist of the school of James I or Filmer. The language that he uses in the "Christian Year," and his sermons about King Charles the Martyr, is couched in terms of servile adulation, and whether or not he is right in believing that the dead king's virtues excite holy mirth in heaven, certain it is that Keble's account of them is calculated to provoke a faint smile upon earth. In fact, he was cast in a lesser mould than either Carlyle or Newman; he is able to see that the times are evil and that a remedy is needed, but he is unable to take a comprehensive view of either evil or remedy. Blind reaction is a poor remedy even for revolution.

Hurrell Froude, "the bright and beautiful," one of the most brilliant men of his day, and yet a little child in spirit, has left an essay in which he openly treats the

State as an enemy, and, quoting from Newman, asks how long God's true race must remain linked in forced friendship with Belial. These are strong words, and show the trend that the Oxford Movement was taking; the State was no longer an ally and a guardian, but "the world," something to be fought against and avoided as much as possible. Froude confessed, in conversation, that the only war he could enter into with any zest would be a civil war, and in a sonnet regretting the decay of Tory principles he bids the Christian take comfort:

> "Thou hast a treasure and an armoury
> Locked to the spoiler yet: thy shafts are bright,
> Faint not: *Heaven's Keys* are more than sceptred might,
> Their guardians more than king or sire to thee."

This is far upon the road to Rome.

Throughout the "Tracts for the Times," we shall find little or nothing that can appeal to the heart of a patriot. The religion of their authors was different from that of the Hebrews, who looked to God to lead them into Edom, and to build the walls of Jerusalem. It was different from that of the Elizabethans, or Cromwell, or Nelson. It was essentially a refuge from a bad world, like the art of Oscar Wilde and Walter Pater. And yet it represented what was noblest in contemporary religion. Keble and Hurrell Froude had manifested an ideal of life and theology, that places them in an altogether superior category to Whately, with his logic, and Thomas Arnold, with his common sense, and they are as far removed from the trough-philosophy of Paley, as Heaven from Hell.

They were intensely in earnest, and, in another age, would probably have sent their opponents to the stake with as little compunction as they would have gone themselves. It is told of Keble, that he preferred to remain outside a friend's house, upon the doorstep, rather than be under the same roof as a guest whose opinions he suspected of being Liberal. Yet a more humble and

lovable man than Keble has never existed. Newman himself dissuaded a lady from attending the wedding of her sister, owing to a difference of religious opinion, and Hurrell Froude considered that all churchwardens, who had failed to deal with notorious evil-livers in their parishes, had perjured themselves. A man's religion was no matter of choice or opinion, but the most important thing about him, and Froude did not fail to remind his readers of the apostolic precept, that he who wishes an evil-doer good-speed, makes himself partaker of his sin. Arianism, socinianism, sabellianism, were words of vital and sinister import to these men.

In the early 'forties came the inevitable crash. Froude was in his grave, but Newman, the greatest of all the Tractarians, and Ward, one of his ablest comrades, severed their connection with the English Church altogether, and found their final refuge upon the rock of Peter. But they had accomplished, in the nineteenth century, a work as great as that of Wesley in the eighteenth. The High Church party, into which they had breathed new life, was henceforth to occupy a position of great and increasing importance. The study of theology and the Fathers was revived, the priestly office assumed a new dignity, colour and fragrance replaced Puritan gloom in the churches, and a powerful instrument was forged for appealing to the imagination of the poorest classes, and withstanding the growth of infidelity, not only from without, but from within the Church. The Oxford Movement may justly claim to represent the highest religious thought of the century, and its divorce from patriotism thus acquires a peculiar and ominous significance.

But all that it accomplished counts little against the fact, that under its influence was fostered the genius of one, who was the greatest ecclesiastic, and perhaps the greatest intellect, of nineteenth-century England. The

figure of the glowing and saintly Newman towers like a colossus above the Whewells and Kingsleys and Jowetts, above the Arnolds and Mills and Spencers of the Victorian age. He seemed, in his mournful grandeur, a being superior to the frailties and bickerings of his contemporaries, and if once his calm was ruffled by one of the Titans of his day, it was as though an Olympian, intolerably provoked, had reluctantly, almost wearily, launched his bolt, and in an instant the offender lay scorched and blasted, overwhelmed beneath mountains of shame and contempt.

It is this serene detachment from tendencies and prejudices which blinded the souls of lesser men, that is Newman's chief title to our reverence. Attempts have been made to pigeon-hole him with the Royalist school of the Bourbon Restoration. Readers of Newman's writings will be clever indeed, if they can find in them the least resemblance to the sombre austerity of de Maistre, or the tedium of Bonald or the gaudiness of Chateaubriand. Compare the "Grammar of Assent" with that other famous apology for Catholicism, "Le génie de Christianisme." Here Chateaubriand is constantly reminding us of a brilliant barrister, who, conscious of having a bad case, is trying to work upon the feelings of the jury by rhetoric; all is sensational, feverish, overdrawn; but Newman scorns to take an advantage of his reader, he speaks like a man who is so certain of the truth, that he does not need to embellish it, a scholar whose mind has no patience with tinsel, a gentleman who instinctively shrinks from anything like advertisement.

He occupies a similar position among the opponents of nineteenth-century materialism, to that of Prince Arthur among the elfin knights of Gloriana. All the others, however valiant and devoted, are subject to defeat; the Redcross Knight by Orgoglio, Guyon by the two paynims, Arthegall by Rudigund; but the prince comes victorious

through all trials, he combines the virtues of all the rest, being at once and always holy, temperate, chaste, loyal, just and courteous. There is about Newman the same harmony and completeness; he has the subtlety of Coleridge without his frailty, the vigour of Carlyle without his rudeness, the grace of Arnold without his superficiality, the beauty of Ruskin without his priggishness, the sanctity of his own comrades of the Oxford Movement without their narrowness. It may even be said that he had, at any rate potentially, the lyric ecstasy of Tennyson, for who shall venture to put even "Crossing the Bar" upon a higher level than "Lead, kindly light," with its last two lines, whose depths no mortal plummet shall ever sound?

This is not the place to examine in detail the stately temple of thought that Newman raised, as if by enchantment, in the very heart of Babylon. Those who read such books as the "Grammar of Assent," or the "Idea of a University" can hardly fail to rise from their perusal with a charged and steadier outlook upon life. Calmly, without declamation, the sophisms and sentimentalities of "advanced" thought are dissected and exposed. "Obscurantist," which has lately become a sort of catchword, is perhaps the most brazen of all the sneers that it is fashionable to level at Newman. For it was just he who confounded his opponents by turning their own guns upon them, by exposing rationalism as a lazy and slovenly use of reason, by condemning the unscientific claims of scientists, by confirming in every department of thought the truth of Bacon's saying, "A little philosophy inclineth man's mind to atheism; but depth in philosophy bringeth men's minds about to religion."

It is therefore of the highest importance to ascertain, in what relation the Cardinal of St. George stands to St. George's England and his own; whether he found himself able to act in loving sympathy with his Motherland,

or linked in forced friendship with Belial, and more inclined to bear arms against Englishmen than against aliens. Alas, it is too plain that he is not to be numbered amongst the great enthusiastic patriots, he who fled from England to Rome, and whose dreams for the future, if we may judge from his language to Dublin students, seem latterly to have centred rather round Ireland than England. There is one of his Catholic sermons which shows scant sympathy with, and even scant understanding of, the ideal of an Italian patriot. It concerns the Pope and the Revolution, and it reminds the Roman people that they were happier under the quiet government of the Pope, than they will ever be as part of a United Italy, that little states have, in fact, always had the easiest time of it. Newman would not have thought of seriously applying the test of happiness to Christianity, or anything that he considered of really vital importance. He speaks contemptuously of the Piedmontese as having been incited to robbery by expedience or "some theory of patriotism." His loyalty to the Church came completely to overshadow every other consideration in his mind. In another of his Catholic sermons he takes the view that it ought not to be a matter of reproach to the Church, even if her success involves the confusion or ruin of the civil power. Rome meant more for him than England.

It is easy to trace the idea that ran, like a dark thread, through Newman's career, and finally gained entire possession of him. He watched the rising tide of Mammon and scepticism slowly submerging the ancient landmarks; he ran to the dyke of Anglicanism and found it crumbling, letting in the flood through a hundred apertures; he saw the domes and pillars of faith still rising above the shallow waters, but knew that the foundations were undermined; while towering above the universal ruin loomed the mighty rock, upon which Christ had founded His Church. Thither fled Newman, leaving his own

doomed city of the plain, and calling upon all the elect to follow him as to their last refuge.

This is the final position of a man whose life had been one long course of change and steady development. It was as a Catholic that Newman found peace, it was then that his literary genius came to maturity, and he produced those masterpieces, which will always be numbered among the classics of English literature. But the pilgrimage was long and hard, and upon the way Newman left precious gifts to his countrymen.

Certainly we have little enough to gain from the perusal of his Anglican Sermons, except for the deliverance of our own individual souls. In this respect his sermons, and Froude's, differ markedly from those of Keble. Keble's teaching was indeed restricted, and often ridiculous, but he did face social problems in his own way, whereas his two friends are, for the most part, concerned with the man alone, a man as cityless, though not as soulless, as any economic dummy. Newman's correspondence, while in the Church of England, shows singularly little interest in politics or society. There is a passage, written shortly before the Reform Bill, which shows what he then thought about the state of the nation. "I much fear society is rotten, to say a strong thing. Doubtless there are many specimens of excellence in the higher walks of life, but I am tempted to put it to you whether the persons you meet generally are—I do not say consistently religious, we can never expect that in this world—but believers in Christianity in any true sense of the word. No, they are Liberals, and in saying this I conceive I am saying almost as bad of them as can be said of any one. . . . I dread above all things the pollution of such men as Lord Brougham."

In one of his poems, written a year later, he addresses his country in terms not affectionate but minatory:

> "Tyre of the West, and glorying in the name
> More than in Faith's pure fame!"

Not only with Tyre, but with Sodom does he compare her, and warns her to beware of the divine judgment. There is a more tender note, however, in a wistful poem which describes the autumn of the Tree of Life, how leaf after leaf, truth after truth, has fallen unheeded :

" For she, once pattern chief
Of faith, my Country, now gross-hearted grown,
Waits but to burn the stem before her idol's throne."

Fond is he, too, of contrasting the mere patriot with the saint. As early as 1826, speaking of his vocation as messenger of Heaven, he says :

" Deep in my heart that gift I hide ;
I change it not away
For patriot warrior's hour of pride. . . ."

The day after he had compared England to Sodom, he wrote a short poem in which, after describing how Moses, from a " patriot fierce " had become " the meekest man on earth," he cries :

" O grant me loss with Moses here,
To gain his future rest ! "

and afterwards, in one of his later sermons, he has a picture of a lost soul being dragged to Hell, protesting in vain that he has, amongst other things, been a benefactor to his country : " O, vanity ! vanity of vanities, all is vanity. What profiteth it ? His soul is in Hell."

One sonnet, indeed, breathes a different strain, and shows, that in spite of all his pessimism and indignation, there was, deep in Newman's heart, a natural yearning towards the land of which he despaired. It is called " Home," and is wholly in the spirit of Wordsworth, or of that fair English Madonna of Reynolds :

" Dear fertile soil ! what foreign culture bears
Such fruit ? And I through distant climes may run
My weary round, yet miss thy likeness still."

This note is not common in Newman's works.

There are two essays of considerable length and

importance, which deal with social problems. The first is written in the early 'forties, and is directed against Brougham, whose shallow brilliance was abhorrent to Newman, and against Peel—a significant conjunction. These two statesmen had, in opening the reading-room at Tamworth, made speeches expounding those commonplaces of the bourgeois creed, of which Macaulay was the high priest, and both Peel and Brougham, despite their different labels, whole-hearted exponents. It was easy for a thinker of Newman's calibre to make short work of Sir Robert's heavy platitudes, or the mere obvious tinsel of Brougham. The essay shows how impossible it is to find any principle of social cohesion by science or "useful knowledge"; the Benthamites and Liberals are not only building their house upon sand, but of sand. And the anomalous position of Peel as leader of the Tory party, and of the Tory party as followers of Peel, does not escape notice. "How sad that he who might have had the affections of many should have thought, in a day like this, that a statesman's praise lay in preserving the mean, not in aiming at the high; that to be safe was his first merit, and to kindle enthusiasm his most disgraceful blunder. How pitiable that such a man should not have understood that a body without a soul has no life, and a political party without an idea no unity." This, though its author probably did not know it, was precisely the standpoint of Benjamin Disraeli.

Newman has left us another important fragment, in the shape of a series of letters written to "The Times" during the Crimean War. Here he speaks more definitely as a statesman, and less as a theologian, than in any other part of his writings, and here also he takes a more kindly view of his countrymen than was his wont. He compares them to the Athenians of old, and finds the mainspring of their character in an excessive individualism, which, though it may make them the ablest of men, makes them

also the most inefficient of nations. There is a vein of delicate irony running through these letters. "See," he says in effect, "the result of your Whig individualism run mad." England is always distrusting and bullying her faithful servants, Ministers, generals, parsons, and the result is inefficiency and chaos. "Who's to blame," he asks, "for the untoward events in the Crimea?" and his answer is "The ignorant intemperate public, who clamour for an unwise war," and then beat their servants for not doing impossibilities.

There is an air of detachment, a sort of friendly criticism about these letters, that makes them seem the work of a foreigner. And, indeed, Newman had become an alien in everything but birth, a citizen of the Eternal City, whose policy had ever been in open or tacit hostility to English patriotism, whose yoke we had chafed under in the Middle Ages and shaken off at the Reformation, and which the Protestant feeling of the country justly regarded as something vaguely hostile and menacing. He did, indeed, deal with the question of divided allegiance, in his "Difficulties of Anglicans," but though he admits cases in which the authority of the State may override that of the Pope, his language and similes betray the lukewarmness of his patriotism. He actually compares Catholics dwelling in England, with the English dwelling in Russia during the Crimean War, and though in a hypothetical war between England and the Pope (which English Catholics will oppose both before and during it by all constitutional means), he allows our soldiers and sailors to disregard the Pope's threat of excommunication, their plea is that they act under the influence of fear, or, as our English law would express it, under duress. Newman, indeed, held that the powers that be are ordained of God, and he would have been as strong against rebellion as Keble himself, but if his heart's allegiance was not divided, it was because Rome had it all. His language to the

Dublin students, appealing to a distinctively Irish patriotism, glows with an ardour he never had for England, and plainly implies that with Ireland, the daughter of the Church, Christian before England, lies the hope of the future.

Yet we must not overlook the evidences, scattered and far between, that the love of England smouldered, at least, in Newman's breast. He wept when he heard of the destruction of the great ship, laden with necessaries for our troops in the Crimea, though this was perhaps due to his personal and human pity for the poor, disappointed soldiers. Father Neville tells how the venerable Cardinal felt the sacrifice of Gordon as an unparalleled disgrace to the country. Newman himself testified, that the Sudan tragedy had, by its very wantonness, come home to him more than either the Crimean War or the Indian Mutiny. Gordon's own last days had been cheered by Newman's "Dream of Gerontius," and its author writes simply, that it is more than a compliment to have been associated with such a man. Moreover, despite his recognition, even against Gladstone, of Irish patriotism, he could write of Home Rule, "I am no advocate of such an issue; rather it seems to me a blow on the power of England as serious as it is retributive."

But no patriotism was able to satisfy Newman's supreme desire. To cope with the Antichrist of infidelity was, in his view, a task beyond the scope of any nation or national Church. The Red Cross of St. George was down, but the gonfanon of Peter still floated above the hard-pressed ranks of the elect, and under that standard Newman fought and died. And those of us who, honouring his memory, reverently wish it had been otherwise, may perchance feel, that though of all the prophets of our latter day, a greater hath not arisen than John Newman, yet he that is least among English patriots is, in this sense, greater than he.

## CHAPTER V

### THE LAUREATES

IF the view which we have taken of the Whig régime, and the period that led up to it, be correct, and it be granted that the country was, by very gradual stages, sinking into an abyss of mediocrity and materialism, it must be conceded that the University of Oxford adopted, on the whole, an attitude more clear-sighted and courageous than that of her sister. It is the glory and holiest function of such ancient bodies, to be lifted above the prejudices and passions of the hour, to shine with a steady light among will-o'-the-wisps. It is thus that we associate a University education with what is tried and eternal, with all that is alien to the modern spirit of journalism and " advanced " thought.

The ideal University man will be the master and not the slave of his emotions, his enthusiasm will be the more intense and resistless because it is steady. He has an instinctive horror of anything that smacks of smartness or advertisement; like Hurrell Froude he will be distressed at the very thought of having been " flash." He is able to excel in prose, without purple patches or curious verbiage; in verse, without turgidity or affectation. He will study from day to day the fluctuations of opinion, but is too well grounded upon the past, to share in the fashions and idolatries of the hour; he has studied Socialism with Plato, and heresy with the Fathers; he has found the Higher Thought in the valleys of the Yang-Tse,

and evolution on the shores of the Ægean. Though a fighter and an idealist, the catchwords of clique and party leave him cold; their champions will seldom so much as provoke him to the field; his business is with demons, and not with imps. Too close to God to be flippant, too close to life to be pedantic, too responsive to genius to miss any spark of it in a contemporary or an opponent, he is at once the fairest and the most redoubtable of controversialists. And, finally, he has entered into the mystic communion of the living and the dead and the unborn, that constitutes a nation; he knows how intimate is the bond that binds Englishman to Englishman; he feels that he is the citizen of no mean city; and fortified tenfold in his devotion by his knowledge of her past, and his heightened imaginative sympathy, he views with scorn any attempt to disparage her flag, or her dominion, or her faithful servants, or anything that is hers.

Fully to realize such an ideal is perhaps beyond the power of any human institution, but in some measure to conform to it should surely be the aim of a National University. It is not possible to make great men out of fools or knaves, but it is possible to create an atmosphere in which greatness can breathe and flourish, in which at least it shall not be stunted before its prime. That such an atmosphere existed in nineteenth-century Oxford, at least from the coming of Newman till the death of Jowett, can scarcely be denied. Her very action in casting forth her greatest son, when he forsook England for Rome, is perhaps not wholly to her discredit. Alas! that such a tale cannot be told of Cambridge! While the advance of materialism had only strengthened the determination of her rival to hold fast to ancient ideals, she was half-heartedly compromising with the enemy, trying to keep her reputation as a centre of culture, and at the same time haunted with a dread of being left behind the times. It was said that Cambridge was more practical than Oxford,

and this was a polite way of saying that she was more shallow and earthy. It is significant that the book, which has been imposed upon generations of undergraduates as a masterpiece of reasoning, and the buttress of faith, is no less than Paley's "Evidences," which is as insulting to God as it is tedious to man.

Matthew Arnold has told us, that Cambridge has produced great men and Oxford great movements. This is a very misleading statement, too characteristic of its author, for Oxford's great movements were made by her great men, and a list which includes Keble, Newman, the two Froudes, Pusey, Gladstone, Church, Ruskin, Pater, Swinburne, Wilde, Green, Jowett, and Arnold himself, is sufficient evidence of its absurdity. Nineteenth-century Cambridge may have produced famous scientists, but in literature and philosophy, in statesmanship and theology, in those liberal accomplishments which alone form the end of a University education in the true sense, her record is disappointing. Of course, Cambridge could no more extinguish genius than Oxford could create it, but she could starve it and lure it aside.

Just before the time of the Reform Bill, there flourished a group of Cambridge undergraduates, who were described, years afterwards, by one of them, as being "for the wealth of their promise, a rare body of men such as this University has seldom contained." Full of hope and ambition, they fell short of the reverence and disciplined earnestness that were the features of contemporary Oxford. The present Lord Tennyson says of them that they "not only debated on politics, but read their Hobbes, Locke, Berkeley, Butler, Hume, Bentham, Descartes and Kant." The result of this training seems to have been a state of indecision between the old and the new, a genuine love of the past, marred by such eccentricities as the placing of Eutropius above Pindar, of the "poets" Livy and Jeremy Taylor next to Shakespeare, and a desire to take

part in the movements and iconoclasms of the present, even extending to a qualified sympathy with rick-burners. Carlyle tells us of Sterling, one of the most brilliant of these men, that he had not "adopted the then prevalent utilitarian theory of things. But neither, apparently, had he rejected it," which is one of the many straws that show how the wind was blowing. Tennyson's self-contradictory aphorism, "I am of the same politics as Shakespeare, Bacon and every sensible man," displays a slovenliness of thought, that would have been literally inconceivable in Newman's circle.

It is sad to think how much of this promise was wasted. Brilliant these men were, but almost without exception they fell just short of greatness; they were like the pollard willows along the banks of the Cam. FitzGerald lives but in one poem, and that, at least in name, a translation; Sterling in Carlyle's biography; Hallam in "In Memoriam"; Maurice is sometimes heard of but seldom read, and the rest—Houghton, Spedding, Kemble, French, Buller, Merivale, Alford, Spring-Rice, Venables—have somehow fallen short of immortality; even such minor orbs as those of Keble and Matthew Arnold have eclipsed them all. Modern Cambridge may truly be styled the grave of genius; not once nor twice is it that we have heard of some personality being hailed with universal wonder and expectation, which it has utterly disappointed in the end.

Tennyson managed to survive the blight, but he did not escape unscathed. For a long time he was drifting about like a ship without a rudder, the wind of heaven was filling his sails for the open sea, but the current of "progress" was pulling him towards the rocks of materialism. And thus we find him versifying the ideas of the Palmerstonian Whigs, a poor kind of fodder for Pegasus. The Whigs represented compromise in politics, just as Cambridge represented it in thought, and therefore

we find the ideas of Palmerston's Don Pacifico peroration, almost word for word, in Tennyson's earlier poems. We have freedom broadening down from precedent to precedent, and the chord which Hampden smote, and the abuse of Russia, and the havens filling with commerce, and the world spinning down the grooves of change.

That this Whig Tennyson is not the poet's true self, must be apparent to any discerning student of his work. But in order to demonstrate this, we must first consider that work as a whole, and endeavour to fix Tennyson's real place among English poets, for the question is by no means free from controversy. His admirers have praised him most, for the very merit in which he was most deficient. There are few poets, not even Byron and Wordsworth, whose grain lies mixed with so much chaff. The fact that he carefully polished every line, and weeded out many, has served to mark, but not to remove, this essential unevenness. For a line may be able to pass every imaginable test of metrist and critic, without being poetry, and the critics of the eighteenth century were able to detect few flaws in Pope. There is a certain aspect of Tennyson, which would make him, if this were all, the Pope of the nineteenth century. He has the same faculty of putting exactly the correct word in the correct place, of expressing an idea neatly, strikingly and harmoniously, satisfying the intellect and leaving the soul unmoved.

> " His honour rooted in dishonour stood,
> And faith unfaithful kept him falsely true,"

is a thoroughly Popean conceit.

Again, he is not rich in the faculty of construction, he is essentially a poet of detail. " In Memoriam " is little more than a number of separate poems in the same metre, more or less related to the same subject; the " Idylls of the King " stand just as well, or better, by themselves; as a dramatist, Tennyson fails in the first

of Aristotle's requisites—nicety of plot. The "Passing of Arthur" is the longest of the pieces in which he seems to have complete control over his subject, without diffuseness or patchwork.

With these qualifications, we are now able to appreciate Tennyson at his true value. We must be content to sift out his real poetry, from what is often little better than metrical prose; we must look to him for lyric, rather than for epic or dramatic beauty; but, after every allowance is made, we are left with a remnant of verse, that places its author among the supreme poets of his country. To find out just what this remnant is, is to understand Tennyson and his relation to his age.

The Whig sentiments, which we have already noticed, are in Tennyson's least poetical or Popean style. Of this order, are the couplets about change and progress in the first "Locksley Hall," such lines as:

> "There the common sense of most shall hold a fretful realm in awe,"

or:

> "In the Parliament of Man, the Federation of the world,"

or:

> "Let the great world spin for ever down the ringing grooves of change."

These have all the merit and all the shortcoming of Pope. They are the poetry of a prose age. But an awful note, one of real inspiration, is struck in the couplet:

> "Slowly comes a hungry people, as a lion creeping nigher,
> Glares at one that nods and winks behind a slowly dying fire."

Here is a ring of the true Tennysonian spirit, which has nothing in common with the vague progressive optimism he had picked up at Cambridge. For he had Newman's distrust of humanity, with only a fitful glimmer of his faith in God, a religious ardour that was more of a longing for the light than any assured vision. Whenever

Tennyson echoes the sentiments of the Tamworth Reading-room, as often as he is talking about the advance of science, common sense, and Russellite constitutionalism, he drops into the prose style.

Another instance of this contrast between the true and the false in Tennyson, may be drawn from a study of his laureate pieces, the purely formal Exhibition Ode of 1862 and Jubilee Ode in 1887, which are devoted to Lord John's ideal of happy progress, and the latter of which drops into the bathos of an advertisement poster :

> " Fifty years of ever-broadening Commerce !
> Fifty years of ever-brightening Science !
> Fifty years of ever-widening Empire ! "

These are neither poetry nor good prose, but when Tennyson finds a subject that suits his genius, he is all poet and no courtier. The song of welcome to Princess Alexandra is perfect of its kind; generous, healthy loyalty bursting forth in a rush of inspired music. The Funeral Ode on Wellington stands alone. Scott's lines on Pitt, and Marvell's reference to Charles I, may bear comparison with individual passages, but they lack the sustained grandeur of the whole. Perhaps a more fitting comparison would be with Beethoven's Funeral March on the Death of a Hero.

This false note in Tennyson's music must be attributed, at least in part, to his University training. It is true that he denounced the lethargy and uselessness of the dons; but then donnishness was a fairly constant, and not very important element in both Universities. That a certain number of old gentlemen, occupying positions of authority and cut off from all the interests of life, should sink into a not altogether unamiable state of lethargy, was natural, and perhaps the best practicable safeguard against a worse evil. But these old gentlemen, though easy targets for satire, exercised about as much influence upon the

rising generation as the mummies in the Fitzwilliam Museum. An exceptional character, a Jowett, a Whewell, a Newman, was indeed able to wield, from his academic chair, an immense influence for good or evil. But the circle in which Tennyson moved was evidently composed of brilliant young men in a hurry, intent rather on the latest fashion than the true ware of knowledge. A course of study, in which such authorities as Hobbes and Berkeley, Bentham and Kant, appear to have mingled on a footing of equality, was a poor protection against the claptrap of newspaper and politician. It is perhaps the supreme proof of Tennyson's genius, that he could survive the taint that marred the promise of so many of his friends.

We are thus justified in classing him among the opponents of what Newman described as "liberal thought." Though he may sometimes have had its formulas on his lips, the quality of his poetry, a sure guide, shows that they were far from his heart. He had the same despondency about the fetish of comfortable progress, that we find all through the "Lyra Apostolica," and "Latter Day Pamphlets," and "Unto this Last." How many of the passages that we would cite as the supreme examples of his genius, those which place him amongst the very greatest of our poets, are pitched in this strain! Such lyrics as the swallow song in the "Princess," or the garden piece in "Maud," are not fit to bear comparison with Shakespeare or Shelley, or even with George Meredith, in the expression of happy love; they are a little too obvious and bear the impress of elaboration; but there are stanzas, and even cantos in "In Memoriam," that need not fear any comparison, and these voice an agony that is only the more pathetic, because it is struggling against hope for some ultimate reconciliation. Who can forget the vision of an ever-crumbling shore, tumbling in the godless deep, or the desolation of the March day,

when the rooks are blown about the skies, or the protest, worthy of Michelangelo himself, that anything so beautiful as man should be

> " Blown about the desert dust,
> Or sealed within the iron hills " ?

Tennyson, like Newman, had encountered the Hydra of despair, but instead of hewing it down, sword in hand, he was struggling in its toils. The hope of reconciliation was, he felt, a dream, and he but

> " An infant crying in the night :
> An infant crying for the light :
> And with no language but a cry."

When, in the " Higher Pantheism," he does attempt a solution, he drops into the balanced antithesis and elaborate frigidity of the eighteenth century.

The gloom of those who revolted against the bourgeois ideal had clouded Tennyson's spirit. As a general rule, the more optimistic he is, the worse becomes his poetry. It is the same, when he tries to express the respectable sentimentality that we associate with the phrase " early Victorian." It is then that he becomes tedious and mawkish, Tennysonian in the sense that his most bitter detractors use the word. Here again, it is obvious that he has not found his true voice. Optimism and sentimentality were two essential parts of the Palmerstonian Whig creed, and a Palmerstonian Whig, Tennyson, whether he realized it or not, was not, and never could be.

Though the music forsakes his lute when he tries to sing the blessings of commercial progress, there can be no doubt of his force or sincerity when he is denouncing it as a curse. It is in " Maud " that he addresses himself to fight with laissez-faire, and capitalism, and all their works. " Why do they prate of the blessings of peace ? " he cries, " they have made them a curse ! " Villainous centre-bits murdering sleep, the quack medicine vendor poisoning

his patients, Timour Mammon grinning on a heap of children's bones :

> " Is it peace or war ? better war ! And war by land and by sea,
> War with a thousand battles, and shaking a hundred thrones ! "

In the second " Locksley Hall," written in 1886, the illusion of a peaceful advance to an industrial Utopia has grown faint indeed :

> " Is it well that while we range with Science, glorying in the Time,
> City children soak and blacken soul and sense in city slime ?
> There among our glooming alleys Progress halts on palsied feet,
> Crime and hunger cast our maidens by the thousand on the street."

True, in the last two or three couplets we again hear the cry of " forward," but they are in spirit, almost in letter, the conclusion of the whole matter in Ecclesiastes.

Tennyson's view of social progress is thus little more hopeful than his view of religion, and it shows less tendency to right itself.

> " I found Him in the shining of the stars,
> I marked Him in the flowering of His fields,
> But in His ways with men I find Him not,"

cries his pattern King at the close of his career—and these lines were inserted years after the original " Morte d'Arthur " was written.

There is one tendency that constantly militates against this despondency becoming despair. Tennyson is unlike Newman, in being, from the beginning to the end of his career, a whole-hearted patriot. He is never tired of expressing his love for England, he sings of her heroes, of her victories, of her landscape, of her rulers, of her empire, with equal enthusiasm. Though he hates the mammon-worship that is consuming her like a foul disease, though he despairs of progress along the lines of

Cobden and Herbert Spencer, he can never believe that his countrymen have become wholly vile.

> " For I trust if an enemy's fleet came yonder round by the hill,
> And the rushing battle-bolt sang from the three-decker out of the foam,
> That the smooth-faced, snub-nosed rogue would leap from his counter and till,
> And strike, if he could, were it but with his cheating yard-wand, home."

It was a friend of Tennyson's, and a bishop, who had hazarded the opinion that God, who made the storm and earthquake, perchance made battles too; his predecessor in the laureateship had spoken of carnage as God's daughter; and this view, stern though it was, rapidly prevailed in Tennyson's mind over the dream of universal peace. He saw that war for a just cause was the cleanser of nations, that its suffering and self-sacrifice were more endurable than the petty virtues and miseries of competition. He did not love the waging of war for its own sake, a man who would advocate this must be a " fool or crazed or worse," but he was above the coward's creed that would measure the blessings of peace, not by honour or justice, but by the cheating yardwand of the tradesman, or the calculus of the utilitarian. In " Maud," the hero is healed of his madness and spiritual sickness, by taking part with his countrymen in wreaking Europe's wrath on a tyrant and a liar. Tennyson may have been wrong about the facts of the Crimean War, but the principle for which he stood is unaffected.

He is never happier than when he is writing about battles, and nearly all his battles are English. He sings of Athelstan at Brunanburgh, with as much vividness as he tells the story of Lucknow. The note is the same throughout: generous pride in his countrymen, unhesitating devotion to his country. His despondency drops from him as soon as decks are cleared for action, or the bugle sounds the advance. It is economic, and not military England that fills him with dismay. When the ardour

of battle is upon him, he is seldom at a loss for inspiration. His "Light Brigade," which thrilled many an English heart in the trenches of Sevastopol, is, save for its unnecessary concluding stanza, quite flawless. It was the genius of a historian, no less than that of a poet, that made Tennyson seize upon this particular incident of the war as the one most worthy of celebration. He has not a word of praise for the leaders (Mr. Punch's first idea was to talk of a trump Cardigan), his only thought was of the sublime, pathetic devotion of the poor troopers, who knew that their lives were being thrown away, and yet were ready to charge an army, because it is a soldier's duty to obey orders. His poem on Lucknow is so vivid, that it seemed to one of the defenders as if Tennyson must have been through the siege to have written it.

Perhaps the noblest of all his battle poems is the description of Hastings at the end of "Harold." The alternation of Stigand's description, with the broken cries of Edith, the stern, rolling chant of the monks, and the shouts of Saxon and Norman, produce an effect almost Wagnerian in its blending of different motives, and the power of working them all up to a climax of thunder melody. Take this description of the defence of the hill:

*Edith.* O God of battles, they are three to one,
Make thou one man as three to roll them down!

*Canons* (singing). Equus cum equite
Dejiciatur,
Acies, acies,
Prona sternatur,
Illorum lanceas
Frange Creator!

*Stigand.* Yea, yea, for how their lances snap and shiver
Against the shifting blaze of Harold's axe!
War-woodman of old Woden, how he fells
The mortal copse of faces! There! And there!
The horse and horseman cannot meet the shield,
The blow that brains the horseman kills the horse,
The horse and horseman roll along the hill,
They fly once more, they fly, the Norman flies!
Equus cum equite
Precipitatur.

This is in the true Tennysonian vein, which is as far removed from Palmerstonian bluster and the "give it to 'em, Charlie" sort of patriotism, as it is from the industrialism of Cobden. In nearly all his war poems, in the "Light Brigade," the "Heavy Brigade," "Lucknow," "The Revenge" and "Harold," the English are struggling with overwhelming odds, charging an army, or fighting one ship against a fleet. "They are three to one!" cries Edith at the climax of the battle, and we love Harold the more. Again, success or failure is a secondary consideration, Harold is killed, the Light Brigade ride back "not the six hundred," Sir Richard Grenville is taken. There is little disposition to abuse a foe, except in the unfortunate case of the Tsar, when Tennyson, at any rate, had the whole country with him. William the Norman is drawn with as sympathetic a hand as Harold the Englishman, and we cannot but like the brave enemies who praised Sir Richard "with their stately Spanish grace." In every way, Tennyson stands for the best type of English patriot, "the meekest man and the gentlest that ever ate in hall among ladies, and the sternest knight to his mortal foe that ever put lance in rest."

The Duke of Wellington in reality, and King Arthur in legend, he took for his pattern Englishmen. His character of the Duke is perhaps the last word to be said on the subject. One or two little blemishes he may have missed, but the man is there, and the portrait of the old soldier with his rough maxims, his iron devotion to duty, his unflinching truth, yet about whose knees the little children used to cling, will remain enshrined in his verse, beyond the reach of cynic or bookworm, only surpassed by that other portrait, embodying all Tennyson's conception of heroism, of the good King, betrayed by his kinsman, forsaken by his wife, with his Round Table well-nigh dissolved and his whole life's work undone, pausing beneath the dragon of the great Pendragonship,

and preparing to ride to his last battle in the West, and to perform his last duty to England.

A word may be said about Tennyson's attitude towards France, which his detractors would have us believe to be intolerant, "typically English." It is true that he had little enough sympathy with the methods or authors of the French Revolution, and could not see any philanthropic or scientific reason for applauding "la sainte guillotine," or the doctrines which deluged Europe in blood, to give it the Metternich system. Nor could he raise much enthusiasm for Napoleon III, though he never indulged in anything like the unmeasured invective of "Les châtiments," nor the venomous hysterics of Swinburne over the fallen Emperor's grave. His own son says of him: "Although a passionate patriot, and a true lover of England, he was not blind to her faults, and was unprejudiced and cosmopolitan in seeing the best side of other nations; and in later years, after the Franco-German War, he was filled with admiration of the dignified way in which France was gradually gathering herself together. He rejoiced whenever England and France were in agreement, and worked harmoniously together for the good of the world." So much for the charge of Gallophobia.

Towards the end of his life, the following sentences fell from his lips in the course of conversation:

"I am afraid patriotism is very rare."

"The love of country, which makes a man defend his landmark, that we all have, and the Anglo-Saxon more than most other races; but the patriotism that declines to link itself with the small fry of the passing hour for political advantage—that is rare, I say."

"The Duke of Wellington had both kinds of patriotism."

"In war, we Englishmen do not listen to argument until we are victorious."

In these sunset days, he had almost got free from his old veneer of Whiggism. He had forsaken Gladstone

politically, because of his Irish policy, and become a whole-hearted member of the Unionist Party. At heart he had always been a Tory. He had a hatred of violent change, and was attached to everything time-honoured or venerable. He loved the country houses and their owners, their old customs and loyal peasantry. He was passionately devoted to the Queen and the Royal Family, he is almost the only Laureate who has ever been able to write Court poetry without the suspicion of formality or frigidity. Reverence was part of his nature, and his ideal lay in the performance of duty, and not in the attainment of rights or happiness. He loved the troopers of the Light Brigade, more than the mob that sacked the Tuileries.

Finally, and perhaps most important of all, he understood and accepted the Imperial ideal. There is a scene in "Harold," where the dying King Edward sees the vision of a mighty tree, uprooted and soaked in blood, which

> "Grew ever higher and higher, beyond my seeing,
> And shot out sidelong boughs across the deep,
> That dropt themselves, and rooted in far isles
> Beyond my seeing: and the great Angel rose
> And past again along the highest, crying,
> 'The doom of England!'"

Tennyson's love of the past did not obscure his vision of the future, nor confine his patriotism to the shores of these islands. It is significant, that a year before his death he wrote to praise Rudyard Kipling for his masterpiece, "The English Flag," the trumpet-call of the new era. Never more, he trusted, would Englishmen make the mistake of alienating their colonies, as they had in the previous century. His last and fairest vision was not of a capitalist's, or Socialist's paradise; not of a world-federation, but of

> "One imperial whole,
> One with Britain, heart and soul!
> One life, one flag, one fleet, one throne!"

It gladdened his heart during his last days to know that one great party in the State, the one to which he belonged, had adopted these lines as its motto.

Tennyson's central thought is often difficult to unravel, because his inspiration, though genuine, was inconstant, and because his mind lacked the concentration and power of Newman's, with whom comparison naturally suggests itself. Both were, by nature, opponents of the Whig ideal, though Tennyson's Cambridge training put him at a grave disadvantage in respect of thoroughness and independence. Both touched the depths of pessimism with regard to their country, but whether it was that Tennyson was incapable of sternly facing the worst, or that some last infirmity of a noble mind made Newman prefer the certainty of peace with Rome, to hoping against hope with England, certain it is that the patriotism which almost died in Newman never forsook Tennyson, but burned brighter and brighter as it shook itself free from the Whig tradition, and widened into an ideal that looked to all the corners of the world, and embraced a fourth part of its inhabitants.

As Tennyson was to the poetry of the Victorian Age, so was Watts to its painting. Both were Laureates, not by the caprice of a monarch nor the interest of politicians, but by birth and the nature of things. There was a scope and conscious dignity about their art to which none of their contemporaries aspired. Swinburne and Browning, Arnold and Rossetti, might each claim a superiority in his own province, but they seldom trespassed beyond its borders, their poesy was an art remote from the centre. The same holds good of the painters, Burne-Jones, Whistler and again Rossetti, even the greatest of them fell short of universality, and aimed rather at being the artist of a school than of a nation or age. Of their work we shall treat more fully in a later chapter.

Even more than Tennyson, Watts made himself the

voice of his age; he was its prophet in colour, and the noblest possessor of that sad and self-conscious virtue that was its distinguishing characteristic. His early surroundings had been those of Ruskin, the latter-day Puritanism to which we attach the names evangelical and sabbatarian, and which is so fruitful a breeding-ground of spiritual pride. With this vice, Watts was tainted to a less degree than Ruskin, though there is a tincture of it in his very humility, and he is never quite free from the danger of wrenching his art to point a moral. With the sadness that pervaded the nobler spirits of his time, he, too, was oppressed. Beneath his delight in flowers and the good earth and the strong red bodies of men and women, there is a certain undercurrent of tears, and the blossoms amid which Eve rises do not sing together like the morning stars in Blake's drawing. There is already some premonition of the Fall, some consciousness of the serpent lurking beneath.

The muse of Watts does not laugh, and if she smiles it is most often with the pensiveness of resignation. The infidelity behind that respectable mask of Victorian faith had cast its shadow over him too, and there is something in Watts, by which we recognize his kinship with Herbert Spencer. If we had to select the one of his pictures which comes nearest to utter failure, we should take the "Faith." Of the strength and grimness of assured conviction there is no trace, only the sentimental triviality which is the mark of false emotion, it is, in fact, a very pretty picture. But the "Hope" is, by general consent, ranked among Watts's masterpieces, because it might justly be rechristened "Forlorn Hope." It is the heroism that refuses to die even in the midst of despair, still loving a world that drifts amid a blue of unfathomable sadness, still listening to the last unbroken string of a ruined lyre. Watts is haunted by the vanity of human things, he has thrown the whole Book of Ecclesiastes

upon the huge canvas of his "Court of Death." His is the gentle, tolerant religion that steals over men and nations that have forgotten what religion is, a creed that lays aside the sword, and recks no more of the struggle between faith and heresy than of the quarrels of babes.

Once, indeed, he triumphs as Tennyson never did. The Poet Laureate, in the slow death march of his "In Memoriam" quatrains, tells how he hears Love's sentinel whispering, at times, to the worlds of space, that all is well; but it is only a whisper, very fitful and almost inaudible in Tennyson's music.

> "He thinks he was not made to die,
> And Thou hast made him—Thou art just,"

is more like a wail of agony, of doubt invincible, than any triumphant affirmation of immortality. Even where the words are those of hope, the music is that of despair. But in the Painter Laureate's masterpiece, the "Love triumphing over Death," the message is one of certainty, a pæan of leaping flame. Death is swallowed up in Victory. This is the more strange, because it forms such an exception to the general trend of Watts's art. He could console, but only this once could he triumph laughing. The calm Death that appears to an old man, is "the angel by the river brink" of Omar, the "respite and nepenthe" of Edgar Poe's "Raven," a merciful Nirvana. The terrific vision of God, which torments Blake's Job in dreams, is less formidable than the consolation of Watts.

Watts was as great a patriot as Tennyson, and, like him, sympathized with the rising spirit of Imperialism. Long before his country recognized him, he had devoted himself and his art to her. The best of his pictures he held to be her due, and not, like those of Whistler, to be scattered abroad among the rich, until the community claims its own. He was consciously, sometimes, perhaps, too consciously, working for her good. Consummate

technician though he was, he held technique by itself to be of minor importance. To express ideas was the whole end of art, and it was better to fall short of the highest, than to achieve anything else. He was the reverse of a decadent, a butterfly, a poet in blue china, the singer of an empty day. His conceptions were gigantic, he had Michelangelo's love for huge figures and huge limbs, he preferred the lusty and massive beauty of his red Eve to the more fragile charm of the drawing-room. He was, in fact, heartily at home among the Titans. "He suspected," says Mrs. Russell Barrington, "that in the times that were coming, we should want men rather than sentimentalists."

He rose to his greatest, when he was chastising the materialism, that was the result of the prolonged peace and middle-class government. The Jonah who denounces the vices of England-Nineveh is evidently Watts himself, and yet Jonah is not the most convincing of his figures, for the doubting Victorian was ill-fitted to enter into the spirit, even of the weakest among the Hebrew prophets. We are startled, but not terrified, at those wide-staring eyes and frantic admonitory gestures. It is in his "Mammon" and "Minotaur" that Watts's power is fully revealed. Here there was no question of faith or a creative ideal, the high-souled and sensitive artist had but to isolate and fix for ever the two aspects of his time that he loathed most, its vice and its materialism. The "Minotaur" rivals the most terrific denunciations of vice that had proceeded from earlier and sterner Puritans than Watts. There is no compromise about it, no lurking sympathy such as even Milton displayed towards his "Devil." It was literally dashed off in two or three hours, under the stimulus of intense indignation, caused by the revelations of another doughty Puritan concerning the horrors of Modern Babylon. The gesture with which the huge figure crushes the little bird in his paw, is one of the most

intolerably painful things ever imagined by man, and some there are, who realize only too keenly to what it refers.

The "Mammon" is an even greater work of art than the "Minotaur," because here Watts has realized not only the horror, but the pathos of the thing he depicts. The face surmounting that ponderous, heavy-robed figure is not wholly detestable, not without some trace, however faint, of its divine origin. It is curious that this should have escaped the attention of all the criticisms we have as yet read. Modern commerce, even when carried on by Hebrew Randlords and American millionaires, is something more than a deliberate competition in crime. Big financiers are not conspicuously worse men than their victims, more often they are pathetically convinced that energetic greed really tends, in the long run, to promote the good of mankind. The expression on the face of Mammon is not the gloating cruelty of the Minotaur; the iron hand that crushes youth and maiden with callous impartiality has not the fiendish clutch of the brute, it falls for no other reason than that it is attracted earthwards, and that it is very heavy. Poor Mammon knows not what he does; he is more of a victim than his slaves; his dull, coarsened, powerful features are lit by no gleam of hope, but they betray some consciousness that hope is lost, the agony of the mechanic who is crushed to death in his own machine. There is even a faint suggestion of John Stuart Mill.

But it was not only through the conscious symbolism of imaginary figures that Watts visioned his age. All faces were windows through which he gazed upon eternal verities. He has been blamed, because he did not confine himself more strictly to the painting of celebrities, but this is to mistake his art, for to him every human face was divine. We have been privileged to reproduce from one of his private letters an extract, which perfectly

explains his theory of portraiture. It had been complained that one of the most beautiful of all his pictures was not a good likeness. To this he replied, "His criticisms on the study of your head are perfectly good from the ordinary point of view of portraiture, but my picture is rather a study of your nature, vigour, generosity, vitality and glowing brightness . . . a musical present ment rather than a realistic one." This was the first principle of his portraiture. He designed to penetrate to the soul of his sitter, to the dweller in the innermost. Nor did he, like Whistler, strive to fix some mood, however subtle and harmonious; he would see life whole or not at all; it was the essence and not the accident at which he aimed.

No history of that age has yet been written, so illuminating and comprehensive as the Watts pictures in the National Portrait Gallery. There is something almost uncanny about the way in which the most recondite and unexpected qualities are dragged to the surface and revealed for ever. Who would have dreamed of looking behind the pride and testiness of Lord John Russell, to a wistfulness as touching, but less strong than that of Romney's Pitt? Matthew Arnold, that doyen of culture, has taken on an expression of bewildered weakness, the soul is that of a preacher, and a mid-Victorian preacher, who has forgotten his own creed. Cecil Rhodes is there, with the masterful energy of the successful empire-builder, but none the less with some of that unscrupulous hardness, that is the worst feature of modern imperialism. The great Eltchi is there too, in white ermine in a background of crimson, fitting symbol of the pride that could avenge a personal slight by a European war. The most cruel portrait, perhaps too cruel, is that of Lecky, the weakest of them all, with cocksureness and sensitive vanity depicted in every line of his face; nor did Watts's Puritan soul prevent him from detecting the

priggishness, that lay beneath the respectable exterior of Lord Shaftesbury, even as he divined the strain of coarseness in the temperament of Rossetti.

But his critical faculty is tempered by love. He was quick to see the highest and to worship it. With all their faults, his Victorian worthies are a noble and lovable band, and it is good to linger among them. Watts had most sympathy with the serious and massive energy, that was the best quality of Spencer, Cobden and their peers. In his Robert Browning and George Meredith, in his William Morris and Burton the explorer, this is the most conspicuous trait, and we, who are perhaps too prone to scoff at the ideals of our grandfathers, may at least ask ourselves, whether the advantages we have gained from the break-up of Victorian respectability, may not be too dearly bought by the loss of this, its redeeming soundness. It is hard to imagine a patriot artist of to-day, endowing his country with a gallery of contemporary likenesses in which we could take such pride. Alas, we have but the sardonic elegance, the veiled satire of Mr. Sargent. And the "Mammon" is a King Arthur, and the "Minotaur" a Galahad, compared with one unforgettable masterpiece, which we forbear to specify. It is a true saying that a nation gets the art it deserves.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE WAVERERS

TENNYSON and Watts were the giants of the age, strong enough to cut their way to a solution through the thickest jungles of doubt and discouragement. It was not so with Matthew Arnold, that delicate spirit whose lot it was to see the evil, but no remedy, to suffer but not to triumph. And yet he is, in his own way, as great a testimony to the influence of Oxford, as Newman himself. For it is a lesser task to nourish and develop a spirit naturally great, than to make the best of one whose mind was incurably superficial, and whose nature it was to be graceful without being profound. Whether it was better for Arnold himself that his nerves should have been sharpened to feel a pain that he could not surmount, matters little; it was better for England that he should have been what he was, and it is to Oxford that her thanks are due.

It is chiefly as a poet that he has earned his place among the immortals, for whatever else may perish, such poems as "Thyrsis" and the "Forsaken Merman" will make their appeal to sensitive hearts in all ages, and are among the most mournful of the glories of Victorian literature. And yet, to a discerning eye, it is evident that, of all the leading poets of that time, he owes the least to himself, and the most to his education and surroundings. Tennyson has his lapses into portentous dullness. Browning too often forgets the poet in the thinker, Swinburne

can write page after page of almost mechanical jargon, but only Arnold was capable of such blasphemy to the Muse as:

> " But the signal example
> Of invariableness of justice
> Our glorious founder
> Hercules gave us,
> Son loved of Zeus his father—for he sinned."

Such lines Southey, in his worst mood, might have been ashamed to pen, and they are on a par with the English translations of foreign operas provided by the management at the doors. Combined with this tendency to sink into prose, or even bathos, is a singular lack of passages of supreme excellence, and absence of what Arnold himself would have called " the grand style."

But it is not really paradoxical, to hold that the same cause that produced these deficiencies, was the source of all his merit. For the distinctive feature of the Oxford spirit, during Arnold's youth, was its simplicity and sincerity. The marvellous preacher, whose sermons at St. Mary's exercised such an influence over the young man's style, was more simple than a field preacher. It was just the opposite that prevailed at Cambridge, a restless straining after novelty, and a disposition to be satisfied with such nonsense as Tennyson's epigram about " Shakespeare and Bacon and all sensible men." But whatever may be the defects of Arnold's genius, he is determined to eschew the avoidable sins of turgidity and forcing the Muse. Thus is produced the most endearing feature of his poetry, the extraordinary intimacy of its appeal. We never feel, as we do so frequently in the case of Swinburne, that we are the spectators of some gorgeous pageant of words; it is the pleading, pathetic voice of a friend, to which we are listening. There have been greater elegies than " Thyrsis," but none which so readily provoke us to tears.

Never was penned a more unconsciously ironical sentence than this of Arnold's about Emerson: "One can scarcely overrate the importance of thus holding fast to happiness and hope." For of all books ever written, there is none that leaves a deeper impression of grief and hopelessness than Arnold's poems. It breathes not only in the words, but in the metre; the stormy defiance of Byron, even the pugnacious pessimism of Schopenhauer, are cheery and bracing compared with this quiet, unrelieved pathos, these wings heavy with tears.

Once or twice there is a faint suggestion of light, a ray of real sunshine in the song of Callicles, but it is the one break in a continuously clouded sky. Empedocles' endeavour to compromise with destiny, to make the best of what may be had, but to nurse no extravagant hope, is merely the prelude to his throwing himself down Etna. And the "gleam" in "Thyrsis" is too obviously but a mirage.

> "Creep into thy narrow bed,
> Creep, and let no more be said,
> Vain thy onset, all stands fast,
> Thou thyself must break at last."

Arnold has a gospel to proclaim, but it is in prose. It is perhaps the most shallow and pitiful solution ever offered for the difficulties of doubting men, or of a labouring nation. For as long as he confined himself to verse, his sincerity kept him from trying to fly without wings, but as soon as he dropped into the easier medium of prose he forgot his limitations, and appeared in the double rôle of an Isaiah and a Horace Walpole, for the enlightenment of his countrymen. And to the question, which even in mid-Victorian days was becoming painfully audible, "What shall we do to be saved?" he replied, "Adopt my remedy of Liberal culture, and above all, keep in touch with the Zeitgeist."

It is characteristic of the time, that Matthew Arnold

should have been acknowledged, by fairly general consent, as the foremost representative of taste and style. Nowadays, many of his prose writings seem insufferably tedious, the same idea, often the same phrase, is repeated again and again, and we even get tired of the cheap jibes at the Bishops of Winchester and Gloucester, or the Trinity, or Mr. John Bright. Indeed, the least amiable trait of Arnold is the feline malice of his attacks, his obvious willingness to wound, masked by a transparent affectation of impartiality—the method of a spiteful woman abusing another's character or clothes.

Even more serious than these faults of style, is the habit of reckless and dogmatic assertion, which is Arnold's ready method of overcoming difficulties. The most notorious instance of this is his airy, "miracles do not happen," certainly an easy solution of one of the most hotly contested questions of his, or any day. Deliciously characteristic is the patronage he accords to Newman, in his Essay on Emerson. The great Cardinal seems to have struck him as a man who had said some pretty and elegant things in his early sermons, but "he has adopted, for the doubts and difficulties that beset men's minds to-day, a solution which, to speak frankly, is impossible." George III, as a critic of Shakespeare, must yield the palm to the author of "Literature and Dogma" on Newman.

Arnold's dogmatism may partly be explained by his worship of the "Zeitgeist." He is distinguished no less by his serene ignorance of German philosophy, than by his readiness to adorn his prose with its untranslated catchwords. He is animated by a deep-seated, though unformulated conviction that times change and truth changes with them, and in this he anticipates one of the worst and vulgarest features of present-day journalistic philosophy. He has often no ears for the music of Heaven, because he is always straining them to catch what other people are saying. In one of his letters, he

remarks of his own poems, that though he may have less poetical sentiment than Tennyson, and less intellectual vigour and abundance than Browning, he has perhaps more of a fusion of both than either of them, and has "applied that fusion more regularly to the main line of modern development." It is the same with the miracles, and with Newman, they need not be refuted, they are out of date. This is an extraordinary state of mind for a poet and a man of letters. Put in plain terms, it judges of the truth, not by evidence or insight, but by a show of hands. For Arnold's "Zeitgeist" is no person or separate intelligence, but simply the party that happens to be in power at the moment—and to be led by it is literally "time-serving." His prose works derive a great part of their interest from this very defect. From his lack of creative genius, the time-server is well fitted to reflect the tendencies of his age, and we must grant Matthew Arnold his claim to be peculiarly in touch with "the modern spirit." He made himself the voice of a change, which was to alter the whole political complexion of England, that of the Palmerstonian Whig into the modern Liberal. There were some respects, indeed, in which he failed to mirror the change quite correctly, his hostility towards Dissenters, for instance, and his opposition to Home Rule, but, on the whole, his interpretation of this phase of the "Zeitgeist" was sufficiently correct.

He is as staunch in his opposition to the old Whig ideal, as either Newman or Carlyle, Ruskin or Tennyson. But all these, though none of them party men, were, as we have seen, essentially Tories in principle. There is no doubt about the sincerity of Arnold's Liberalism, but it is a Liberalism freed from the control of middle-class statesmen and economists. It is a more active, more dangerous, less patriotic creed, than that of Lord John and Macaulay. The Whigs had worshipped the middle class, Arnold regarded it as hopelessly vulgar and

Philistine; the Whigs detested State interference, Arnold invoked it on every possible occasion; the Whigs, with all their faults of weakness and bluster, had at least gloried in the name of Englishman, Arnold never missed the opportunity of glorifying some other country at the expense of his own.

Perhaps the best thing that Arnold did in the political sphere was his defiance of the bourgeois fetish. However tedious may be his reiteration of sarcasm at the expense of Mr. Bright, Mr. Lowe and the Dissenters, it was at least a refreshing change to find the respectable man of business held up to derision as a vulgar, unenlightened Philistine, a most unsuitable person to be entrusted with the government of any nation. Mr. Bottles is no unfair portrait, you may meet him to-day in any first or second-class carriage of the 9.15 for the City. But it is not to him that statesmen and Cabinet Ministers now grovel, that economists frame their systems, that posters appeal; and the leader of the Liberal Party no longer looks to the City of London for a safe seat.

Arnold's sensitive disposition was instinctively repelled by the ugliness of bourgeois life and ideals. He is happiest when he is dealing with the shuffling, swaggering and ineptitude of Government and Press. The gilt is rudely stripped off the rhetoric of men like Palmerston, who *imagined that it was possible for us to cut a lordly figure* in European politics, without fighting or even paying for it. The cant and insincerity of the Whig régime had reached its zenith in the 'fifties and 'sixties, and as their unsparing critic, Arnold deserves nothing but praise. It would have been well if he had stopped at that.

He was on more dangerous ground in his attack on the aristocracy. Ugliness was a thing that he could feel and resent, but when he talked about "insensibility to ideas," he was giving way to his most dangerous weakness. For the question at once arises—"What ideas?" And

the answer, as we might expect, turns out to be, "The ideas of Matthew Arnold." The aristocracy, in fact, did not keep abreast of the times, they were insensible to the glories of the French Revolution, and Prussian Geist, and the general superiority of foreigners over Englishmen. Above all they were obstinately indifferent to the ideal of culture that Arnold preached, and Chelsea and half Hampstead have since put into practice.

Yet it is probable that the country squire, who was blind to the excellencies of Maurice de Guérin, and who, if he ever heard of Geist, thought that it was the name of a racehorse, was more truly sensitive to ideas than his assailant. For the very fault of Arnold's culture was just that it embodied no idea except that of being cultured. The men whom Arnold most admires, Dante, Milton, Wordsworth, Isaiah, would have been the first to repudiate such a conception of their art; they were imbued with ideas of supreme importance, which they burned to express as well and as clearly as they could; but Arnold was little troubled about the idea, provided he could extract a certain amount of æsthetic satisfaction from select passages of its expression. It is for this reason that he floundered so hopelessly in all but the most superficial department of criticism. He was a dilettante, not a seer. We have seen the way he treats Newman; he can appreciate the stylist, but the ideas which Newman burned to express, and did express with such matchless ability, he dismissed with a wave of the hand. He is almost without sense of literary proportion, except when he is dealing with already recognized classics. The man who eulogized Maurice de Guérin, was able, after pages of gossip about Shelley's life, to dispose of his poetry in a sentence such as the grandson of old Mr. Bottles, Mr. Endymion Bottles, who has learnt culture, might use nowadays about Tennyson, or even Shakespeare.

But it is with Arnold's politics and not his criticism

that we are now concerned. He had no use for the aristocracy, and little for the middle class, for the purpose of governing the nation. He was therefore driven back, by a process of exhaustion, upon the class that he described as a brutalized populace. He had no particular affection for the masses, but his admiration for everything foreign made him naturally espouse a mild version of Revolution principles. Such German precept as he could understand, combined with the practice of France to imbue him with a belief in the omnipotence of Governments, almost as extreme as the Benthamite distrust of them. He was also painfully impressed by the real misery and squalor of life among the poor, and he recognized what he called an instinct of expansion among these classes, a desire for a better and more prosperous existence.

For the satisfaction of this instinct he looked to the Liberal Party. The Tories, he thought, were only a stop-gap, the people might put them into power for a time, when they were dissatisfied with the Liberals, but the country was Liberal at heart, and it was only necessary for the party to transform itself, in order to remain in power indefinitely. Hitherto, as Whigs, they had only satisfied the instinct for trade and political liberty, now they had to place expansion in the forefront of their programme. In order to do this, the functions of the State were to be greatly enlarged. This, in rough outline, is what the Liberal Party has since professed to do, and its land policy, especially, is in quavering harmony with Arnold's ideas on the subject. But it may be questioned whether Tory policy, as foreshadowed by Beaconsfield, and repudiated by his successors, does not offer to satisfy this instinct on a nobler scale than Arnold had dreamed of, without any sacrifice of Tory principles, or the ancient framework of society.

Arnold is weakest just where the Liberals, under the

leadership of Gladstone and his successors, have also proved themselves weakest, for it is hardly to be disputed that their social policy, whatever its faults, is at least more human than that of laissez-faire and the Poor Law of 1834. Arnold is a cosmopolitan. It is part of his culture to pose as a disinterested spectator, and, on the whole, to concentrate his attention upon the faults of Englishmen, and the virtues of foreigners. He adopts that curious and double-edged argument that proves Englishmen to be bad because they despise foreigners, and doubly bad because foreigners despise them. Thus, like a modern Cardinal Morton, he quotes, with obvious approval, from the "Cologne Gazette," a passage in which some foolish German officer had bracketed English soldiers with Turks; and then goes on to quote passages from the "Times" and other English papers, in order to show how insular and contemptuous of foreigners (including Germans) Englishmen are.

It is only by understanding Arnold's attitude towards life in general, that we can understand his attitude towards his country. He was a stranger to the hope and joy that he had, in theory, placed among the first qualifications of men of letters. Every one knows his strange definition of poetry. He regarded it not with Shakespeare as an ecstasy, nor with Schopenhauer as an escape, but as a criticism. This definition, which would exclude half of the world's greatest poetry, gains its value from the light it throws upon its author's character. Such a man could not but be a cosmopolitan, because he was as incapable of merging his personality in a cause as he was of forgetting himself in a love-song, with a hey and a ho and a hey nonino!

His criticisms of his country are the thinnest and most irritating part of his work. We read them with quite different feelings from those aroused by the more terrible indictments of a Carlyle, or even of a Keble. Here are none

of the " fears unnamed " of a lover or a child ; Arnold's attitude is one of mingled impertinence and cynicism. " Friendship's Garland," an undeniably clever piece of satire, is spoiled by its lack of seriousness; its author cannot command the pale flame of Swift, nor the poisoned rapier of Pope, his attack is like that of a swarm of gnats, irritating, but not deadly. For all his pose of impartiality, he has a pronounced disposition to be favourable and sympathetic to foreign nations, but to score points off his own whenever possible. For instance, he more than hints that the French had borne the brunt of the Crimean War, and that England had contented herself with trying to trip up the enemy at odd moments, surely a strange way of referring to the men who had borne the brunt of the Alma, Balaclava and Inkermann—ungenerous in a foreigner, but inexcusable in an Englishman.

Much that he said was undoubtedly true ; his indictment of Palmerstonianism fell just short of greatness ; but the Philistine was right in thinking that even the oratory of the Greenwich fish dinner, and the platitudes of Mr. Lowe, were preferable to the bloodless culture that jibed from an easy chair, at men who did at least love the country they served, and would at least have been as sorry to think her dishonoured, as if she had been their own mother or sister. As the poet of weeping, Matthew Arnold is often a beautiful, always a lovable figure ; as the high priest of culture, he is wearisome and a little contemptible. Earnest men, even when they want a criticism of life, will hardly have recourse to an Osric.

There is a figure among the leaders of Victorian thought, whose story is more pathetic, even, than that of Arnold, and who occupies a position in many respects similar to his. For Arnold, if our view of him be correct, was a man of naturally very moderate capacity, which was fostered and developed, like some frail but exquisite hothouse

flower, under ideal educational conditions. But John Stuart Mill, who was striving (though he might not have acknowledged the connection) in the same cause as Arnold, in the transition from the old Liberalism to the new, had to work beneath the crushing handicap of the brutal and well-nigh insane educational system of his father. Only the author of the "Essay on Government" could, without a qualm of conscience, have treated his own son with such mingled harshness and folly. A glance at the portraits of the two men is the best commentary on their lives. The father, as we see him in the excellent sketch in the recently published letters of his son, might have been drawn by some modern Giotto, to adorn the new Temple of Humanity, as the personification of Cock-sureness. It is the face of an intellectual dandy, untroubled by doubt or fire, whose one redeeming quality was a restless energy that shrank from no obstacle upon the dark and narrow way of its choice. Far otherwise is the face of John Stuart, in the portrait of Watts. It wears an inexpressibly sad cast of puzzled benevolence; in the tight-closed lips with their drooping corners, in the troubled yet gentle eyes, in every falling line of cheek and forehead, we read the same tale of feelings strangled at birth, of a soul sacrificed upon the altar of one man's pedantry and conceit.

Nothing can be more mistaken than to talk of poor John Mill as if he were a drilled automaton, such as his father would have made him. He was a man of deep and tender feeling, with an intensely human craving for sympathy. His dreadful boyhood, with Greek lessons at three, and the study of Socrates when he would better have been engaged upon the feats of Jack the Giant-killer, had taught him that emotion was a thing to be ashamed of, and that the best way to understand men was to be inhuman. To this cause may be traced his studied self-consciousness, and his utter lack of humour. One

cannot think of Matthew Arnold laughing outright, but it is hard to imagine even the smile of "Friendship's Garland" upon the face of Mill. But a good man's soul is not easily destroyed, and that of Mill was perpetually striving for freedom, though in bonds. The judgments of Carlyle upon his contemporaries were often harsh and uncharitable, but he was a seer indeed, when he detected the mystic beneath that unpromising exterior. There is no more touching passage in autobiography, than where Mill describes, how the systematic starving of his religious instincts had brought him at last to a state of despair that might have led to suicide, a modern pilgrim, clothed in the rags of Benthamism, and breaking forth with a lamentable cry of "What shall I do?" The humility which shrank from no instruction, however strange, which drew comfort from Wordsworth, and inspiration from Coleridge, was a quality that James Mill could never have understood. At last came the volcanic outburst of suppressed affection, called forth by the woman he adored and finally married. "For seven and a half years that blessing was mine; for seven and a half only! I can say nothing which could describe, even in the faintest manner, what that loss was and is. But because I know she would have wished it, I endeavour to make the best of what life I have left. . . ." Such language as this is nearer akin to Dante than to Bentham.

But the soul in Mill was not to triumph. Stunted and starved as it had been, it was too much to expect that it would emerge finally into the light, serene and unscathed. This is why his story is so intensely pathetic, and we cannot help thinking what he might have been, if he had had a fair chance of developing simply and naturally. As it was, his honesty proved more fatal to the causes he espoused, than their worst enemy could have been. Though a utilitarian, he refuted his own creed in the course of an apology; though an economist, he did more than

anybody else to prepare for the collapse of the classical economy; though a Free-Trader, he made a grave admission as regards infant industries; though a defender of empiricism, he almost drifted into idealism; though an individualist, he hovered upon the confines of Socialism; though a Radical of the old school, as regards colonies, he made admissions that would have let in the whole doctrine of imperialism. Thus was he blinded, and forced to grind husks in the factories of Mammon, yet proved more fatal to his masters in captivity, than he ever could have been as a free man.

There is a natural dialectic in the history of thought, by virtue of which any imperfect principle, if pushed far enough, involves itself in contradictions, and eventually passes into its opposite. This process Mill performed for most of the causes with which he identified himself, in so far as he usually left them standing indeed, but undermined and ready to fall at the least push. James Mill had written characteristically to Bentham, that he hoped to make the little John a son "worthy of us." Now the Benthamite school stood for a system of thought, in which men were treated as if they were worse than brutes, and which was inconsistent with any sort of patriotism. To all outward appearance, James Mill's hope was realized, for after a good deal of wavering, John came forward as the avowed champion of utilitarianism, and raised the science of Ricardo and M'Culloch to a position of dignity and authority, that might have satisfied the ambition of a Hildebrand. But like many men who make a great account of formal logic, Mill was by no means a clear or consistent reasoner. His opinions frequently changed, and not in the honourable sense that signifies development. In our examination of Bentham, we saw how Mill knocked the bottom out of the utilitarian system, by admitting a qualitative as well as a quantitative difference between pleasures and pains, in fact, by applying

a different and nobler standard than that of happiness, while keeping the name utilitarian.

In the realm of economics he endeavoured to carry on the work of Ricardo, of whom he was an admirer. In his logic he accepted in the most explicit terms the orthodox doctrine that men must be treated, for scientific purposes, as if they were actuated by no motives save greed and idleness. But Mill's practice is characteristically at variance with his theory. The human element, which Ricardo could not appreciate, was perpetually tempering the hardness of his theories, and in his chapter on the " stationary state," he actually came out as the opponent of the very ideal of progress that had delighted his predecessors. The prospect of a triumphant and indefinite increase of material wealth, with all the men dollar-hunters, and all the women breeders of dollar-hunters, with nature blasted and solitude destroyed, was not delightful to him. A state of which industry was a regular and subordinate function, seemed to him preferable, and here he approached near the ideal of the most enlightened Socialists, which is of course fatal to the " science " of economics, as formulated in Mill's logic.

Of the capitalist's charter, which was the basis of the classical economics, he appeared at the beginning of his treatise as an out-and-out supporter. More than any other economist, except Malthus himself, he was obsessed by the idea of population continually outrunning the means of subsistence, and nullifying the most plausible schemes of reform. He laid down a series of propositions concerning capital, which included the doctrine that industry is limited by capital, and the absurd paradox that a demand for commodities is not a demand for labour ; which led directly to the most uncompromising form of the wages fund doctrine, and represented the unfortunate workman as bound by iron laws to depend-

ence upon the capitalist. What, then, must have been the consternation of Bottles and McCroudy, when their own champion and pope, who had worn the tiara for twenty years, made open and public recantation of one of their fundamental doctrines! It was the article, which Mill wrote in reply to Thornton, which sounded the death-knell to the claims of the classical economics. It was about this time that Jevons, who was generally recognized as the ablest of the later economists, made the discovery that the car had been shunted on to a wrong track altogether by " those able, but wrong-headed men John Stuart Mill and Ricardo," and so the whole Economic Bible had to be written again. Professor Cairnes made a desperate effort to bolster up the doctrine that Mill had recanted, but the spell was broken, and such speculations, though interesting to academic circles, fell upon deaf ears in the world of men.

In fact, the Whig ideal was everywhere crumbling, and with it went the more uncompromising forms of individualism, such as the older Radical doctrine and the classical economics. A new spirit was beginning to animate the extreme champions of democracy, and it is in the lives of such very different men as Gladstone, Arnold and Mill that we are able to study the transition. It was but logical that the first efforts of the masses should be directed towards political freedom, and that, when this seemed in a fair way of being accomplished, they should seek to use their new-won power to the best advantage ; the supreme question was whether they would be content to aim selfishly at their own material happiness, or whether even Demos could be brought to realize that he was not born to please himself, and that ideals are the only realities. The outward shell of Benthamism might change, but it has yet to be seen whether the gross and shallow philosophy, that laughed at everything except greed as unpractical, had not merely profited from its

discredit, by taking on a yet more dangerous and persuasive guise.

But to the old school of individualist materialism, Mill's defection was a disaster only comparable to that which overtook Napoleon at Leipzig, when the Saxons changed sides in the heat of battle, and fired on their own comrades. This was the thing of permanent value, with which Mill's name will be associated in the history of thought. He could undermine, but he could not construct. The professed adherent of one system, but in reality the sport of forces that directly contradicted it, a tablet, nominally, for the preservation of some ancient formula, but scored over almost at random with the emendations of a later age, he is as valuable to the historian as he is unprofitable to the disciple.

His conception of patriotism, for this reason alone, will repay study. The founders of utilitarianism had been content to eschew or ignore even insular patriotism; as for the colonies and India, they were generally anxious to cut them adrift as quickly as possible. James Mill, one of the first purely scientific historians, had employed much of his time in composing a solemn slander, in several volumes, upon British rule in India, which was capable of deluding Macaulay into his own more brilliant slander of Warren Hastings. There was, in fact, a general disposition among the more advanced individualists, to sneer and carp at everything and everybody connected with British administration abroad. This disposition John Mill inherited, and it is the least pleasing part of his character. He says in one of his letters, that his eyes were first opened to the moral condition of the English nation, by their atrocities during the Mutiny, and the feelings that supported them at home. Such a statement almost silences criticism by its obtuse priggishness; what, we wonder, would have been the feelings of one who had gazed into the well of Cawnpore, at being lectured upon

his moral condition by such an apostle of reason ? The meanness of this utterance was equalled, it could not be surpassed, by that of the attack upon Governor Eyre, of which Mill constituted himself the leader. That an honourable man, who had faithfully endeavoured to perform his duty under circumstances of the gravest difficulty, upon whose firmness depended the lives, and more than the lives, of helpless women and children, whose worst offence was that he might have thrown one or two extra buckets of water upon the fire—that such a man should be subject to petty and continued persecution in police courts, at the hands of such English patriots as Messrs. Chamerovzow, Shaen, Slack and Chesson, was intolerable. The repeated snubs that the efforts of these gentlemen received, at the hands of magistrates and grand juries, may go some way towards absolving the English nation from the scandal of the Eyre persecution, but that such things should be done by accredited leaders of English thought, was indeed ominous of the tendencies of the age.

Had this been all, Mill's views upon patriotism and imperial policy would have been no more illuminating than those of Bentham. As it was, he could be just as unpractical and absurd, and would actually have had Mr. Gladstone use the British Navy against whichever party to the Franco-German War commenced hostilities ; thus presenting the curious spectacle of an apostle of peace and anti-militarism, thirsting for a war as foolish, and probably as bloody, as any in history. But he was often wiser than he knew, and the dogma of utilitarianism was too small to contain all his views.

In spite of his attacks upon Governor Eyre, and men who failed in sympathy for the murderers of Englishwomen he was not wholly the friend of every country but his own. On the contrary, he shows in his later writings, at least in germ, a definite theory of patriotism, and even

of imperialism. He was above the cheap flippancy of Matthew Arnold at the expense of his countrymen, and he showed, on more than one occasion, that at heart he gloried in the name of Englishman. There is, at the beginning of the Essay on Non-Intervention, an appreciation of his country, which, though it is written from the extreme standpoint of the mid-Victorian individualist, is warm and wholehearted enough to satisfy a Chatham. "There is a country in Europe," it begins, "far exceeding any other in wealth, and in the power that wealth bestows, the declared principle of whose foreign policy is to let other nations alone. No country apprehends or affects to apprehend from it any aggressive designs. . . . It will hold its own, it will not submit to encroachment, but if other nations do not meddle with it, it will not meddle with them. Any attempt it makes to exert influence over them, even by persuasion, is rather in the service of others than of itself. . . . Not only does this nation desire no benefit to itself at the expense of others, it desires none in which others do not freely participate. . . . Whatever it demands for itself it demands for all mankind. . . . A nation adopting this policy is a novelty in the world."

That Mill set great store by patriotism, is evident not only from this essay, but from his correspondence, and from his chapter on Nationality in "Representative Government." He is at pains to show the importance of common sympathies and common traditions in any scheme of democratic polity, and he is alive to the danger of a mercenary army, whose loyalty is only for the flag under which they happen to be fighting. He was, what was very remarkable in the 'sixties and 'seventies, a convinced advocate of national service on the Swiss system, and perhaps the two most valuable letters in his correspondence are those in which he insists upon the duty of every Englishman to devote at least six months to the

service of his country. "I do not know which are the most utterly smitten with imbecility, those who are for trusting our safety solely to our navy because no foreign army can land in England, or those who, after crying at the top of their voices that we are utterly without the means of facing an enemy in the field, turn round next day and demand that we should instantly go to war with Russia for the Black Sea or with Germany for France."

There is evidence that Mill, who was sensitive to most movements of his time, was not uninfluenced by the first stirrings of imperialism. He might attack our administration in detail, but he laid down principles that would have proved more acceptable to Disraeli than to the Radicals of his own circle. Though he considered imperial federation to be an impracticable ideal, he strongly opposed the idea of cutting the colonies adrift. But he went further than this, in breaking with the greedy passivity, in foreign and imperial affairs, that passed muster among his contemporaries for a policy of enlightened Liberalism. He saw that the duties of a great nation are positive and definite, and "the white man's burden" was, to him, a thing to be accepted and manfully borne. He was, indeed, opposed to the cynical pursuit of British interests, to the neglect of every higher consideration; his motto for England would not have been "Put money in thy purse," but "Noblesse oblige."

He has no objection even to conquest, when the ends are noble. "The Romans," he says, "were not the most clean-handed of conquerors, yet would it have been better for Gaul and Spain, Numidia and Dacia, never to have formed part of the Roman Empire?" And again, in "Representative Government," he lays down the doctrine that, "If the smaller nationality, supposed to be the more advanced in improvement, is able to overcome the greater, as the Macedonians, reinforced by the Greeks, did

Asia, and the English India, there is often a gain to civilization." So far from Mill's doctrines being the negation of modern imperialism, they sometimes lead logically to consequences that might stagger even the most advanced of its exponents. For it is easy to see how a Napoleon the Great might quite plausibly justify the invasion of Russia, or a Napoleon the Little the Empire of Mexico, upon these very principles.

Nor was Mill in favour of treating barbarous peoples as if they were capable of governing themselves, and entering into equal relations with civilized States. "To characterize any conduct whatever towards a barbarous people as a violation of the law of nations, only shows that he who so speaks has never considered the subject." He defended the annexation of Oudh as "the criminally tardy discharge of an imperative duty," and followed this pronouncement with a rebuke, amazing when we consider who was its author, against "the predisposition of English public opinion to look unfavourably upon every act by which territory or revenue are acquired from foreign States, and to take part with any Government, however unworthy, which can make out the merest semblance of a case of injustice against our own country." Will it be believed that these are the words, not of Froude or Beaconsfield, not of Carlyle or any member of the Eyre defence committee, but of the successor of Bentham, and the acknowledged exponent of mid-Victorian Radicalism?

## CHAPTER VII

### FROM MANCHESTER TO KHARTOUM

THE middle of the nineteenth century, like the middle of the eighteenth, saw the party system in abeyance. The evil genius of Sir Robert Peel had proved more fatal to the Tory cause than the Reform Bill, and if a Derby Government was allowed to hold office for a few months, it was only as a stop-gap, while the Whig Party were settling their own differences. It was the heyday of the House of Commons, for the Lords seldom did anything worth speaking of, and the very Cabinets were at the mercy of their supporters. Palmerston was able to have what he called his tit-for-tat with John Russell, by turning him out of office on a Militia Bill, and found himself turned out a few years later, just after he had obtained the triumphant verdict of a General Election.

The country had now passed wholly under the power of the middle class. Palmerston and Russell, after the death of Peel, occupied a position of unique importance in the political world; the doctrines of Mill held the field in the realm of Social Philosophy; Free Trade and material prosperity were the ideals of a Whig electorate; and it was evident that no swing of the pendulum was likely to upset the balance of political power. But to a shrewd observer, it must have been obvious that the fabric of Whig domination, like the Napoleonic Empire, was built upon no lasting foundations. As early as 1852,

Finality John had recanted his finality, and Lord Derby had rejoined by making it clear that his party, at any rate, would offer no blind opposition to any further measure of Reform.

The aristocratic Whigs, the generation of Lord Melbourne, were beginning to lose power, though as long as Palmerston lived, they were able to retain its symbols. It was natural that in great manufacturing centres, where the burgher spirit is more developed and self-respecting than in suburban London, respectable ten-pound householders should choose to be represented by men of their own class, and more directly in touch with their ideals. It was to supply this want, that the so-called Manchester school of politicians came into existence, the school of which Bright and Cobden were the leaders.

We have, in our survey of the Don Pacifico debate, obtained some idea of the Manchester gospel from the mouth of its chief evangelist. Cobden's equally famous biographer has given a summary of his hero's career, that bears out the conclusions already suggested by that important speech. "He had begun life," says Lord Morley, "with the idea that the great manufacturers and merchants of England should aspire to the high directing position which had raised the Medici, the Fuggers, and the De Witts, to a level with the sovereign princes of the earth. At the end he still thought that no other class possessed wealth or influence enough to counteract the feudal class." "My opinion," says John Bright, "is—looking at the course of history—that merchants and manufacturers, in the aggregate, are generally becoming much more important in the world than warriors and statesmen, and even than monarchs themselves." This was, indeed, the root of all that was harmful or admirable in the careers of Cobden and Bright; they possessed, in the fullest degree, the pride and virtues and limitations of their class. Industrious, plain-spoken, honest, bene-

volent, and full of homely common sense, they were nevertheless men of narrow education and restricted ideals, and this, notwithstanding the lucid sincerity of Cobden and the splendid eloquence of his friend. Cobden's sneer about the Illyssus may be placed by the side of Bright's naive admission, that he was "one of those who, in the sense of the high-culture people, never had any education."

Material progress and material prosperity were the objects at which the Manchester school aimed. A thriving trade, and no wars or rumours of wars to spoil it, an aristocracy humbled and powerless, a working class contented and law-abiding, Free Trade and laissez-faire all round, such were the gates of a bagman's paradise, such the ideal at which even high-minded men like Cobden were content to aim. It is curious how rapidly the fountain-springs of philanthropy dried up, when the pockets of the bourgeoisie seemed to be in jeopardy; no one was more fervent in his denunciation of slavery than John Bright, no one more vehement in his opposition to Lord Ashley's Ten Hours Bill, to mitigate the grosser horrors of factory labour; but then John Bright was a mill-owner and, in name at any rate, not a slave-owner.

There is a method in this Manchester benevolence, that makes one sometimes doubt whether, behind the harmlessness of the dove, there may not lie hidden some of the wisdom of the serpent. The famous prophecy of Cobden, that within four or five years of our adopting Free Trade other countries would follow our example, is one of which we may shrewdly suspect that the wish was father to the thought. Had the other nations listened to the teachings of the classical economists, the adoption of Free Trade would have done more for the supremacy of England than the triumphs of Chatham or Wellington, for, with the start she had obtained, she would have been able to establish her position as the workshop of the world, and the English

capitalists would have ruled their own and every other country from their office chairs. As it was, Cobden was perfectly right in his opinion that we could afford to adopt the new policy, whether other nations did so or not, but with a shortsightedness that was characteristic of his school, he treated the very favourable and transitory conditions of the middle of the century as if they were to hold good for all time.

The movement against the Corn Laws was essentially middle-class. But though the members of the Anti-Corn Law League were business men with business instincts, though the first great manifesto of the Free Trade party had been the Petition of the London Merchants in 1820, the more intelligent among their leaders were ready to enter into alliance with a class who sought, not for markets and profits, but for dear life. It was on behalf of the workers that Carlyle had fulminated against taxes on food, and Ebenezer Elliott, the Corn-Law Rhymer, could sing in such very uneconomic strains as :

" Child, is thy father dead ?
Father is gone !
Why did they tax his bread ?
God's will be done ! "

It is thus that we find Cobden and Bright standing in a curious position, with regard to the utilitarian economists. The Ricardian doctrine, as it was usually understood, was an eminently satisfying one for employers, for any lowering of the price of food was supposed to mean, in the long run, correspondingly cheaper wages, and less rent for the landowner. But this would not do for the labourers, and so we find Cobden, though he is constantly appealing to the doctrines of the economists, flatly contradicting them, by his assertion that fluctuations of wages have as little to do with the price of food, as the changes of the moon.

It was thus possible to repeat the tactics of the Reform

Bill. Just as then the working class had been induced to shout in favour of a middle-class measure, so, in 1846, the capitalists, by raising the cry of cheap bread, managed materially to forward their policy of large profits and cheap markets. There can be little doubt that Cobden and Bright themselves were sincere men, no one will doubt this who has read Bright's touching description of how Cobden consoled him upon the death of his young wife: "Don't allow this grief, great as it is, to weigh you down too much; there are at this moment in thousands of houses in this country, wives and children who are dying of hunger, of hunger made by the law. If you will come along with me, we will never rest till we have got rid of the Corn Law." But even their idealism was a bourgeois idealism, and their conscience to some extent a business conscience.

The Corn Laws moved them to indignation, but then the Corn Laws were also bad for trade; peace at almost any price they were ready to advocate, but war is the great disturber of trade; parsimony amounting to meanness in Government expenditure was to them sound finance, but burgher wisdom in all ages has been penny wisdom. The scientific cruelty of the Poor Law left them cold and contented; the complaints of the factory worker could be put aside by John Bright, on the Pecksniffian plea that the conditions in other industries might be worse; trades unions were regarded by them with something more than distrust; and any organized effort by the State to improve the conditions of industrial labour, was generally repugnant to their notions of individualism.

From the sublime to the Stock Exchange there is but a step, and sometimes the two appear in ludicrous, and even blasphemous conjunction. The economists had recommended buying in the cheapest and selling in the dearest market, upon frankly economic grounds, but

Cobden will have it that this is the highest principle of Christian morality. And Bright, immediately after denouncing war as "the combination and concentration of all the horrors, atrocities, crimes and sufferings of which human nature on this globe is capable," proceeds as follows: "But what is even a rumour of war? Is there anybody here who has anything in the funds, or is the owner of any railway stock?" and so forth. It is the same as regards the political morality of which Bright is so fervent an exponent. It is certainly very admirable, but it is also very good business. Pæans of material prosperity alternate with lay sermons.

It does not follow, however, that the peace propaganda of these men was always ignoble, or always wrong. History must justify, and patriotism commend, the attitude of John Bright on the Crimean War. Though he knew that he was making himself an object of almost universal execration, though he was denounced as a traitor and a mean-spirited wretch, he persisted in his opposition to a policy which he believed to be unreasonable, unrighteous, and ruinous to his country. There is something heroic about such an attitude, and it is in loneliness and unpopularity that the worth of statesmen shall be revealed. Nor must we forget that Bright, despite his Quaker creed, and his own and Lancashire's obvious interests, gave his steady support to the North against the slave-owners. So did not Gladstone.

One of the most distinctive features of the Manchester creed is the hostility of its exponents towards the landed class. After the great war, the landlords had for some time managed to obtain an unfair influence upon the machinery of the Government, and the middle class was determined to better the instruction. The Free-Trade triumph was inevitable after the Reform Bill, and, as soon as the bourgeoisie felt themselves firmly in the saddle, it was inevitable that they should turn the tables upon the

squires. It was by no means a chance blunder that the Ricardian school should have failed to see, or at any rate to lay stress upon, the fact that the rent of land is by no means the only case in which the principle of the unearned increment holds good. The natural effect of Ricardo's theory was to represent society as a drama, of which the capitalist is the hero, upon whose well-being depends that of the community, and the landlord the villain, who profits at everybody else's expense.

The Manchester leaders, who were not out-and-out Ricardians, but who adopted as much of his teaching as was consistent with the alliance of the working class, shared, and even exaggerated his bias against what they called feudalism. However coldly they may have looked upon the claims of factory labour, they overflowed with sympathy towards poor, downtrodden Hodge, and Cobden eagerly looked forward to the time when there should be a general strike of rural labourers. In one of his speeches in favour of Free Trade, he threatens the landowners, in no obscure terms, that if they resist his policy, "the middle and industrious classes" will be revenged upon them by the weapon of taxation. Speaking after the Reform Bill, in 1868, John Bright says: "The aristocracy of England which so lately governed the country has abdicated, and its boastful leader, Lord Derby, its chief, in its name, and for it, has capitulated to the people" —such seemed to him the end of twenty years of Whig ascendancy. And he sneered at an ambitious foreign policy, as a gigantic system of outdoor relief for the sons of the aristocracy.

Whether or not we approve of such doctrines, there can at least be no doubt as to the influence of the Manchester school, in moulding the destinies of the country after the achievement of Free Trade. Cobden himself was never in the Ministry, nor was Bright a Minister for very long, but their power was increasingly felt in shaping the policy

of Liberal Governments, from the fall of Palmerston to the days of the Home-Rule crusade. It was in fiscal and foreign policy that their influence was most of all felt.

There is a connection between these two departments of national activity, that told in favour of the Manchester theory. In the middle of the century, as we have already had occasion to notice, England was confronted by very weak neighbours. Peel and Aberdeen had been able to adopt a policy of passivity and retrenchment, because we had no enemies who were at all likely to attack us. Louis Philippe, as John Bright very shrewdly pointed out, was too insecure upon his own throne to add to his difficulties the task of overturning ours. For offensive purposes, the other nations of Europe did not count.

From the year of revolutions till the overthrow of the Second Empire, Europe was passing through a period of transition, and the only power that was at all likely to give us trouble was France. There was, indeed, a certain amount of intermittent and just disquietude with regard to the man whom Tennyson called

> "Such a faithful ally
> That only the Devil can tell what he means."

The Volunteer movement, and Palmerston's characteristically ill-conceived scheme of fortifications, were the result of this alarm. But when we come to think of the dangers with which England has been confronted in the last twenty years, the bubble Empire of Napoleon the Little seems harmless indeed. Vast conscript armies, trained to the last pitch of efficiency, first-class navies that are the property not of one, but of every nation of importance, and, most formidable of all, the great fortified camp that has arisen in the centre of Europe upon the ashes of the old German Empire, are perils not inferior to the Armada or Louis XIV or Napoleon I, warning England, at the peril of her existence, to stand with watchful eyes and buckled armour.

But in the 'forties and 'fifties, it was inevitable that some sort of a reaction should take place against sanguinary escapades like that of the Crimea, and the vainglorious ineptitude of the Palmerstonian foreign policy Never were the arguments in favour of peace and retrenchment so strong, and no one, who reads the noble protest of John Bright against the levity of the Greenwich fish dinner, can doubt that Palmerston received a well-deserved and keenly felt snub, that had the effect of bringing out still further the vulgarity, that lay not very far beneath the polished surface of the diplomatist.

Here again, as in the case of Free Trade, the policy of the Manchester school had been anticipated by the utilitarians. But the naked absurdity of Bentham's scheme, which would have disbanded the navy, cut adrift the colonies, and left no room for any sort of patriotism, wanted toning down and humanizing before it could be translated into a practicable and popular policy. This Cobden and Bright were eminently fitted to accomplish. Neither of them would openly sneer at patriotism, nor disown the name of Englishman; Cobden, while cavilling at every actual provision for national security, declared his willingness to vote a hundred millions for the navy in case of an imaginary necessity, and Bright, while denouncing every preparation for war in the concrete, declined to commit himself to an absolute condemnation of all wars in the abstract.

These plausible qualifications made no difference whatever to the actual policy recommended by Bright and Cobden, which was one of unrelenting hostility to every penny expended by the Government with the object of making England great, or even secure. Like true burghers, they desired nothing better for their country than that she should absolve herself of all responsibilities, and sit still and fill her pockets. Not only was war, with its attendant evils of the wrath of God and

disturbance of the funds, to be avoided at any price, but even the necessary insurance against the aggression of other nations was grudged. For this has always been a weakness of the burgher mind, to imagine that because one nation prefers making money to making war, other nations will leave her alone. It was the Carthaginian plutocrats who starved Hannibal in Italy, it was the sleek burghers of the Netherlands who allowed their country, naked and unarmed, to face the assault of Le Roi Soleil.

Just as the Manchester leaders made their wish father to the thought, that other nations would play into our hands in the matter of trade, so they were lavish in their prophecies of the good time that was coming when swords should be turned to ploughshares. We have seen how Cobden, in the Don Pacifico debate, came forward with what, if he had been born a generation later, he would probably have described as a theory of evolution, to the effect that the tendency of the age was towards the peaceful settlement of disputes, and that wars were destined to go out of fashion, like duels. He committed himself, in 1849, to the singularly unfortunate prophecy that " in proportion as you find the population governing themselves—as in England, in France, or in America—there you will find that war is not the disposition of the people, and that if Government desire it, the people would put a check upon it." England, France and America! It was not many years, before a peaceful Premier was in vain endeavouring to resist the popular clamour for war, before Cobden and Bright were being howled down as Russians, before these amiable and self-governing peoples were hounding on their rulers with such cries as, " Give it to 'em, Charley! " " We'll hang Jeff Davis on the sour apple tree." " À Berlin! " " By Jingo if we do! " And to add to the irony of Cobden's prediction, " the black despotism of the North,"

which, being a despotism, was held up to obloquy as the most aggressive nation in Europe, was to be the first victim of these unexpectedly violent tendencies on the part of Cobden's lambs.

Both Cobden and Bright were determined, with perfect sincerity, to press the Christian religion into the service of their political and economic schemes. If they did not strain at citing, as an authority for buying in the cheapest and selling in the dearest market, Him Who overturned the tables of money-changers, and said, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God," they were not likely to hesitate at swallowing the more plausible fallacy that Christianity forbids nations, as well as men, to resist evil. John Bright, as a man of business and a member of the Society of Friends, did not hesitate to unite the love of God to the love of money, almost in the same sentence. "Is your Christianity a romance?" he cries, "is your profession a dream? No, I am sure that your Christianity is not a romance, and I am equally sure that your profession is not a dream. It is because I believe this that I appeal to you with confidence, and that I have hope and faith in the future. I believe that we shall see, and at no very distant time, sound economic principles spreading much more widely among the people. . . ." Here the secret is out, Christianity and economics have kissed each other, it is as if John Bright had represented our Lord as saying, "Take up thy cross and grow rich, follow Me and put money in thy purse!"

But he would be a shallow and ungenerous observer of human nature, who should represent Bright and Cobden as scheming hypocrites. It is impossible not to recognize that there was a daily beauty in their lives, which makes that of many a wiser statesman seem ugly indeed. Their loyal and touching friendship is a thing on which, at least, we may dwell with unstinted admiration, and in such

controversies as those between Cobden and Delane, and between Bright and Palmerston, there can be no doubt as to which is the nobler, and which the smaller nature of the two. But the issues at stake are more subtle. The harm that has been done by deliberately bad men, is not a tittle of that which has been done by good men, whose consciences are at the mercy of their prejudices. And this was eminently the case with Bright and Cobden.

They were brought up upon principles that made it almost impossible that they should rise above the standpoint of their class, and the English middle class of those days was sunk in almost complete ignorance of anything not directly connected with the making of money. We read how Cobden, after five years in a Yorkshire school of the Dotheboys Hall type, was sent into an office, and how Bright, after what might be described as a sound commercial education, was passed on into his father's business. It is a marvel that these youths were able to build such careers upon such unpromising foundations, it would have been a miracle had they acquired detachment or intellectual delicacy. It is true that Bright quoted poetry and was a lover of books, but his efforts after culture are too reminiscent of those of the worthy artisan, who attends evening lectures twice a week for the improvement of his mind. It was just because they were so thoroughly in touch and in sympathy with their class, that Bright and Cobden were able to wield such power as they did. Their cosmopolitan and little-England ideals fitted in with the two traits that were uppermost in burgher natures, the commercial instinct, and jealousy of the landed gentry, in whose interest they imagined most schemes of war or armaments to be engineered.

"We have heard a great deal of imperial policy and of a great empire," said John Bright; "these are phrases that catch the ignorant and unwary." The policy of the

Manchester school in regard to the empire was, in fact, upon a par with their conception of patriotism. They did not treat the colonies with the cynical indifference of Bentham and James Mill, but they were equally determined that they should cost nothing, and entail no responsibilities. They must govern themselves, and defend themselves, and act in every respect as if they were perfectly independent communities. In all but name they must be cut adrift. The danger of allowing an empire to fall under the power of its tradesmen, was never better illustrated than in the doctrines of these worthy men. To abdicate our responsibilities, to abjure our imperial mission, to starve our defences, to reduce our influence for good to a cipher, by a rigid theory of non-intervention, and to grow fat upon the proceeds of our virtue—such was the policy to which the Manchester school would have committed us. The influence that they exercised in the middle of the century, shows to what an extent the tendency towards materialism had grown upon us since the war.

This Manchester influence was by no means the only one that was working for the transformation of the Liberal Party, at the close of the Palmerstonian era. There was another school of thought that in some ways was the direct opposite of theirs, and which was leavening both parties alike. For the working class was beginning to make its influence felt, and after the second Reform Bill, the centre of power began to shift downwards in the social scale, and the rigid individualism of the economists and Manchester gave place to more and more ambitious schemes of Social Reform. In this cause the Tories had generally been more active than the Whigs; Southey had stretched out a friendly hand to Robert Owen; Wordsworth and Coleridge had both suggested schemes that would have terrified Ricardo and Cobden by their boldness; Lord Ashley, the Tory statesman, who did more

than anybody else of his time to alleviate the conditions of labour, found his chief opponents among the Whig capitalists, and the bitterest of them all in John Bright. During the whole of the period between the first two Reform Bills, we do not find the all-powerful Whigs passing a single comprehensive measure of what we should now call Social Reform. The Poor Law of 1834 may have inaugurated a more efficient system than the Tory Socialism it superseded, but it was certainly much more inhuman. The Whigs did indeed abolish slavery abroad, but they left it almost untouched at home, contenting themselves with developing the reform of criminal law which the Tories had begun, and tinkering very gingerly indeed with factory legislation.

The impulse in favour of Social Reform did not only emanate from Tory circles. It was about this time that the word Socialist was coined in France, but the thing itself had been in existence even before the Revolution. Spencean philanthropy died a natural death, not long after the Spa Fields riots, but there were a number of more or less able men, of whom Owen was the chief, to carry on the doctrine. It was impossible that the cruelty and squalor, which was involved in the system of cut-throat competition, should fail to drive some sensitive natures to the advocacy of heroic remedies. But the times were against them, and the dismal "science" had obtained too strong a hold upon the minds of men, to be shaken by direct frontal attack. The contempt and hatred with which these pioneers regarded the economists was heartily reciprocated. James Mill thought of one of them, Hodgskin, that the adoption of his principles would be a disaster comparable to the invasion of the Huns and Tartars, and another of them, Minter Morgan, laid his finger upon the weak point of the Ricardian case, in a manner worthy of Coleridge or Disraeli: "The most important error of the economists," he said, "lies in their

mistaking certain political institutions and reasoning from them as axioms of science." It is the same Minter Morgan who lashed the follies of the Ricardians, in a kind of Socialist Dunciad, devoted to the glorification of Owen.

At the end of the Palmerston régime we have, then, three distinct schools of thought, each of which was powerfully represented among his followers. There is first the old Whig oligarchy, of which he himself, and Lord John, had been the pillars. But their power was on the wane, and it was only the combined prestige of the two veteran leaders that had kept it alive so long. After Palmerston's death, it was soon evident that Lord John must retire definitely from the leadership, and give place to a man whose policy he soon came to view with the utmost alarm and chagrin. Mr. Lowe, who, amongst his other accomplishments, was well versed in economic lore, represented a dying tradition. In speech after speech, this most orthodox Whig opposed the Tory Reform Bill, in terms that breathed forth such hatred against the people as would have shocked the most hide-bound of his opponents. Perhaps Mr. Lowe was the only member in the House who was clever enough to see what a shrewd blow the impassive Disraeli was striking at Whiggery and all its works.

Besides the Whigs, there were the Manchester school, essentially bourgeois, but seeking and obtaining a good deal of democratic support, and the new school of Social Reformers, who had not yet begun to make much noise, but whose influence was increasing, especially in little things. If we wish to realize the extent to which this last tendency gained ground, within less than twenty years from the death of Palmerston, we have only to listen to the wail of agony sent up to the Unknowable by Herbert Spencer in 1884, in his article, "The New Toryism." There is a good deal of evolution jargon, and several long and irrelevant words borrowed from biology, but its real

purport is plain enough. It is the outraged protest of an ultra-individualist of the old school, against the change that is taking place in the policy of his party. He enumerates, with great accuracy and wealth of detail, the transgressions of Whig Governments against the sacred principle of laissez-faire. Amongst other monstrous iniquities, legislators are arraigned for having tried to protect children in factories, for having made some provision for the safety of those who go down to the sea in ships, for spending no less than four thousand pounds of the nation's money for the endowment of research, for providing cheap trains for workmen; all of which things "restrict still further the liberty of the citizen"—to poison men in white-lead factories and women in open-air bleaching works, to drown his sailors and starve his apprentices. Nefandum!

We must bear these circumstances in mind, if we are to understand the career of the extraordinary man who dominated the Liberal Party after the death of Palmerston, and who impressed his personality upon the imagination of his contemporaries, to an extent that has never been surpassed, if it has ever been equalled, by any British statesman. Perhaps there is no figure in history, which is so difficult to appraise as that of Gladstone. Time has not been his friend. That infinitely modulated voice, with just a suspicion of the northern burr, has ceased to move; the venerable figure that compelled respect is seen no more. No one who has received so much homage during his life has left so little behind him. Of all the torrent flow of eloquence, how little has remained! From the dusty shelves of some big library we take down the record of the speeches, that once shook the country, and hurled one of her greatest statesmen from power, and as we grope our way through that vast forest of parenthesis and circumlocution we cannot but ask, in amazement, "Who was this that all the people went

out for to see? Could it have been, after all, but a sophistical rhetorician?"

Where now is Gladstone's literary reputation, his researches in Greek antiquity, his defence of the Vatican, his defence of Christianity, his criticisms of Tennyson and Macaulay? Dead and buried in the eight volumes of his "Gleanings," one of the most unreadable and unread collections in our language. It is scholarly and unexceptionable, but all on one dead level of monotonous respectability. A few years ago, a collected edition of his speeches was commenced; it never got beyond the first two volumes. He is more memorable in the criticisms of his opponents than in his own works: Macaulay's essay on his first book, the boisterous scorn of Huxley, the immortal parody of his style by Beaconsfield, are familiar to a generation that has forgotten the "Church and State," the "Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture," and the Midlothian speeches. A world-wide reputation, the respect of one political party, the adoration of another, all the glamour of scholarship and industry, all the white light of Christian virtue, have failed to redeem his words from the tooth of oblivion.

The most significant thing ever said about Gladstone is the remark of the old Whig, quoted by Lord Morley, "Ah, Oxford on surface, Liverpool below!" For the secret of his success, of the mastery he wielded over his contemporaries, lay in the fact that he was hedged round by the prejudices, and saturated with the ideals of the middle class; he was the grandest and most finished product of the mould that turned out a Peel and a Cobden. Once we have grasped this clue, we shall not have so much difficulty in threading the vast and crooked windings of the Gladstonian labyrinth.

It may, however, be conceded, that but for Oxford Gladstone might never have achieved the fame of his later years. The Oxford of his youth was dangerous on

account of her very merits. So admirable was the training that a zealous student might acquire, that a man of naturally quite moderate abilities might rise to an eminence for which he was naturally unfitted. This seems to have been the case with Keble, it certainly was with Matthew Arnold, and probably, to some extent, with Jowett. But the most conspicuous instance of all is that of Gladstone. Everything that education, everything that industry could give him, he possessed in full measure. Judge him by any formal test, and no fault can be found in him. A laborious scholar, an omnivorous reader, a linguist, the master of many subjects, a ready and impressive speaker, steeped in all the lore of antiquity and yet in touch with every movement of his own day, he seemed possessed of every human talent, without one spark of the Promethean fire that crowns talent with wonder and immortality.

Yet it would be pettiness to speak of him in any terms but those of honour and veneration, honour for his achievement, veneration for his life. For if he stood for a middle-class ideal, he at least did so with a completeness and grandeur that the worthiest of his contemporaries could not hope to rival. All the virtues of mid-Victorianism found in him their noblest exponent; intense and methodical industry, unflinching integrity, a sound business instinct, a grave and dignified demeanour, ostentatious humility and self-conscious piety. It is not a small benefit for a nation to be governed and swayed by one who, whatever his defects, is at heart known by all to be a just, Christian man, one who would not consciously deviate a hair's breadth from the path of duty, and on whose heart might have been engraven:

"For ever in my great Taskmaster's eye":

and when such a one stands in the first rank as an orator, a financier, and a scholar, the voice of criticism may indeed

be heard, but that of contempt or execration must perforce be dumb.

There is an affinity both of character and policy between Gladstone and the leader and wrecker of the Conservative Party under whom he made his debut as a Minister. Peel was certainly the lesser man of the two, for he lacked both the theological fervour of his lieutenant, and his power of appealing to great masses of men. In all other respects the similarity between them was remarkable. Both were Oxford men; both distinguished themselves by taking double firsts; both were of middle-class antecedents; both achieved their most brilliant triumphs in the sphere of finance; both were lovers of peace at almost any price; both, though ardent patriots in theory, inclined to sacrifice security to economy; both were distinguished among their contemporaries for conspicuous virtue; both were equally lacking in sense of humour and creative imagination; both were champions of Free Trade; and, most remarkable of all, each of them, by a complete political volte face, finally succeeded in rending his party asunder and leaving it demoralized and impotent for the next twenty years.

It may indeed be questioned whether Peel, could he have added another fifty years to his life, would not have taken the same course as Gladstone. It was no vain boast to the electors of Midlothian, "that, could his valuable life have been prolonged to this moment . . . Sir Robert Peel would have been found contending along with you, against the principles which now specially place you in determined opposition to the Government of the day." We have seen how thoroughly the two men were in sympathy during the Don Pacifico debate, and indeed Gladstone was as naturally attracted by the staid temperament of Sir Robert, as he was repelled by that of the brisk old worldling opposite, with whom he was afterwards to be linked in uneasy comradeship.

Gladstone's policy as leader of his party was not essentially different from that of Peel as leader of the Conservatives. Except in the realm of finance, he cannot be called a constructive social reformer on anything like a grand scale. Forster's Education Bill, the greatest advance of this kind made under his leadership, was carried rather in spite of him than because of him. Reviewing his own legislative achievements, the measures that strike him as being the most important are the Tariffs (1842–60), the Savings Banks, the Oxford University Act, the Franchise Act, the Irish Land Acts, and Irish Church Disestablishment; surely not a very formidable record for a statesman whom his supporters had hailed as the champion of Democracy, and his enemies denounced as an unscrupulous, and even insane demagogue. For though he helped to guide his party through its transition from Whig individualism, to a democracy faintly tinged with Socialism, he acted less as a stimulus than as a brake upon its more advanced members.

Just as Peel had aimed at making Conservative policy liberal, so it was Gladstone's boast that he was more conservative, in the truest sense of the word, than the Conservatives themselves. Among the many counts of his indictment against the Beaconsfield Government, there is none that fires him with greater wrath than their tampering with the very Constitution they profess to uphold. He was always devotedly loyal to the throne, and if, at the end of his life, he was provoked into an attack upon the Upper House, he entered upon it with obvious reluctance, and, in his biographer's opinion, he was one of the only two men in his party who cared a straw about the hereditary principle at all. Still less was he the mouthpiece of that cry for social change, which was to sweep his opponents from office within a decade of his death. We have only to read his address at Chester, in 1889, upon the workman's opportunities, to

realize what a gulf separates him from the advanced reformers of our own day. Instead of pointing to the defects of society, to the iniquities of capitalism and the grievous case of the unemployed, he launches forth into one of those glorifications of progress, and principally of material progress, which were the common property of such different characters as Palmerston and Peel, John Bright and John Russell, Eliza Cook and Robert Lowe. On the whole the workman was not only the best of fellows, but he was exceedingly well off, and Progress, who was as good a fellow as the workman himself, was his friend. "A country," he says elsewhere, "is in a good and sound and healthy state when it exhibits the spirit of progress in all its institutions and in all its operations; and when with that spirit of progress it combines the spirit of affectionate retrospect upon the times and the generations which have gone before, and the determination to husband and to turn at every point to the best account all that these previous generations have accumulated, of what is good and worthy for the benefit of us their children." And again, "The principle of nationality and the principle of reverence for antiquity —the principle of what I may call local patriotism—is not only an ennobling thing in itself but [and here speaks the true Victorian bourgeois] has a great economic value."

If Peel was a Tory who tried to hold his party together by throwing overboard every Tory principle, so, conversely, was Gladstone, in his Liberal days, more saturated with reverence for antiquity than many of his opponents. That this was only one phase of his character may readily be conceded, for when he was aroused or thwarted, he was capable of uttering the most revolutionary sentiments, and paving the way for changes whose nature he himself can scarcely have realized, but none the less is it certain that in his declining days, he was as constant

in his Conservatism as when, more than half a century before, he had been the rising hope of the stern, unbending Tories. When Ruskin taxed him with thinking one man as good as another, he replied, "Oh dear, no! I am nothing of the sort. I am a firm believer in the aristocratic principle—the rule of the best. I am an out-and-out *inegalitarian*," an admission which caused Ruskin to clap his hands with delight.

But when we have taken into account all the qualifications and defects of Gladstone's democracy, one fact remains that must never be lost sight of. He did at least impress his personality upon the people, he was to them a symbolic figure, raising an ensign of freedom for aspirations more daring than his own. Whether he believed in the people or not, he taught them to believe in themselves, to regard injustice and tyranny as intolerable things, hateful to God and man. He defined the principle of Liberalism as trust in the people qualified by prudence. And perhaps it was this trust that was the main source of his strength. Whatever else he was, he never adopted the pose of a cynic, he convinced his hearers of his implicit belief in his own principles and his fellow-men. We have heard of listeners to his speeches who were carried away by his eloquence, and afterwards were at a loss to understand what it was that had enslaved their judgment. For, however much he may have obscured or qualified his meaning, when he spoke, he was like a man inspired. Nor was it only over the English people that he extended his spell. In Italy, in the little states of the Near East, his name is honoured to this day. The poet King, the grand old man of Montenegro, has testified to this love of England, which was directly inspired by Gladstone:

> "Oh, thanks to thee, hundredfold thanks,
> Great-hearted race of men,
> So long as the world endures,
> So long as the mountains stand above Dulcigno."

When he assumed the leadership of his party, he had to make his choice between old Whigs, new Liberals, and the Manchester school. With the Palmerstonians, he had always been in more or less open conflict. He had worked against them for peace in the Coalition Cabinet; he had helped to throw Palmerston from office over the affair of Orsini; and he alternately opposed and scandalized him during his last Ministry, so that the very posters in the street appealed to the mob to support the Chancellor of the Exchequer against his leader. Besides, when Palmerston and Russell were gone, there was scarcely one of the old Whig aristocrats who could possibly have taken their place, so that, except for the conservative spirit that formed such a notable part of the new leader's temperament, and the love of liberty that coloured his foreign policy, the break with Palmerstonianism was complete. But with the new ideal, towards which the Liberal Party was being attracted with ever-increasing force, he had scarcely more sympathy. The very idea of freedom, which he himself believed to be the explanation of all the changes in his career, contradicted it as much as his reverence for the past, and his burgher parsimony contradicted it still more. It is probable that, had he survived to our present day, he would have been as unwilling to spoil his budgets by old-age pensions as by Dreadnoughts.

It was towards the Manchester school, the burgher philosophy of Bright and Cobden, that Gladstone naturally inclined, despite the Tory sentiments of his youth and the Socialist bias of Liberalism during his last days. Oxford on the surface, Liverpool beneath, he represented all that was best, and much that was worst, in the great class that had attained the zenith of its power in the middle of the century, and which, at the end, was declining rapidly towards its nadir. One of the most striking incidents of Peel's conversion to Free Trade, the

one which most plainly indicated his alienation from the party he had wrecked, was the speech in which he went out of his way to eulogize Cobden. It was a lesson that was not lost upon Peel's pupil and successor. The famous budgets, which many hold to be Gladstone's chief title to fame, were no more than the logical application of principles that the Manchester school and the classical economists had advocated, and Peel had been the first to put into practice.

What would have alarmed the country, if advocated even by Bright and Cobden, became a popular and practicable policy in the hands of Gladstone. Herein lay one of the secrets of his power. He had none of the sharp angles and harsh outlines of the extremist. He could so paraphrase and qualify the most extreme doctrines, as to make them appear the commonplaces of politics and morality. He could advocate the policy of a class without using its language. Never, at the height of their popularity, was it conceivable that either Bright or Cobden could have commanded a majority in the country; the one was unalterably associated in the public mind with Corn Laws, the other with the Society of Friends. But Gladstone's mind seemed to comprehend the universe, his watchwords were those to which all lips gave homage, freedom, reverence, patriotism, humanity, progress. Even less than in the case of Peel, was it easy to disentangle from all this sublime platitude, what really were its author's political principles. Speech, as the most cynical of diplomatists once said, is the art of concealing thought—even, one is tempted to add, from the thinker himself.

The freedom to which Gladstone attached so much importance turns out, in the domestic sphere at any rate, to be the old economic laissez-faire, or Manchester individualism. But the godless brutality of the McCroudy tribe, or even the unctuous austerity of Bright's opposition

to the Factory Acts, were foreign to his nature. He was too well educated to pander openly to the greedy prejudice of mill-owners, and too much of a Christian to have any part in the philosophy of the trough. Under his auspices, the extension of State action in a hundred small ways was sufficient to produce the most doleful of laments from extremists like Herbert Spencer, and his own language was not definite enough to stamp him as the exponent of any particular theory, but his policy in all big matters of statecraft was to put his trust in individual, as distinct from State action. About the prospects of society he was robustly optimistic, and his efforts were rather directed towards removing every hindrance to the free play of progressive forces, than to stimulating them by artificial means. For with all his love for what was fixed and permanent, he had that mystic adoration of progress which was characteristic of his time: "The great social forces," he cries in 1866, "which move onwards in their might and majesty, and which the tumult of our debates does not for a moment impede or disturb—these great social forces are against you; they are marshalled on our side"; which is the familiar dogma of evolution tricked out in a different set of phrases, and such a philosophy fitted in well with the belief that the State should let things alone, and allow the great social forces (whatever these might be) to do the work. But what in Herbert Spencer was an iron dogma which few sane men can have taken quite seriously, in the case of Gladstone is rather suggested than formulated, like the "one whispered note" that resounds through Schumann's Phantasie in C major "for ears attent to hear." And if his Irish land policy forms a partial exception, it is because his middle-class optimism wavered for a moment, where landlords were the enemy, and the "great social forces" had so obviously failed to act, though it received its most striking expression of all in the Home Rule Bill of 1886.

Such was the philosophic or dogmatic basis of Gladstone's individualism, but there was an inherited trait that lay deeper, the parsimony that we have found to be at the root of the burgher temperament, the Liverpool beneath the Oxford surface. Thrift, as we gather both from his life and his correspondence, was a virtue he placed only second to godliness. And this thrift or parsimony is by no means confined to his dealings with money, but is an elemental quality that pervades every part of his being. What strikes us when we survey the lives of the mid-Victorian worthies, is the extreme and vigilant self-consciousness with which they watched over every one of their own actions; so much is calculated, so little spontaneous. As we might expect, Herbert Spencer supplies the extreme case and *reductio ad absurdum* of this method of life; one would imagine that before doing the simplest thing, he would look up the case in the Synthetic Philosophy to assign the exact proportions due to egotism and altruism respectively in his proposed line of conduct. Peel's perpetual vindications of his own virtue, Queen Victoria's and the Prince Consort's elaborate instructions regulating every moment of their son's existence, John Mill's letters, the gospel according to Samuel Smiles and Martin Tupper, all the innumerable moralities and heavy admonitions that adorn the literature of the period, are manifestations of this spirit, and it colours the life of Gladstone from his cradle to his grave.

He never unbends or lets himself go for one instant. A story is told of his having admonished his own housemaster at Eton. "When shall we learn wisdom?" he writes in his diary at Oxford, "not that I see folly in the fact of playing cards, but it is too often accompanied by a dissipated spirit." It is the same note that sounds through the huge and dreary mass of his correspondence, always weighty, never genial; one longs, and longs in vain, for one touch of Lamb's whimsicality, one faint

reflection of Stevenson's glow. The very story, whatever be the measure of its literal truth, that he used to chew every mouthful of food exactly thirty-three times, is symbolic of his nature.

It is only natural to surmise, that with such a man at the head of affairs, the policy of the country would aim at prudence and thrift, to the neglect of the aristocratic virtues of valour and generosity. There was much need for such a policy in the middle of the century, when our enemies were few and our position almost impregnable, and Gladstone had received a thorough education in retrenchment and reform at the hands of Peel, whom he revered, and Aberdeen, whom he loved. In the Don Pacifico debate, we find him on the same side as Peel and Cobden, and in the muddle that led to the Crimean War, he loyally supported Aberdeen in his efforts for peace. It was in 1853 that he produced the first of his great budgets, and found his calculations rudely upset by the waste of war. This probably still further strengthened his pacific tendencies, for except for the one instance where his antipathy to Palmerston put him among the party of defiance in the affair of Orsini, his subsequent career becomes a struggle for peace at almost any price, and retrenchment at almost any risk. "Next to Lord Aberdeen," he says in 1861, "I think Sir Robert Peel was the most just of the just men I have had the happiness to know. . . . Now and then Sir Robert Peel would show some degree of unconscious regard to the mere flesh and blood, if I may so speak, of Englishmen; Lord Aberdeen was invariably for putting the most liberal construction upon both the conduct and the claims of the other negotiating state."

The struggle began in earnest under Palmerston's last Government, when Gladstone was Chancellor of the Exchequer. He was engaged in carrying out the final policy of his master Peel to its logical conclusion, sweeping

away duty after duty, and at the same time keeping direct taxation as low as possible. Never was statesman so favoured by circumstances; England was at the height of her commercial prosperity; improved means of communication and the discovery of fresh goldfields had caused wealth to pour into the country; even agriculture, as yet unspoiled by the new imports of American wheat, had prospered under Free Trade, and it was natural that the new system should receive even more credit than it deserved for the coming of these benefits, and that Gladstone should have accepted it as a financial panacea. But he did not stop here. With his mind fixed upon prospective surpluses and remissions of taxation, he became blind to even more important interests of State, and repeatedly tried to balance accounts at the expense of the navy and army.

The first sign of the passing of the old, easy order of things that had prevailed since Waterloo, was the menace of the new Napoleonic Empire. Its strength, and the capacity of its sovereign, were certainly exaggerated in the popular imagination, but it was none the less true that a Buonaparte could only keep his throne by a series of brilliant strokes, and the most brilliant stroke conceivable, from the point of view of a Frenchman, would have been the capture of London and the revenge of Waterloo. The Emperor himself probably had no desire to be anything but friendly, but then it was risking too much to place implicit trust in the author of the *coup d'état*, and the enigma of Europe. The outburst of Anglophobia in the French army, to which the Volunteer movement was a reply, had sufficiently awakened the English people to the sense of danger, which the completion of the fortifications of Cherbourg intensified.

Palmerston had evidently made up his mind, that he would not a third time be thrown from power for his subservience to Napoleon. He had declared it to be one

of the cherished objects of his career, to see England put into a proper state of defence. Unfortunately the scheme he produced was marked by the showy inefficiency that might have been expected of him. He failed to realize the elementary maxim that the strategic frontier of England is the coastline of the enemy, and he based his scheme of defence upon a number of forts all round our own shores. Cobden and Gladstone had another policy, which found expression in a Commercial Treaty with France, for the reduction of our tariffs had not yet gone far enough to make reciprocity impossible. They still clung faintly to the old hope that Free Trade would become universal. "It is quite true," Gladstone says in 1881, "that that treaty did not produce the whole of the benefits that some too sanguine anticipations may possibly have expected of it, that it did not produce a universal smash of protective duties, as I wish it had, throughout the civilized world." But the results, as far as they went, were good enough, and the only fault to be found with this policy was its unnecessary, and even perverse connection with the agitation for starving the services. A friend is not less valued for being strong.

Whatever may or may not have been the strategical merits of Palmerston's scheme, it was not only, or even mainly, upon strategical grounds that Gladstone opposed it. He writes of the finance of 1860, "The weak point is the fortification plan; I do not now speak of its merits or demerits, but I speak of it in relation to the budget." He expressly repudiated the opinions of military men "naturally anxious for the complete security of every available point," an anxiety that he could attribute to no higher motive than the desire to evade responsibility in case of disaster. He was alone in the Cabinet, but outside it, Cobden supported him by his letters, and Bright by his speeches. This episode of the fortifications was the beginning of a chronic struggle between Gladstone and his

chief, the nature of which is pretty clearly indicated by the poster which Palmerston, half humorously, half reproachfully, had sent to him. "How long will you suffer Yourselves to be Humbugged by *Palmerstonianism*, and Robbed by the Services, and others interested in a War Expenditure, even in times of Peace? . . . *The Chancellor of the Exchequer appeals to you to help him.*" We have extracts of ominous significance from Gladstone's diary:

*Jan.* 25, 1861. "I am in the midst of a deadly struggle about the estimates; the only comfort this year is, that I think the conflict will be more with the navy than with the army."

*Jan.* 26. "By dint of what, after all, might be called threat of resignation, I have got the navy estimates a little down, and am now *in* the battle about the army."

We have dwelt upon these extracts, because they show the spirit which inspired Gladstone's policy, in respect of national defence, throughout his subsequent career. It is true that no Chancellor of the Exchequer would be worth his salt, who did not exact a rigorous account of every penny he was called upon to disburse, but he becomes a danger to his country if he allows his passion for economy so far to get the mastery of him, as to subordinate defence to opulence, and to regard every penny withheld from the navy and army in the light of a personal triumph. Moreover, while Gladstone did not abate one jot of his parsimony to the day of his death, circumstances were changing with a rapidity that made a policy, which might have been right for Peel and Aberdeen, fraught with ever-increasing peril in the hands of their disciple.

It would be superfluous to enumerate in detail the history of Gladstone's constant endeavour to reduce expenditure on the services. His difference with Cardwell, about a reduction of £200,000 in the Army Estimates of 1874, furnished him with a pretext for dissolution, his unsuccessful attempt to cut down the navy twenty years

later was the cause of his final retirement from office. In all this, he held to the true middle-class policy as formulated by Bright and Cobden, and his leadership had the important effect of establishing an unnecessary connection between English Liberalism and a more or less blind suspicion of any proposed provision for national security. This, amid the wreck of Gladstonianism, is at least one heritage that he may be said to have handed on intact to his successors. It must not be forgotten, however, that he was ready and anxious to promote efficiency, provided it could be done without spending money; the Cardwell reforms were carried out under his auspices. Parsimony in a statesman does not necessarily imply a lack of patriotism, even though it may denote, if carried to an extreme, a mean and inadequate conception of statecraft.

The question of national defence must be considered separately from that of foreign policy, even though the scope of every diplomat is determined by the force upon which he can count, in the last resort, to back his representations. We have this important distinction to note in the case of Gladstone, that while, as regards the actual provision for defence, he was to all intents and purposes the disciple of John Bright, yet as regards foreign policy, he honestly repudiated any connection with Manchester, and in particular, with Cobden's theory that the age of wars had come to an end. Few statesmen have uttered more fervent words of attachment to their country, and even to the Empire, than were constantly on his lips, and the peroration of one of his Midlothian speeches is worthy, in its passion, its dignity and its simplicity, to rank beside the best oratory of Chatham:

"I believe that we are all united—indeed, it would be most unnatural if we were not, in a fond attachment, perhaps in something of a proud attachment, to the great country to which we belong—to this great Empire, which has committed to it a trust and a function given

from Providence, as special and as remarkable as ever was entrusted to any portion of the family of man. Gentlemen, when I speak of that trust and that function I feel that words fail me: I cannot tell you what I think of the nobleness of the inheritance that has descended upon us, of the sacredness of the duty of maintaining it. I will not condescend to make it a part of controversial politics. It is a part of my being, of my flesh and blood, of my heart and soul. For these ends I have laboured through my youth and manhood till my hairs are grey. In that faith and practice I have lived; in that faith and practice I will die."

It would be the merest pettiness of faction, a state of mind almost inconceivable now that the thunders of Midlothian echo but faintly in our memories, and the two mighty antagonists have passed to a vaster sphere of activity, to deny to the author of these words the name of patriot, or to withhold our admiration from the spectacle of the veteran statesman, called unwillingly from his retirement by the sense of duty, and flying with impetuous ardour from platform to platform, punctuating his very railway journeys with eloquence, that he might warn his countrymen against a policy that seemed to him fraught with dishonour and ruin. Those who talk of Gladstone as a selfish demagogue or traitor not only fail to be plausible, but miss the whole point of the case against him. He was neither of these, but there is one virtue of the statesman and another of the mayor, and some who were born for the lesser part have the greater thrust upon them.

Spinoza, whom his opponents called atheist, earned the title of "God-intoxicated," and Gladstone, in some of his moods, might with equal truth have been called "England-intoxicated." He was keenly sensitive to her honour, and wished her to stand before the world as the type of a Christian power. He was never weary of protesting against

the phrases of old Rome, the "Civis Romanus" of Palmerston, even the "Imperium et libertas" of Beaconsfield, as unfit for English statesmen. He wished England to act, upon occasion, with noble disregard for her own interests, and, in particular, to throw her influence into the scale on behalf of small and oppressed nationalities. And herein lies the great redeeming feature of his career, that which, in spite of all his blunders and all his limitations, renders him worthy of his country's permanent gratitude. For though his influence was constantly exerted towards rendering her impotent to perform her duty among the nations, though by his agency that duty was time and again shamefully neglected, he at least had a noble conception of what England ought to be, and this, when he had once formed it, he never ceased to proclaim in the hearing of Europe. And herein he excelled Disraeli, just where Fox excelled Pitt. For despite the scope and dazzling brilliancy of his genius, Disraeli never quite soared to that highest patriotism of all, which aims, not only at making a nation strong, but of seeing to it that she uses her strength for nothing but good. Gladstone gave voice to that most splendid of all national ideals, too splendid, almost, for an iron age, of an England that should be not only great, but Christian. "We should do as we would be done by . . . we should seek to found a moral Empire upon the confidence of the nations, not upon their fears, their passions or their antipathies," or, as he puts it elsewhere, "National injustice is the surest road to national downfall." And those who cavil at such precepts on the ground of their impracticability, are most surely putting themselves out of court as accusers of Gladstone, unless, indeed, it be that men were made to serve God singly, and to serve the devil in the mass. When many years have purged away the ill-effects of Gladstone's policy, his ideal will remain, unquenchable like a star, for the guidance of future ages.

It was this ardent desire for international justice that imbued Gladstone with his love of freedom, and his keen sympathy for the principle, of such commanding importance in the modern world, of nationality. This was an aspiration of slow growth, for all his early training was against it, nor was he quite consistent in its pursuit. That he displayed little enthusiasm in the cause of Poland and Hungary, may reasonably be excused on the ground that England was perfectly impotent to help either of them, that Gladstone was but following the precedent of Canning, and perhaps this was also the case as regards Denmark, and here we have to take into account the fact that the disputed provinces were, by sympathy, more German than Scandinavian. But Gladstone's attitude as regards the American Civil War is hard to defend in an apostle of liberty. Though his mastery of verbal qualification might enable him to preserve a nominally balanced attitude, there can be little doubt that his sympathies, unlike those of Bright, were with the slave-owning states. Despite his condemnation of slavery in the abstract, he took every opportunity of throwing cold water on the aspirations of the North, and on one occasion used language, which in after years he admitted to have been indefensible, and which went far towards committing the Government to the recognition of the new nation created by Jeff Davis. Add to this that he was, till it paid him to desist, the starkest champion of coercion in Ireland, and that, in the interests of European bondholders, he crushed a nationalist revolt in Egypt.

It was in Italy and the Near East that Gladstone's championship of freedom was most constant, and redounds most to his credit. He had a tender heart, his indignation was quickly aroused by the spectacle of cruelty, and his visit to the dungeons of Naples in 1850 was a landmark in his career. Henceforward he became a champion of Italian liberty, and lukewarmness in this

cause was the one fault that he had to find with the character of Aberdeen. Not that his conversion was the matter of a day, for we find him writing in 1854, with reference to Austrian rule, "The English mind is not shocked *in limine* at the nation of people belonging to one race and language, yet politically incorporated or associated with another," and depreciating opinions that "link Italian reconstruction with European disorganization and general war." But these hesitations he lived to repent, and the triumph of Italian freedom found no more sincere or outspoken friend than the man, whose name is still honoured in Italy, and to whose influence is due no small part of the friendship, which, despite the combinations of statesmen, renders it to the last degree improbable that Italy will ever go to war with England.

In the question of the Balkan States, time has, for once, been on Gladstone's side. As early as the 'fifties he had supported the union of Roumania, and he outlined the policy of placing a living barrier between Russia and Turkey. With profound and prophetic insight, he declared that there was no barrier like the breasts of free men, a fact which Disraeli was apt to forget in dealing with these peoples. It was the horrors perpetrated by the Turk on the Christian Bulgarians, that called forth Gladstone from his retirement in the 'seventies, and aroused him to flaming indignation that such things could be, and above all, that they could be done with the sanction of England.

> "Murder most foul, as at the best it is,
> But this most foul, strange and unnatural,"

was his description of these atrocities, in the famous pamphlet wherein he demanded the expulsion of the Turk, bag and baggage, from the province he had shown himself unfit to govern.

Of his sincerity in this cause it would be pettiness to

doubt. Like Cromwell, he regarded himself as the elect of the Lord. "The word spoken," he writes in his private diary, "was a word for millions, and for millions who for themselves cannot speak." And who now can read without emotion that speech, on which the march of events has written a comment more eloquent than can be expressed in words: "A band of heroes, such as the world has rarely seen, stand on the rocks of Montenegro, and are ready now, as they have been during the 400 years of exile from their fertile plains, to sweep down from their fortresses and meet the Turks at any odds for the re-establishment of justice and of peace in these countries. Another portion still, the 5,000,000 of Bulgarians, cowed and beaten down to the ground, hardly venturing to look upwards, even to their Father in heaven, have extended their hands to you." The time was to come when into those hands, which had been stretched forth to unheeding man, God Himself should commit the sword of vengeance.

For this advocacy, for these principles, all honour is due to Gladstone. Had he gone on to give them effect in practice, had he been armed with the matchless fortitude, as well as the firm faith of a Cromwell, he might have occupied a place second to none among English statesmen. But alas, the burgher in him was stronger than the apostle of a Christian England, and Gladstone's noble words were seldom backed by noble deeds. As long as it was a question of speeches, of pamphlets, he was in his element, but the nation that would do good in the world needs something more than words to make her decisions respected. He laid down categorically, in Midlothian, what he conceived to be the right principles of foreign policy:

(1) To foster the strength of the Empire by just legislation and economy.

(2) To preserve peace among the nations of the world

—" especially, were it but for shame, when we remember the sacred name we bear as Christians."

(3) To maintain the concert of Europe.

(4) To avoid needless and entangling engagements.

(5) Acknowledgment of the equal rights of all nations.

(6) Sympathy with freedom, with special reference to the example of Canning, Russell and Palmerston.

Stated thus in the abstract, there appears to be little in these propositions at which the most sensitive patriot might cavil, though when we come to examine them more closely, we find that it would be possible for a casuistical mind, such a mind in fact as Gladstone's, to put upon them some such interpretation as follows:

(1) Reckless reduction of armaments.

(2) Peace before honour.

(3) The shifting of our responsibilities, as in the case of Armenia, upon a nominal concert of selfish and mutually hostile states.

(4) A policy of selfish isolation, of Little England.

(5) Equal rights for Zulus, Dervishes, and other barbarians, however ignorant and bloodthirsty.

(6) A willingness to sympathize with rebellion as such, to assume that the Mahdi, Cetewayo, and even Fenians are rightly struggling to be free.

We cannot be too careful in dealing with such a master of evasion, to judge his professions in the light of his performance. Again and again he laid down propositions of which the sense seemed indubitable, and when taxed with them afterwards, discovered some qualification in his original statement that enabled him to beat a retreat. Consciously insincere he could not be, but with all his mastery of language, there was never a man who possessed in a less degree the faculty of conveying to his audience what he really meant. This was partly due to the fact that his intelligence inclined to be more

subtle than profound, partly because of his love of grand phrases and the commonplaces of morality and patriotism.

We take the instance of his "Edinburgh Review" article of 1870. Here he describes, to all appearance in the most definite terms, the foundations of England's greatness. It rests, according to him, entirely upon the sea power, that renders her innocuous for purposes of aggression, and inviolate as regards defence. No writer for the Navy League ever laid down in stronger terms the necessity of maintaining a supreme navy. "It is hard to say whether, or when, our countrymen will be fully alive to the vast advantage they derive from consummate means of naval defence, combined with our position as islands. Our lot would perhaps be too much favoured if we possessed, together with such advantages, the full sense of what they are. Where the Almighty grants exceptional and peculiar bounties, He sometimes permits, by way of counterpoise, an insensibility to their value." Could any language be clearer, more convincing, more impassioned? And yet it is the language of one, the whole of whose official career was one long struggle with his colleagues to get not only the army, but the navy estimates reduced; who had written, in 1861, that it was a comfort that this year his struggle was with the navy; who wrote in 1874, little more than three years after the article in question, that the Ministry might "proceed cheerily with their work," provided they could get from three-quarters of a million to a million off army and navy jointly; who was the bitter opponent of the Naval Defence Act of 1889; who resigned office rather than sanction the Spencer programme.

Strip off from Gladstone the gorgeous trappings of orator and moralist, and we are left with the frock-coat and ample waistcoat of the mid-Victorian business man; idealism, theology, patriotism, statesmanship, all these

are of Oxford, but underneath is always Liverpool, and Sancho Panza was not more unfitted to govern an island, than a man with such limitations to control the destinies of empire. For God allows to nations no choice of responsibilities, and what begins in refusal must end in blood and disaster. Such is the lesson of Gladstone's career.

Nobody had a greater command of imposing and dignified language, but for all that, there was never a statesman whose policy displayed more weakness. One instance of this failing has become almost classic; it was when he made the shameful acknowledgment that the Fenian outrages had had the same effect in obtaining justice for Ireland, in other words his own disestablishment of the Irish Church, as the church bell had in making people go to church. The mischief, one is almost tempted to say the wickedness, of such a pronouncement cannot be exaggerated, and the "patriots" learnt their lesson, for it did not require a very shrewd intelligence to deduce that a fresh series of outrages, including the murder of a Chief Secretary, was all that was necessary to procure from the Premier a yet further "act of justice" in the shape of Home Rule. Another famous instance was Gladstone's terrific indictment against Austria, in the same electoral campaign, and the undignified and almost grovelling letter in which he subsequently recanted or explained away his remarks to the Austrian ambassador.

We have seen how Gladstone's policy during his first Premiership had scandalized his old leader, and in what strong terms Lord John had denounced his betrayal of national interests. But this was before the consolidation of Central Europe had had time to affect materially the Continental situation, in a sense unfavourable to us, and before the imperial problem had become one of paramount importance. It was during the Ministry of 1880, that the hopeless failure of Gladstonianism was

made manifest, and perhaps all the heaped-up sacrifices of men and money in the Transvaal and the Soudan, all the blood and shame of the Armenian atrocities, were, after all, but a light penalty, exacted by inevitable justice, for the attempt, on the part of the first nation in the world, to measure her responsibilities by the standard of the Manchester school.

This is not the place to trace in detail that story of shame and disaster, but suffice it briefly to indicate in what respects Gladstone's policy may be said to have planted the seeds of ruin. The Armenian tragedy we shall return to later,* and merely remark here, how by upsetting his predecessor's policy, by substituting the control of Gallio, in the shape of the European concert, for that of English military consuls, who could and would have protected the Armenians, by forgetting that we had already excited the hopes of these poor people, and thereby aggravated the disposition of their oppressors to take advantage of their helplessness, Gladstone, by his pitiably mistaken policy, must share the responsibility, the blood-guiltiness, for that prolonged carnival of massacre and outrage. Perhaps it was some sense of his terrible mistake, some half-conscious desire to repair the mischief he had unwittingly caused, that called him from the very brink of the grave, to demand the reversal of his own policy, to insist that we should act in independence of the European concert and compel justice to be done; though he added the characteristic proviso, that if the resentment of the other Powers threatened to exceed the limits of verbal protest, we might have to back down again.

In the case of the Transvaal, the penalty of her cowardice did at least fall upon England herself. It was in vain for the Premier to deceive himself that he had acted from a sense of magnanimity, the facts are glaring and indisputable. He had intimated in the most solemn

* See page 577.

manner and through the mouth of his Sovereign, that our authority must be maintained and that any scheme of local autonomy must, for the time, be set aside. "Seldom," says Lord Morley, "has the Sovereign been made the mouthpiece of an utterance more shortsighted"; "shortsighted" is a curious and euphemistic word in this connection. Gladstone did not maintain the policy to which he had pledged the nation. He did not like the war; it was not popular in the country; it was likely to prove expensive; the Government was alarmed at the prospect of the Free State, and even the Cape Dutch taking part against us; considerations of national honour and prestige counted with them for little. They granted to rebels terms they had denied to peaceful subjects, and though talking of magnanimity, allowed even these terms to be haggled over and whittled down by the victors of Majuba. "The galling argument," says Lord Morley himself, "was that the Government had conceded to three defeats what they had refused to ten times as many petitions, memorials, remonstrances," but it was undeniable. Our honour had been compromised, our good name tarnished, and our loyal subjects betrayed. On the day of the surrender, a few Englishmen at Pretoria buried the flag, with the laconic epitaph "Resurgam." That victory and that humiliation were not forgotten, and the Boer hated the "rooinek" all the more, because his hatred was mingled with contempt. The surrender of 1881 was followed by that of 1884, in which the British Resident at Pretoria was withdrawn, who, if retained, would have had the power to insist upon a fair settlement of the Franchise question; and by a wretched subterfuge, our suzerainty over the Boers was neither asserted nor yet recanted. Thus wantonly were planted the seeds of inevitable discord. Arrogant tyranny on the one side, wounded honour on the other, combined to produce a spirit of bitter intolerance, that led to brusque-

ness and obstinacy in negotiation and violence in action. Not till the buried flag had risen again, over thousands of graves, was it possible for Boer and Englishman to understand and be generous to one another.

Egypt supplied the most impressive instance of the failure of Gladstonianism, and the one that stamped itself most vividly upon the imagination of contemporaries. There is no need to recount the details of that tragedy of errors, nor nicely to apportion the blame between its various actors. What is abundantly clear, is that our Ministers endeavoured to govern the country of the Pharaohs, as if the supreme object of statesmanship were to evade responsibility. From the first their policy was one of fitful indecision, they allowed themselves to be the victims of circumstances, which they had not the energy nor the moral courage to control. The policy of Beaconsfield had already pledged the honour of the nation to some sort of responsibility for Egyptian affairs, in so far as the office of bailiff, for cosmopolitan bond-owners, is to be associated with honour; that of Gladstone was to admit the responsibility, but to do everything possible to shift it on to somebody else. After we had allowed ourselves to be dragged by France into a policy of which we disapproved, a European Congress was invoked to do some talking, and finally even Italy was invited to join us. When the Sultan offered to sanction our single-handed intervention, Gladstone and Granville declined the proposal without even consulting the Cabinet, thereby incurring the just rebuke of the Queen, to whom their pusillanimity and their presumption were alike distasteful. It was only the murder of Europeans, and the strengthening of the Alexandrian forts under the guns of our fleet, that goaded the Government into action, and it is perhaps surprising that, though four of them were expected to resign, only the mill-owner of Rochdale actually did so. But worse was to follow. The Mahdi

arose in the Soudan, and the Khedive was confronted with an enemy more powerful than Arabi. From this point, the policy of the Government becomes one over which Englishmen may well desire to draw a veil. They first adopted the Jesuitical theory that they were responsible (a word distasteful to them above all others) for the affairs of Egypt, and not for those of the Soudan. Thus they neither enforced the evacuation of the province, nor did they strengthen the hands of the Egyptians. The firstfruit of this typically Gladstonian attitude was the annihilation of the gallant Hicks Pasha and his ten thousand men. They next found it expedient to reverse their own attitude, and force a policy of evacuation, which they had previously declared to be no concern of theirs, upon the Khedive. It was now that they bethought them of the gifted and noble man, whose heroism shone the brighter against a background of pettiness and cowardice, and who was to become the leading figure in the tragedy which was now hastening to its climax. Public opinion was getting restive, and it would serve as a sop, at once popular and inexpensive, to send out a single man of recognized genius upon a desperate mission, the one definite condition of which was, that Ministers were to be spared any inconvenient responsibilities.

Having sent out Gordon, and consented to his appointment as Governor of the Soudan, they might at least have been expected to refrain from actively thwarting him. Gordon had conceived the bold policy of taking with him Zobeir Pasha, the one man who was powerful enough to stem the rising tide of Mahdism. It was his one chance, but the Government, who were insisting upon leaving the Soudan exposed to the horrors of Mahdism, found themselves unable to sanction the appointment of the old slave-trader. The reason of this virtue is apparent from the pages of Lord Morley himself, and it was nothing more nor less than the fear of a defeat in Parliament. Gordon's

arguments were comprehensive and urgent, and his request was backed by Sir Evelyn Baring. "Believe me, I am right," he telegraphed, "and do not delay." He appealed to deaf ears. "A difference of opinion showed itself upon the despatch of Zobeir," writes Lord Morley of the Cabinet; "viewed as an abstract question, three of the Commons Members inclined to favour it, but on the practical question, the Commons Members were unanimous that no Government on either side of the House could venture to sanction Zobeir." To such a depth could our rulers descend, that considerations of statesmanship and patriotism were scouted as "abstract," and those of party whips and wirepullers held to be the only things "practical." When one thinks that the success of Gordon's mission probably depended upon this decision, of the lonely hero with his hair turning silvery white under the strain, and of his last message, "What I have gone through I cannot describe. The Almighty God will help me," the conduct of these time-serving politicians appears too contemptible for words. The God Whom Gordon trusted will judge between him and them.

Of the conduct of the Government concerning the relief expedition, there is little new to say. On this point, at least, the general sense of the country has pronounced upon them an emphatic and final condemnation. And yet even here it would be unfair to charge them with deliberate wickedness. They were only politicians, "sophisters, economists and calculators" in high places, bartering away their country's honour, and a hero's life. Even Lord Cromer, the coldest and least sympathetic of men, is constrained to say of the repeated Government messages to Gordon, that it is difficult, even after the lapse of many years, to read them without indignation. "Not only does reason condemn them, but their whole tone runs, without doubt unconsciously, counter to those feelings of generous sympathy, which the position of

General Gordon and his companions was so well calculated to inspire"; and again: "If the proofs [of Gordon's danger] which already existed in the early summer of 1884 were not sufficient, one is tempted to ask what evidence would have carried conviction to Mr. Gladstone's mind, and the only possible answer is that Mr. Gladstone was well-nigh determined not to believe a fact which was, naturally enough, most distasteful to him."

The sort of thing that was going on in Downing Street is indicated only too plainly in the pages of Lord Morley. "The Cabinet decided against an immediate expedition, one important Member vowing he would resign if an expedition were not sent in the autumn, another vowing that he would resign if it were." And on a later occasion six were favourable, and five, including Gladstone, unfavourable. The unkindest cut of all came from Lord Granville, who, during a career of consistent mediocrity, at least distinguished himself by what is probably the meanest pronouncement in the whole annals of British statesmanship: "I cannot admit that either generals or statesmen, who have accepted the offer of a man to lead a forlorn hope, are in the least bound to risk the lives of thousands on the chance of saving that forlorn hope." And Gladstone adds to this, six years later, "My own opinion is that it is harder to justify our doing so much to rescue him, than our not doing more." Poor Gordon, in bitter sarcasm, penned a sketch of several newspaper editors forcing an unwilling Gladstone towards Khartoum, and the Premier is calling out that it will cost at least ten million pounds. Gordon was a shrewd judge of character.

But then Gordon was, say his detractors, a troublesome subordinate. He was troublesome in just the same way as Nelson to Sir Hyde Parker, or Cochrane to Admiral Gambier, and, at any rate, more tractable than John Nicholson, whose memory all men honour, and who had

thanked God, when he was dying, that he had still strength to shoot his commanding officer, should it be necessary. Gordon was, by Gladstone's own admission, a hero of heroes, "but we ought to have known," he continues, "that a hero of heroes is not the proper person to give effect at a distant point, and in the most difficult circumstances, to the views of ordinary men." The aversion of the bourgeois mind from heroism has seldom been so frankly expressed. Gordon had paid Ministers the compliment of assuming that they would not order him to execute any policy manifestly dishonourable. "I was named for *evacuation of Soudan* (against which I have nothing to say), not to run away from Khartoum and leave the garrisons elsewhere to their fate." Above all, he considered himself bound in honour to stand by the people whom he had come to defend, and who had welcomed and trusted him almost like a god. How could he leave them? It is sometimes better to disobey men than to offend God, and all heroes and martyrs have been agreed on this point. "I declare positively, once and for all, that I will not leave the Soudan until every one who wants to go down is given the chance to do so, unless a Government is established which relieves me of the charge; therefore if any emissary or letter comes up here ordering me to come down, *I will not obey it, but will stay here and fall with the town and run all risks.*" And to conclude his last journal, one of the most lovable records ever penned by man, with its little child's simplicity, and saintly steadfastness, he might well say, "I have done my best for the honour of our country. Good-bye."

We have dwelt upon this tragedy of Gordon at what may seem disproportionate length, but there is surely no incident in modern history of deeper and more disquieting significance. For in all ages, a symptom of national decay has been the mistrust of great men, not through ignorance

or dullness, but positive aversion. There are men who needs must hate the highest when they see it, because their souls are little. It is one of the strangest freaks of human nature, which induces even cowards to cast away sword and shield in the hour of peril. Why was it that the Jews stoned their prophets and crucified their Messiah, that the citizens of Athens murdered their victorious admirals, and the Florentines Savonarola? To those who believe that heroes and prophets are endowed with some peculiar insight into God's purpose, the problem is simple, for the support that a nation gives them will be the measure of its inner soundness, and even those to whose scientific orthodoxy the very mention of God is abhorrent, will perhaps admit that there is a fundamental distinction between heroes and those whom Gladstone characterizes as "ordinary men," and that, however irrational and obscure may be its methods of arriving at conclusions, the heroic soul has actually displayed a quickness of intuition, and brilliancy in action, altogether beyond the scope of its more sober companion. It is when such men as Gordon are regarded with distrust and suspicion, when their plans are thwarted and their services rewarded with coldness and depreciation, that we may discover the signs of national decay, as surely as the skilled physician detects the first symptoms of cancer or consumption. But it is to the eternal credit of the British people, that, from their Queen downwards, they brushed aside the sophisms with which the Ministers would fain have appeased them, and the wrath and grief excited by their hero's death cling even now to Gladstone's memory; the spell of Midlothian was broken, and many there were whose feelings towards him might have been expressed, in words not very different from those of Edward Plantagenet:

> "O Clifford, boisterous Clifford, thou hast slain
> The flower of Europe for his chivalry!"

We have now seen the middle-class ideal in its plenitude of power, and its full capacity for mischief. We saw how, at the beginning of the century, its representatives were for making terms with Napoleon and impeaching Wellington; we have seen it working through aristocratic representatives after the Reform Bill, and diluted into the cheap patriotism of Palmerston; we have seen it become self-conscious in the hands of burgher statesmen of the Manchester school, and at last finding its full realization in the person and policy of Gladstone. To the characters of its leaders we can often give a full measure of admiration; the names of Bright, Cobden and Gladstone will always be remembered as those of men who, like Sir Henry Lawrence and Gordon, could truthfully say at the close of their lives, "I have tried to do my duty." It is not that they ever consciously departed from this ideal, but that to avoid responsibility, and to avoid expense, were the objects to which everything else had to give way. They failed to realize, that the resources and glory of empire were not given by God, nor bequeathed by our ancestors, to fust unused in greedy isolation; that to risk nothing for duty or honour is to gain nothing; that over the graves of nations whose motto was "Laissez-faire," the epitaph will soon be written:

"Fece per viltate il gran rifiuto."

# CHAPTER VIII

## A SCIENCE OF SOCIETY

IT has been our task to record the progress of a spirit, which is poetic and religious, in its agelong war against materialism. We must therefore take notice of every effort to bring human affairs under the yoke of scientific generalization. Once we have succeeded in regarding our country with cold detachment, we have ceased to love her, and in ceasing to love, we have ceased to know her. We may not speak with disrespect of Truth's handmaiden, nor of the patient, selfless legions who have squandered their lives in her cause, but he is no despiser of navies, who despairs of emulating the feats of a certain Chinese sage who propelled boats on land, and he is the worst enemy of science, who would put her to tasks with which she was never meant to grapple.

The thought of the last sixty years has been dominated by one vast and shadowy Colossus, underneath whose legs scientists, philosophers, and even poets have been resigned to crawl and creep about. The name of that Colossus is Evolution, and Darwin is said to be its prophet. No one who witnessed the homage paid, on the occasion of his centenary, to the memory of that great-souled man, could have failed to realize the grip that so-called Darwinism has gained on the imagination, not of Cambridge only, but of Europe. Any account of English Patriotism that failed to reckon with one of the most vital phases of

English thought, would obviously stand convicted of superficiality.

It must not be imagined that the publication of the "Origin of Species" was the beginning of the controversy, or that the problem of man's descent was the real issue at stake. Charles Darwin had, all unwittingly, set the spark to a long-prepared train. A dozen years before, the shrewdest observer of his time had hinted, in no obscure words, at the coming intellectual fashion. Readers of "Tancred" will remember the charming blue-stocking, who so nearly succeeded in ensnaring the affections of the hero, and the new book, the "Revelations of Chaos," with which she plied him. The language is more familiar among the blue-stockings of our own day than it ever was in the 'forties.

"What is most interesting is the way in which man has been developed. You know, all is development. The principle is perpetually going on. First there was nothing, then there was something, then, I forget the next, I think there were shells, then fishes; then we came: let me see, did we come next? Never mind that; we came at last. And the next change there will be something very superior to us, something with wings. Ah! that's it: we were fishes and I believe we shall be crows." And again—"You understand; it is all science; it is not like those books in which one says one thing and another the contrary and both may be wrong. . . . We are a link in the chain, as inferior animals were that preceded us. . . . This is development."

Even earlier than this, we find evolution in the air. In the "Church and State" of Coleridge, there is a remarkable and gloomy anticipation of the results of contemporary materialism. Very significant is the conjunction of sensationalist philosophy; "presumption, temerity, and hardness of heart in political economy"; utilitarianism and "a state of nature, or the Ourang-

outang theology of the origin of the human race, substituted for the first ten chapters of the Book of Genesis." It was evident, then, both to Coleridge and Disraeli, that "evolution" was likely to become the banner under which the armies of the Philistines would rally for an even more formidable advance than that of the Benthamites. There was, indeed, during the first twenty years of the Queen's reign, a state of intellectual suspense, like the ominous, uneasy calm before the tornado. In the realm of thought, as in that of politics, great impulses seemed to have spent their force. The romantic glory had passed away. On the other side, the utilitarians, though still powerful, had received somewhat of a check after the Reform Bill, and were mainly occupied in holding the ground won by Bentham, and with such a wavering champion as John Mill, their iconoclasm was hardly likely to disturb the composure of authority. The state of things that obtained in the Church, after the Oxford Movement had received what seemed a fatal blow in the defection of Newman, is thus described by Samuel Butler: "It must be remembered that the year 1858 was the last of a term during which the peace of the Church of England was singularly unbroken. Between 1844, when 'Vestiges of Creation' appeared, and 1859, when 'Essays and Reviews' marked the commencement of that storm which raged until many years afterwards, there was not a single book published in England which caused commotion within the bosom of the Church. . . . At no time probably since the beginning of the century could an ordinary observer have detected less sign of coming disturbance than at that of which I am writing." The parallel between the intellectual and the political condition of the country is striking.

To seeing men like Disraeli, it must have been a matter of wonder that the storm was so long delayed. The orthodoxy of the 'fifties was too like the putty and tarpaulin with which Ibsen's dock-hands patched up the

leak in an Atlantic freight-ship. The disease of materialism was growing upon the nation, none the less because the symptoms were masked. Already the old dogmas were beginning to totter all over the Continent; the Tübingen school had arisen in Germany to cut away the roots from which Christianity had sprung; Socialism had for a while been the actual, though hardly the working policy of France, and most important of all, the positive philosophy, the messenger before the face of Evolution, had taken shape in the hands of Auguste Comte.

It is to this voluminous system, so strangely compounded of encyclopædic genius and abject pedantry, that we must look for the connecting link between the old utilitarianism and the new sociology. Benthamism itself was but an English offshoot of French eighteenth-century philosophy, and all its root principles had been the property of Helvetius, Holbach and Diderot before ever Bentham began to write. Thus John Mill and Comte, like man and the ape, traced their intellectual descent from a common ancestor, and it was only natural that they should have felt a certain amount of cousinly sympathy. There is no doubt that many of Mill's later shiftings were due to Comte's influence.

Here we must make a distinction. It was only part of the positive philosophy that made any real headway on this side of the Channel. It is seldom that great men, even when they receive the most evident homage, succeed in doing more than fathering a few striking and easily conceived ideas, just as the policies of statesmen have to be boiled down into the ineptitudes of poster and cartoon. A striking case is that of Nietzsche, who has become, in the hands of admirers and opponents, a sort of philosophic Bobadil, with undefined tendencies to Socialism. It is the penalty of greatness to be neglected by its own age, and then vulgarized by posterity. Thus it is that the best part of Comte's message fell upon stony soil.

For if one half of him was *philosophe*, the other was romantic. It was in the spirit of Diderot that he proclaimed the bankruptcy of religion and metaphysics, it was after Chateaubriand that he formulated, as his second main principle, the subordination of the brain to the heart. This was in direct opposition to the trend of political philosophy in England, though Mill himself, who had found his Clotilde de Vaux in Helen Taylor, was sensitive to it. The whole constructive fabric of Comte's polity was regarded as a curiosity, the weakness of a great man, and the English sect of Positivists, though it could boast of one or two names of some notoriety, was no more important for any practical purpose than that of the Swedenborgians.

The importance of Comte lies in his being the founder of a "science." It is in his works that the new and unlovely word Sociologie first makes its appearance, and this, the latest-born of the "ologies," was soon to rival Economics in its efforts to conquer humanity by rule and line. Though Comte himself was not, in the Darwinian sense, an evolutionist, he may fairly be reckoned as the predecessor of Spencer, and the first of the new biological school of social thinkers. The distinguishing characteristic of this school has been to exalt the brute in man, and to annihilate mystery and Godhead. What Coleridge had feared in the "ourang-outang theory," was that human beings would come to be treated as if they were only somewhat highly developed members of the monkey tribe, beasts by birth, and by no means gods in germ. Comte gave a notable impulse to this tendency, by the stress he laid upon biology.

This science was to become as dominant in social speculation, as mathematics and jurisprudence had been for the previous two centuries. Here Comte was doing unconsciously what he so often did deliberately, in reverting to the practice of the Middle Ages. It was

customary then to adopt the theory of St. Paul, who compared the Church to a body whose head was Christ. Thus it came about that speculations, as elaborate and pedantic as those of Spencer himself, were indulged in by ingenious schoolmen, and the analogy between body natural and body politic was pursued to the extreme of detail and absurdity. There was, however, a saner and more fruitful spirit informing the social biology of these medieval casuists, than appears in the works of their modern brethren. The distinction between the mystic body of the State and the natural body was understood, nor was the symbol confounded with the reality by the most enlightened. Above all, the medieval body politic was the dwelling-place of a soul, and a temple of the Holy Ghost, finding its perfection in doing God's will.

By Comte, however, God and spirit were discarded as obsolete superstitions. The utmost feat to which brains could aspire was the registration of causes and effects, and one of those sweeping and dogmatic generalizations, which were to become the stock-in-trade of sociologists, was invented to support this dismal theory. When men had been very foolish and ignorant, they had worshipped a number of gods; when their foolishness had diminished a little, the many gods became one God; the one God in His turn became a World Spirit; and the end of the process will be that men, becoming perfectly enlightened, and realizing their own absolute incapacity to find out anything whatever about the meaning of the universe they live in, or of their own existence, will fall down in an ecstasy of scientific altruism and worship one another.

Philosophy and divinity being thus conveniently disposed of, it becomes necessary for Comte to have recourse to a lower sphere. He tells us that the life of the Great Being, which is his name for mankind, is connected even more closely with that of brutes, than is brute life with that of plants. Thus biology stands in a peculiarly intimate

relation with the new science of sociology. "It is especially in the statical study of the internal functions of the brain, that Sociological conceptions need this confirmation and preparatory examination from Biology. For in truth Humanity exhibits no moral or intellectual attribute which is not found, though in a slighter degree, in all the higher animals." It must be admitted that Comte does not push the cult of biology to the lengths of some of his successors, for he admitted that it must depend on sociology and not sociology on it, and as for psychology, he did not even give it a place in his hierarchy of the sciences, though he gave a subordinate one to a modified version of the study of bumps—the notorious phrenology. But, despite these qualifications, he had laid firm the foundations of a new science of society, one that should leave no room for any religion save that of man, none for mystery, and very little for philosophy, one that should join hands with biology, and lay special stress upon man's likeness to the lower animals. It may plausibly be surmised that even if the "Origin of Species" had never been written, the evolutionist sociology would have run, with a different jargon, on much the same lines as it does to-day.

It need hardly be said that such a system as Comte's leaves no place for patriotism, except in so far as Paris is selected to be the spiritual metropolis of a reformed world. The first step towards Utopia is to be the breaking up of all the nations into little communities, about the size of Holland, small enough to vegetate under the control of a few godless priests and philanthropic bankers. Human nature will then change, the human mind will accommodate itself to the positive strait waistcoat, and men will eke out their inexplicable but blameless existences with the respectable monotony of well-greased machines.

Purged of its more human and romantic elements, the

positive philosophy was well fitted to join hands with English utilitarianism. The "law of the three stages" was an obviously convenient theory for men, who held any pursuit nobler than that of happiness to be a sort of harmless lunacy. A strong current was setting in towards materialism in every department of life. During the long peace, sensational and unprecedented advances were taking place in man's command over nature; the steam-boat and steam-engine were triumphs of scientific genius that appealed to every man's wonder and interests, and from Prime Ministers to penny cyclopædias, the cry was for progress, material progress, towards ever-brightening vistas of opulence. In the more abstruse departments of thought, this tendency was fully manifest. The romantic ideal had been, to exalt the soul to the very summit of philosophy, to bring her into direct communion with God, while the intellect peers through coloured glass at an intolerable light; to revive the allegory of Dante, by which Virgil, the reason, remains in Limbo, while Beatrice, who is divine love, rises with her friend from glory to glory, even to the supreme vision. The stream now takes another direction, and nature, the conquered goddess, leads her captors captive.

The human mind is one of the first objects of attack. The theories of Hume, the very ones Kant had written to demolish, drink new life at the fount of utilitarianism. John Mill tries to show that there is no knowledge whatever save that which is derived through the senses; even the truths of mathematics are only to be believed because they have worked out right so often, and there may be some strange and feminine planet where two and two make five. The dependence of mind upon body is the theme of a number of pre-Darwinian psychologists, especially Bain; and the microcosmos that had been allowed to comprehend, and even give birth to a universe, is now lowered to a function of grey or white nerve-matter.

Before the "Origin of Species," Herbert Spencer had applied the theory of evolution to mind, and interpreted its growth from sea-squirts and star-dust by the re-distribution of matter and motion. It need hardly be said that in this system the will becomes an automaton, and the brain an ante-room for conflicting automatic impulses on their way to the limbo of instinct. Or we may figure our desires as a number of balls rolled about in an iron bowl, the one that happens to be on the top for the moment, taking the name of will. The fateful year 1859 saw the publication of FitzGerald's "Omar Khayyám," which was so free a translation as to merit the rank of an original poem, and which voiced the numbing hopelessness that follows from such a conception of the universe.

> "'Tis all a Chequer board of Nights and Days,
> Where *Destiny with Men for pieces plays*"

So that when Charles Darwin entered the lists with his theory about species, he found himself, in his own despite, dubbed the champion of causes in which he had no interest, and doctrines that far exceeded the limits of his subject. It is strange that the name of one of the most unobtrusive men that ever lived, should be made the battle-cry of factions as bigoted as the Donatists, and as uncompromising as the Levellers. Whatever becomes of Darwin's theories, nothing can detract from the beauty of his life. Reaction may some day mar his fame, even as discipleship has vulgarized it, but when everything is said and done, he will remain the model for all succeeding men of science, both in what he did and in what he refrained from doing.

Nowhere in all his works do we find those sweeping and aggressive extensions of his teaching that made evolution the most abused word in the language. He was a biologist, and spoke and thought as a biologist. On religious questions he frankly and humbly confessed his

inability to pronounce a verdict, and though he himself had no faith in either God or revelation, he never tried to force his doubts on others, and he was at particular pains to show how natural selection did not necessarily lead to irreligion. "Science," he said, "has nothing to do with Christ, except in so far as the habit of scientific research makes a man cautious in admitting evidence." "What an accursed evil it is," he writes in 1863, "that there should be all this quarrelling in what ought to be the peaceful realms of science." As for evolutionist sociology, evolutionist ethics, and even evolutionist religion, there is no reason to think that he bothered his head about them.

If Darwin's followers ran into excesses, it must be admitted that they were goaded to them by his enemies Had the strongholds of authority been sound, the publication of his book would have been no cause for the ridiculous outburst that ensued. The condition of the greater part of the Church was Laodicean, and she built her faith on arguments like those of Paley, a shovel-hatted utilitarianism bolstered up on magic. Mystery and symbol were driven out of the pulpit as they had been from the lecture-room, and hence when the burlesque realism of a seven-day creation seemed to be threatened, reverend gentlemen behaved for all the world like the chicken in the tale, who was hit by an acorn, and ran off to tell the king that the sky had fallen on her poor bald pate.

There was indeed little enough excuse for all this pother. Nothing in the "Origin of Species" was calculated to cause a greater sensation in the realm of thought, than the atomic theory of Dalton or the discovery of Neptune by two different astronomers. A step forward, and an important one, had been made in biology, but the change was by no means revolutionary, and very far from being final. As a purely biological hypothesis, there can be no doubt that evolution has tended towards the advancement of science and the deepening of thought.

But the prophets of a prose age were not content to let the matter rest there. The unfortunate theory was hailed as a panacea, a universal quack remedy, in affairs of State and conscience and religion. Regardless of the fact that the origin of species has as much, and as little, to do with these matters as the formation of the atom or the binomial theorem, grave professors vied with one another in doing homage to the new idol, and the name of Darwin was made the excuse for an intellectual chaos, beside which even Godwin appears sane and Bentham clear-headed. People are apt to talk about the dark ages, but the fact is that all ages alike are liable to superstitions, and those of civilized and cultured folks are not a whit less gross than the mumbo-jumbo worship of savages. Perhaps the children of some future age will laugh over the man-monkey jargon of our schools, as heartily as we do over the medieval problem of how many angels could stand on the point of a needle.

Superstitions, like faiths, require a prophet, and the history of great illusions is that of great men gone wrong. The prophet of evolutionary sociology is not Darwin, but a man of more ambitious and remarkable personality. Everybody agrees in honouring Darwin, but his character is not one that impresses itself very vividly on the imagination, for its chief merit lies in its quiet, unobtrusive goodness, in its tacit realization that the scientist's duty is to serve and not to lead. Perhaps he was the only true agnostic of his time, in that he did not imagine his proficiency in one science to be any qualification for him to pronounce upon ultimate problems. But if Darwin's biography is not likely to find a large audience among posterity, it is probable that Spencer's Autobiography will remain a classic of conscious and unconscious self-revelation, and a document of permanent historical value. Darwin is a man who might have adorned any age, but it is impossible to conceive of Spencer out of his mid-

Victorian setting. Gladstone may represent the apotheosis of the bourgeois ideal, Spencer is sometimes its *reductio ad absurdum*. There was, in his case, no Oxford surface to hide the Derby beneath, his life was as unadorned as the home of his infancy, the plain, featureless house in Exeter Street, with its bare walls and square windows, its spiked railings and the one scrubby tree behind them.

Nor do his portraits convey a different impression from that suggested by the house. We see him, in the frontispiece to his Autobiography, at the age of thirty-eight, and it is as if we were gazing into the face of a whole generation. All the distinctive virtues of his class are written there, and most of all, its mournful, self-conscious earnestness. It might have been drawn to illustrate the saying of his uncle Thomas, " No Spencer ever dances," a fitting motto for the family, anticipating Gordon's description of a certain diplomatist as a man incapable of laughter. We see him thirty-five years later, an old man, not without a certain rough-hewn grandeur, but essentially unchanged. The dome of the forehead shows more majestic through baldness, but the lines around the mouth have hardened, and the lower part of the face has shrivelled into an expression almost repellent in its absence of tender feeling. Yet surely a venerable countenance, warped and inhuman though it be !

Spencer's character was in his blood as it was in his surroundings. Thanks to his having peeped and botanized, with the innocence of stoicism, on the graves of his parents and all his relations, we can form a tolerable notion of those dour, uncompromising Wesleyans " who never danced," and cultivated the rugged virtues of life with none of its graces. The Huguenot ancestor, who changed his country rather than his faith, was the first of a long line of Nonconformists ; the grandmother who was one of the first to join Wesley ; " Uncle John," the

solicitor for whom Nonconformity was too orthodox and who started a sect of his own; "Uncle Thomas," the Simeonite parson, equally distinguished by his austere zeal for reforms, and an independence of advocacy that scorned Fact; "Uncle William," who "was generally considered somewhat odd," and who was possessed of the "desire to be facetious without the power of being so"; and finally the Father, George Spencer, who refused on principle to address any one as "Esq." or "The Reverend," or to adapt the cut of his clothes to the fashion of his time, and who attended Quaker meetings, not because he held any of their beliefs, but because there was less Church government among them than in any other sect. All the prejudices and all the strength of these non-dancing Spencers, who were after all only an exaggerated type of thousands of families of their class, were handed on in full measure to the young Herbert. It only needed the addition of a very powerful intellect to produce the "Synthetic Philosophy."

The Spencers had scarcely been a compromising folk, and in Herbert's case the habit of running to extremes was almost a mania. He surpassed Strafford in thoroughness, and James Mill in fearlessness of absurdity. His mind was like an engine without brakes, start it off on any line of theory and it must go on, while fire and fuel lasted, no matter whither the line might lead. When he was a boy of thirteen he had been annoyed at some regulation propounded for his good by Uncle Thomas, and had started to walk home, half-way across England, covering nearly ninety miles in a couple of days, and subsisting on bread and beer. As might have been expected, he had no more sense of humour than his Uncle William, and thus the most powerful brake for runaway human engines was missing from him, despite his wonderful joke at Freshwater, "Dear me, these are very large chops for such a small island," the treasured memory of which sets him off

upon an analysis of his own facetiousness, which happily became rare after the first hour or two. There is, however, this difference between him and such men as James Mill and Godwin—he was by nature of a practical and sane mind, and once he could escape from the meshes of his own assumptions, could be fresh and wise. The "Essay on Government" and the "Enquiry concerning Political Justice" are as dry and dead as the theories on which they rest, but even though the whole of the Spencerian philosophy be ticketed off as a monstrous curiosity, his works will remain a mine of quaint and penetrating observations hardly inferior to those of Burton.

In his own narrow groove Spencer was something of a hero. To see in him merely a ridiculous old egotist, is but the commonplace attitude of little minds. Ridiculous he often was, and an egotist in the sense that Frederick the Great and Milton were egotists, but this is far from being the whole truth about him or them. The indomitable persistence with which for some forty years he went on with his "Synthetic Philosophy," without remuneration, without health, and for a long time without fame, is one of the noblest records in the history of letters. The pathos of his closing days is, if anything, heightened by the dry precision of his account. The uncertain visits of sleep, short sleep, broken and disturbed by dreams, were earned by the sacrifice of everything that makes life tolerable, even the innocent joys of thought and reading that are the natural solace of old age; he dared not see plays nor hear music nor play the simplest games, from the pleasant ways of men he was cut off, and from the book of knowledge he was parted by a veil darker than blindness. He passed his days "lying on a sofa or lounging about, and, when the weather and the place permit, as now, sitting very much in the open air, hearing and observing the birds, watching the drifting clouds, listening to the sighings of the wind through the trees, and letting

my thoughts ramble as far as possible in harmless ways, avoiding as much as possible exciting subjects. But of course, debarred, as I thus am, from bodily and mental exercise and most kinds of pleasures, no ingenuity can prevent weariness." And yet, in circumstances of almost incredible adversity, the spirit of Herbert Spencer did not quail, and he went on with his task, dictating in fitful snatches of ten minutes. It is of such stuff that the founders of beliefs are made, and the Koran of modern rationalism could only have been given to the world by such a Mohammed.

The discoveries of Darwin were, from Spencer's point of view, little more than a lucky incident. The main outlines of his own scheme had been drawn, the system to which the facts of the universe had got to accommodate themselves had been settled, before the appearance of the "Origin," and its effect was only to turn him from whole-hearted Lamarckian biology to a compromise between Darwin and Lamarck, somewhat in favour of the latter. Whether Spencer would ever have got a hearing, but for Darwin, is another question, but that the "Synthetic Philosophy" would have been much the same without Darwin, there can be no question at all. The two pillars that immediately supported it were the "Positive Philosophy" and English Utilitarianism, but its foundations were laid deep upon the bedrock of middle-class prejudice, and had been planted, firm but invisible, by successive generations of non-dancing Spencers.

For a new prophet, the first thing obviously needful is a God. The declaration of impotence put forward by Comte was not enough for Spencer, and he was not the man to admit any power into the universe that he could not understand. There was no trace of humility in the Spencer temperament, any sort of mystery was felt as a restraint, and it was the task of the "Synthetic Philosophy" to chase it out of the universe. But there are

some knots too hard for the blade even of an Alexander; we might trace the universe to force, but whither were we to trace force? We might form a more or less plausible theory as to how life originated, but this did not help us to explain how "this compound I" came to be clothed in its garment of brain, and what was the relation between the two. These and similar mysteries were no obstacle to Spencer, who got out of the difficulty by inventing an Unknowable Power, which was to bear the responsibility for anything that could not be worked into his system. Whatever there was to know, Spencer knew it, and what he did not know was unknowable, such was the gist of the new agnosticism. "The red and raging eye of imagination is forbidden to pry further," says Macaulay in a famous review, "but further Mr. Robert Montgomery persists in prying," and the remark might well have been applied to Spencer. Not only does he perpetrate the Irish bull of saying that something unknown is unknowable, but he imparts several other pieces of information concerning it. For instance, it stands in relation to nothing, yet the universe is its manifestation, and its existence is a logical deduction from that of the universe. We are even compelled to conceive of it vaguely as an unknown force correlative to known force. It "persists unchanging in quantity, but ever changing in form," and therefore form, quantity, change and persistence are to be counted among its attributes, and as it has no beginning or end in time, we must think of it as being endowed with immortal youth, a conservation of the unknowable force that allows it to go on with its changes through all eternity. In the original draft scheme of the "Synthetic Philosophy" there is a heading called "Laws of the Unknowable," so that on the whole Spencer is well informed about his God. Even if he cannot be deduced from a study of the universe, he is a natural outcome of his author's personality. Just

as the father had gone to a Quaker meeting-house to escape discipline, the son provided himself with a deity who could not interfere with his system in the slightest degree, yet provided it with a vague background, and whose elastic disposition enabled him to be played like the joker at cards, to supply any otherwise irremediable deficiency.

Having thus ruled out the unknown as unknowable, the "Synthetic Philosophy" proceeds to deal with the rest of the universe. It is nothing more nor less than a huge machine, quite comprehensible to Spencer, and run by the Unknowable on very simple lines. It is all an affair of matter and motion, matter is integrated and motion dissipated, and the result is a process of increasing complexity, which comes to a conclusion when everything is so perfectly balanced with its surroundings that a state of complete rest, or in other words, of complete death, has been attained. This is followed by a sort of cosmic putrefaction, matter begins to dissipate and motion to integrate, and everything reels back to chaos, upon which the universe turns round again and starts on another journey deathwards, and so *ad infinitum*. Nietzsche's blasphemy ought to have been spoken of Spencer's Unknowable—"Hath he not made the world in his own image—as stupid as possible!"

The "Synthetic Philosophy" differs from other evolutionary systems in that it is not primarily biological. Spencer had started life as an engineer, and hence his mind was at first apt to run on mathematical and mechanical lines. It is to this influence that we may trace the most monstrous of the assumptions on which he bases his scheme. "All these phenomena," he says of the universe, "from their great features down to their minutest details, are necessary results of the persistence of force, under its forms of matter and motion. In other words, every change that takes place in mind or matter or society, even

changes of ideas or institutions, are merely so many applications of a law in mechanics. It is by virtue of this law that artists of every kind have got to become specialists, and specialize more and more as time goes on, a law that is easily proved by looking up Michelangelo and Leonardo in a textbook and discovering that they were versatile men, but saying nothing about Goethe or Victor Hugo, Watts or Rossetti or William Morris. To formulate such a law at all, to hold that it follows from the principle that regulates the motions of billiard-balls, to talk of societies and professions, ceremonies and beliefs, tastes and arts, as if they integrated matter and dissipated motion in exactly the same way as nebulæ and molecules, to devote a lifetime to writing volume after volume on the basis of such assumptions, was a feat from which any one but a Spencer might have shrunk appalled. But, like more than one prophet before him, he was born without a sense of the ridiculous, and it was the persistent solemnity with which he took himself and his wildest theories, that made the world at last come to accept him at little short of his own valuation. A man of undoubted ability, whose creed chimes in harmoniously with the spirit of his time, who is obviously above vulgar selfishness, and devotes his life to ringing the changes on the same perpetual refrain, will not fail of a following, be he Arab sheikh or Indian prince or only lower-middle-class Englishman.

It is impossible to understand the real meaning of this message unless we divest it of its cosmic trappings, and regard it as the quintessence and exaggeration of class prejudice. What Spencer aimed at creating was literally a Cobdenite universe. The whole vast machinery of unknowable and knowable, evolution and dissolution, matter and motion, was working together to give philosophic sanction to a Manchester doctrine, purged and denuded of every humane qualification; for Spencer had

no labouring voters to conciliate and little contact with the world outside his doors. His first book, written before the synthetic scheme was drawn up, shows the direction in which his thoughts were working. It is an uncompromising plea for the abolition of every kind of State action, except the most elementary police duties. The poor were to beg or starve; education was to be left to private enterprise; the Church was to be disestablished; factory, commercial and sanitary measures were taboo; colonies were an encumbrance; and if the State exceeded its extremely modest functions, it was not only the right but the duty of citizens to resist it. An argument of Cobden's against some Factory Act petitioners is quoted by the way with manifest approval. It is not without a smile that we note how rapidly the individualist enthusiasm cools when we are dealing with land. In this first book Spencer is even ready to nationalize it after due compensation, an opinion he subsequently retracted, much to the disgust of Henry George, who had greeted him as a convert.

"Social Statics" is but an overture to the philosophy, an overture which, to do it justice, is full of striking passages, and what Stevenson described as "highly abstract joy, plucked naked, like an algebraic symbol, but still joyful." Between this hour of eager and nipping dawn and the last mournful flicker of sunset, Spencer never quite attained this level. He had now merely to reinforce his inherited prejudices by calling the whole universe to witness. It is remarkable how little difference the universe made to most of them. In "Social Statics" we have the opinions of a young man of limited experience and narrow education, the most obstinate scion of a line whose first principles had been the same for generations. But it might have been expected that the contemplation of eternal verities would have left him a social philosophy widely different from that of

Father George and Uncle Thomas. But a Hottentot would sooner change his colour by bleaching, than a Spencer his prejudices under the influence of philosophy, and since he would not accommodate himself to the universe, the universe had to accommodate itself to him. At the battle of Quatre-Bras a certain famous regiment, which had been surprised and ridden down by cavalry, sprang up decimated, but in perfect order, and fired a volley into the backs of its assailants, and with a less laudable obstinacy, the Radical philosophy of "Social Statics" reappears, slightly pruned, but essentially the same, in the last volumes of the "Synthetic Philosophy."

Spencer had mapped out a scheme into which the facts had got to fit, even before he set about collecting them, and year in, year out, they were collected and marched into the machine like hogs in the Chicago meat factories, which emerge from the ordeal, orderly and homogeneous, in sausage form. By no other simile is it possible to convey any notion of the huge collection of snippets and gossip, on which the Spencerian science of sociology was built up. Undigested extracts torn from their context and flung hugger-mugger together, the pickings of text-books and chronicles, travellers' tales and popular histories, were the material; while as for the results, these had been settled upon long before.

Free will had been disposed of in the "Psychology," and it only remained, in order to get the new science fairly launched, to dispose of the sister ideas of God and immortality. This is the task essayed in the first book of the sociology, a very ingenious variation on Comte's law of three stages, even more elaborate and much less plausible. Here hypothesis is piled on hypothesis to trace the upward striving of the savage mind, all to prove that religious ideas are the logical outcome of the gross illusions of bestial men. We are first given a picture of the primitive mind in which all these beliefs originate,

absorbed in meaningless details, devoid of curiosity or constructive imagination, with scarcely any grasp of thought or power of connecting thoughts together, and yet capable of evolving a system of belief as connected and logical as the synthetic philosophy itself. The savage mind works in the mass in exactly the same way as that of its interpreter, always precise and coldly formal, bothering little about the absurdity of either its assumptions or its conclusions, never irrational, "stiff in opinions, always in the wrong." Such are the Data of Sociology.

Following this, we are treated to another variation on Comte, a part of the philosophy that has perhaps exercised more influence than any other. This is nothing more nor less than an attempt, such as John of Salisbury had made in the Middle Ages, to treat the body of the State as if it were the body of an animal, and to pursue this comparison into details of structure and function, banks, for instance, answering to the vaso-motor nervous system, roads and railways to the vascular system, industry to digestion, and so forth. A good deal of rather childish ingenuity is displayed in establishing these likenesses, just as clergymen are wont to find moral analogies in the journeyings of Israel or the architecture of Solomon. That there are differences, Spencer admits, but these, he says, only serve to qualify the essential similarity—all but one, which is, or must be, fundamental. For such bodily comparisons, however grateful they may be to a Comte, have, for a Spencer, the fatal objection that they conflict directly with bourgeois individualism. The members exist for the body, and not the body for the members, an awkward factor in the situation, which is, however, promptly and conveniently ruled out as an exception. So that in the Spencerian social organism, the body exists for the sake of hands and feet and stomach and the rest of its parts "The claims of the body politic," he says, "are

nothing in themselves"—a chilly doctrine for patriots. Such are the Inductions of Sociology.

To follow, even in roughest outline, the Procrustean methods by which the snippets of "Descriptive Sociology" are forced to accommodate themselves to their places in the system, is a task we may leave to the researches of the curious, merely observing how the results are wrenched towards their destination by yet another twist of the bourgeois screw. All human societies are supposed to approximate to one of two types, military and industrial, a sociological Ahriman and Ormuz. The industrial society, which is the most perfect of which Spencer can conceive, is the bagman's paradise of the Manchester school, with free competition all round and no war, no State education, Poor Laws, factory laws, sanitary regulations, free museums, or free libraries; every one for himself and starvation grip the hindmost. Discipline in any form is the mark of the military type, which nowadays, however necessary it may admittedly have been in primitive stages of development, is abhorrent to Spencer. The mask of scientific detachment is for once thrown aside, and the synthetic philosopher bursts forth into a violent Cobdenite harangue about the politics of his own day. Tories, he tells us, are the reactionaries who represent militarism, and true Liberals stand for the industrial ideal, though he laments the sad falling off in Liberal Orthodoxy that recent years have brought about. The bitter cry of the Holborn ratepayer, who has to contribute towards housing the poor, blends with Gladstonian reprobations against the Government purchase of Suez Canal shares. In China, India, Polynesia, Africa and the East Indian Archipelago our policy and representatives are marked out for condemnation, and the Englishman is everywhere held up as the robber and bully of the inoffensive native. The Volunteers, of course, do not escape, nor does the synthetic eye overlook such horrors

as the autumn manœuvres on the Brighton downs, and the appointment of one or two captains and majors to minor offices in the gift of municipalities. Truly the conservation of force leads to strange results, and the Unknowable fulfils itself in devious ways!

As we pass from the sociology to the ethics, the influence of Comte gives place to that of the utilitarians. The grosser absurdities of Bentham had not stood the wear of time, and it was found necessary by the later happiness-seekers to find new props for their doctrine. This John Mill had done, in characteristic fashion, by making admissions that were directly fatal to his case, but Spencer, whose mind was at once narrower and more logical, would have set the pleasure-calculus on its legs again by making it still more calculating. Bentham had aimed at happiness immediately, Spencer would consider the general and ultimate consequences of any sort of conduct before pursuing it. Thus, while a Benthamite might glean a certain amount of reflected pleasure from feeding a starving man, a Spencerian would with cheerful conscience let him die in a ditch, in order to encourage thrift and keep down the rates. Another innovation was a hint from the classical economists, who had employed themselves in calculating the actions of imaginary men, perfectly greedy and perfectly inhuman, in a world constructed to match. On the same principle Spencer tries to set up an absolute standard of ethics by which to check the confused strivings of everyday life—the conduct of an ideal man in an ideal world, in which any sacrifice is out of the question, and where it is impossible to find an unselfish action to perform. The light of the world, the sinless and perfect man, is a being not very different from the frock-coated, bewhiskered, mid-Victorian business man in his own business paradise.

It is curious that such an austere Puritan as Spencer could conceive of no end in life but the pursuit of happi-

ness, and would not even allow anybody else to have done so. Even the Beatitudes strike him as being nothing nobler than the ingenuous pursuit of mental satisfaction; Christ had recommended people to be merciful because they would be paid for it, even if it were but in emotional coin. Spencer's conception of Christianity has a significant likeness to that of John Bright, and the hell-thunders of the Wesleyans must have predisposed a scion of the Spencers to regard self-denial of every kind as a calculation of reward and punishment.

Calculation is, in fact, the whole gist and basis of Spencer's ethics. In the true spirit of Samuel Smiles and Gladstone, his ideal man is scrupulously exact in all his transactions, he cannot put on his clothes or chew his food without taking into account the exact utilitarian significance of every button and every bite. Spencer pursued happiness as sadly as most men follow a funeral. "We Spencers never dance." His principles of ethics were those to which he had always acted up in life, he was his own ideal man. The rigour with which he conformed to his standard of hedonistic asceticism, lends to his figure some of the pathos that ever invests those who fight loyally for a mean cause. No vulgar pleasure-seeker was he, the satisfaction that he desired was remote and not for himself alone. Justice was the virtue that lay nearest to his heart. He was the noblest of the utilitarians.

And yet how arid and unlovely is this ideal he would set before us! All that is spontaneous, all that is heroic, all gracious impulses that burst the fetters of reason, the virtue that wells up from unimaginable sources and overflows laughing, these are frowned down, and we are given instead a joyless science, a Calvinism without God, by which to map out our lives. "Eat, drink and be merry," cries the egotist, "Live for others," says the altruist, but the Spencerean would have us work out, in every case,

an exact utilitarian compromise between the two, giving a preference to egotism. The aspiring moralist, warmed to generosity or moved to pity, must first sit down and estimate the exact quota his action tends to contribute, on an average, to the general heap of pleasurable sensations, and the more exactly the balance is struck, the better the man. Such a standard of rigid justice, with no allowances and no relaxations, Spencer exacted from himself no less than from others. The Autobiography is but a practical application of the ethics. A man who could check and analyse his very jokes, who could dissect the characters of his parents as if they were corpses at a post-mortem, was not likely to indulge his humanity when it came to theory. Some ethical philosophers have evaded the consequences of their principles by sticking to abstractions—not so Spencer, who, for all his limitations, was no coward. In the two volumes of what he considered to be his most important book he gave a detailed exposition of the whole duty of man, in accordance with the synthetic philosophy and the persistence of force. It is certainly the master-exposition of mid-Victorianism, the stiffest and most repellent of moral codes, sans joy and sans foy, yet not without a certain austere dignity. Lovers of Blake will recognize in it the Gospel according to Urizen.

One of its typical provisions appears thus in the summary of Mr. Collins: "What is the obligation imposed by beneficence to rescue a drowning man? Nothing definite can be said, for the ability of the swimmer, the distance to be travelled, and the relative value of the two lives, all vary." The man who stands passive on the bank may be branded with cowardice or callousness, but we would sympathize more with him than with the calculating monster, who weighs the value of his own life against that of his brother. "Let me take my turn with my brave fellows," said Nelson in the cockpit, an order of

precedence which would, on the Spencerean system, seem profoundly unethical; Nelson should have come first and insisted on his right to do so. Not so was Trafalgar won. The rest of the system is in keeping, from the obligation to measure benefits in exact proportion to the worthiness of the recipient, as if every man had an innate prerogative to sit in judgment on another, down to the refusal, on principle, to tip cabbies or porters. The duties of the State are, of course, restricted, as in "Social Statics," to anarchy tempered by the police.

A system that has been produced with such perseverance and at such cost as this strange philosophy, can never be an object of contempt, but, were it not for the mirror that it holds up to its time, it would remain a pathetic curiosity, like many another laborious work that sleeps for ever in the back rooms of some museum. By no merit of its own, except its harmony with its setting, it has an importance in modern English thought comparable to that of Rousseau in eighteenth-century France. Nothing was more perfectly calculated to appeal to the prejudices of a commercial civilization, and though few people were brave enough to essay the task of wading through all the volumes, its influence was diffused by a hundred channels, and its methods and assumptions were transmitted even to those who most violently dissented from its conclusions. Its clear and muscular English, the wealth of illustration that often masked the thinness of its argument, made it acceptable to plain men, its very length and erudition induced people to take it seriously. Most important of all, it gave philosophic sanction to the upheaval occasioned by the Darwinian theory. It is as the prophet of Evolution that Spencer is famous.

The first result of his influence was to strengthen the already powerful impulse towards materialism. Spencer himself indignantly repudiated the name, but his disclaimer was casuistical, and based upon his vague and

self-contradictory assumption of an Unknowable Power. Everything that was knowable he explained as being caused by the distribution and redistribution of matter and motion, while as for God, immortality and free will, of one we neither knew nor could know anything, one was a barbarous superstition and one a sheer fallacy. Mystery was unscientific, metaphysics a blunder, direct intuition an impossibility, happiness the supreme good, man an automaton. Such gates to knowledge as the spiritual imagination or an illative sense were rudely closed, while the empire of science was extended over provinces she was ill-fitted to govern.

The tendency was to weaken not only religion, but those high and uncalculating emotions which are its natural allies, faith, honour, generosity, love, chivalry and patriotism. These are not plants that thrive on a frozen soil, nor is their growth fostered by estimates of utility, however remote. Let any one of them become a matter of calculation, once start to whittle them with the knife of compromise, and lo, the virtue is gone out of them, and they are left the most pitiful, stunted weeds. It is impossible for a consistent disciple of Spencer to be a patriot. He wished to regard his country with a detachment as critical and severe as he displayed with regard to his human mother; any warmth of affection would have disturbed his sociological calm, and unfitted him for the scientific contemplation of social phenomena. Patriotism is "reflex egotism" in his eyes, and a thing to be doled and measured out after the advice of George Bubb Dodington:

> "Love thy country, wish it well,
> Not with too intense a care."

To do him justice, he had no liking for the flippant anti-patriotism affected by Matthew Arnold and his school. His blunt honesty and the earnestness with which he clave to his own narrow ideal made him justly impatient of

pose and dilettante cynicism, and he brushed the creator of Arminius from his path, as indignantly as we might imagine his Uncle Thomas rebuking the impertinences of some lisping dandy of d'Orsay's train. He brings forward page after page of evidence to show the absurdity of Arnold's sneer that Englishmen are lacking in ideas, and then goes on to dissect his eulogy of the French Academy, in a manner that must have been extremely disconcerting to that apostle of sweetness and light. It is a combat of sledge-hammer and painted lath, and Arnold's pretty tricks and subterfuges are of little avail against these knock-down blows; not only his anti-patriotism, but his nice phrases, his chaff of Dissenters, his platitudes about Addison, and even his own elegant style are subjected to an ordeal they are ill-fitted to sustain.

But though Spencer is able to see the absurdity of such sneers as Arnold's, he is incapable of patriotism, and falls, with all solemnity, into the very snare of anti-patriotism for which he had blamed Arnold. The "Synthetic Philosophy" is curiously silent on the subject, though we read in the "Ethics" that loyalty is an attribute of chronic militancy, and therefore destined to wane with the advance of civilization. In the "Study of Sociology" the "patriotic bias" is the subject of a chapter, but there it is merely treated as being a disturbing factor in the formation of sociological judgments. In Spencer's last collection of fragments, perhaps the most attractive and readable of all his books, he deals with the question plainly. "Were any one to call me dishonest or untruthful, he would touch me to the quick. Were he to say that I am unpatriotic, he would leave me cold." Then, with the ghastly rationalism that had become part of him, he goes on to explain how we ought to love our country, and presumably any other country, in exact proportion to her merits. The love that transcends justice, the love of parent and child that conquers by

forgiveness and persists in spite of demerit, the love of St. Stephen for his persecutors, the devotion of the Old Guard to Napoleon, of these he had no conception. He could find no middle course between the impartiality of a judge, and the false conception of sonship that would abet and justify the Motherland in all wrongdoing.

To such lengths did he carry out his principles, that he would have made every private soldier pass judgment upon the justice or injustice of a campaign. He was rather proud than otherwise of the following brutal remark, made in respect of some poor fellows who were known to be in danger in Afghanistan: "When men hire themselves out to shoot other men to order, asking nothing about the justice of their cause, I don't care if they are shot themselves." No wonder that the officer to whom this was said looked astonished! Spencer had a grotesque horror of anything that even savoured of the military state, and in these last essays he tracks down its real or supposed manifestations with the minuteness of an inquisitor. The Salvation Army is tainted because it professes to fight the devil; such monsters as Wellington and Nelson are "resuscitated" for the benefit of a relapsing public; Volunteer manœuvres (an old "synthetic" grievance) continue; little boys are permitted to degrade their minds by tales about big game and, worse still, encounters with natives; while to crown it all no less than two stories have appeared in sixpenny magazines that concern themselves with prize-fights. After this it is no wonder that Spencer avoided looking at such literature for fear of coming in contact with the unholy thing.

His attitude towards foreign policy had all along been an exaggeration of that of Cobden and Bright. Despite his strictures on Arnold he had, after his solemn fashion, been consistently the devil's advocate against his own country. In every dispute to which she happened to be

a party Spencer was always ready to come forward to prove her in the wrong; even in the case of the Indian Mutiny he not obscurely hinted that the Sepoys were in the same case as William Tell, in Afghanistan he cared not how many of our troops got killed, in Egypt he accused us of having cheated the Khedive, the South African War he branded as a crime, and the annexation of the Republics as "a continuance of our practice of political burglary." In anything connected with the Empire his hatred of our policy and representatives was rabid, and it would be hard to find a single case in the fifty years of his literary career in which he admitted either to have been even partially defensible. One of his last essays was an attack upon imperialism.

It would hardly be unjust to describe Spencer as a perfect cosmopolitan, an extreme product of the tendency that inclines frigid and material thinkers to become citizens of the world. The direct anti-patriotic influence that he wielded in the intellectual sphere was bound to be of importance, for he gathered up the threads that were beginning to fall from the hands of the philosophic Radicals, he gave new life to the utilitarian dogma, and he lent the awful authority of science to back the prejudice of a class wholly incompetent to direct national policy. The superstition, so prevalent nowadays, that any display of patriotism is not only illiberal but unscientific, is partly the legacy of Herbert Spencer.

These direct attacks on patriotism were not so destructive of it in the long run, as the social philosophy fostered by Spencer's writings. Here again we observe how closely allied is his work with that of the early utilitarians. Bentham had a conception of happiness for his aim in life, which Spencer modified and purged of its more obvious crudities; Bentham and James Mill had a sensationalist psychology, a "feel-osophy," that Spencer made more plausible; and finally, both the earlier and the synthetic

utilitarians formulated a social science, and Spencer's sociology is an attempt to accomplish on a larger scale the work of the classical economists. Both attempts were peculiarly favoured by circumstances, for Bentham was able to avail himself of the passion for system and drastic change that was alike the prelude and consequence of the French Revolution, while Spencer began his career when the spirit of materialism was at its height, and enjoyed the good fortune of the Darwinian controversy, of which he reaped the fruits.

In spite of the intellectual ascendancy wielded by John Mill, it must have been evident in the 'fifties that the classical economics could not last for ever in its original form. There was a certain similarity between the state of the Anglican Church and that of the economic Papacy. In either case overt doubt was silenced and authority supreme, but the calm was ominous. How the classical economics ultimately tumbled to pieces we have already seen, but before the collapse came, another system had arisen whose spirit was that of Ricardo, but whose form was modified to suit the needs of another generation.

Spencer had adopted most of Ricardo's principles, and pushed them to their conclusions with a fearlessness and brutality which might have staggered that kindly banker. But the machinery of economic men and enlightened self-interest wanted scrapping, other methods and another jargon were required to keep the bourgeois idol on its pedestal. Not even in "Social Statics" is Spencer's language that of the economists, the new fashion, set by Comte, of borrowing from biology, has already begun to colour his writing, and his very title is borrowed from the "Positive Philosophy." The way was thus prepared for the mania that followed upon the Darwinian theory. The word may seem strange to use about men of science and scholars, but it must be remem-

bered that no form of intellectual training has yet been devised proof against those impulses of the crowd which the Germans call "Schwärmerei" (swarmery), but for which our own dictionaries supply no appropriate word. The business community, from which the "economic man" was generalized, is no more immune than the goddess-intoxicated crowd at Ephesus, and the history of commercial booms and panics throws a curious light upon the workings of "enlightened self-interest." The notion of the balanced impartiality of the scientist is as false as that of the economic business man, and the reason is not far to seek. Man's nature aspires after the universal, but the high calling of the scientist binds him down to the particular, and it is but a human error to chafe at limits, and snatch at any chance of magnifying the importance of one's office. From the days of Paracelsus to those of Haeckel, the sweeping generalization, the synthesis that determines once and for all the Riddle of the Universe, has ever been more popular than the plodding, glacier-like gait of scientific discovery.

It would have been almost a miracle if something of the nature of "Schwärmerei" had not followed upon the events of 1859. The forces which were massing against established beliefs had only gathered strength from having been so long repressed, and the defenders of authority had already compromised their position by tacitly granting the assumptions of their enemies, and reposing their faith on materialism. It seemed as if, at the first blast of the Darwinian trumpets, the ramparts of faith had fallen, for did not these depend upon the very creationist theory that Darwin was supposed to have dissolved? Darwin himself grieved that the calm of science should be disturbed, but lesser men on both sides rushed into a conflict of implacable bitterness, and made it seem as if the very twilight of the gods were come, and a new era of progress and science about to dawn.

Religion was the key of the position, and religion was allowed to stand by the biology of "Soapy Sam" and the rhetoric of one who could defend, with equal plausibility, the story of Adam and the betrayal of Gordon.

Was it not inevitable that after such an initial success, the supporters of Darwinism should imagine that the key to truth had at last been discovered, and that a theory capable of undermining the faith of centuries should prove equal to any task which might be imposed upon it; for the philosopher's stone and the talisman change only their names with the procession of ages. It was not long before metaphysics shared the fate of religion. Such was Spencer's contempt for Kant, that he cast aside the "Kritik" after glancing at the first two or three pages; for Plato he had nothing but condemnation; while as for German idealism, he referred to it towards the end of his life as "old-world nonsense." In the "Synthetic Philosophy" the words and ideas of all metaphysicians were dismissed as absurd, and in general the attitude of the evolutionist champions towards metaphysical speculations was the more or less contemptuous indifference of Macaulay's Essay on Bacon.

The crowning achievement of evolution was to be the ordering of society upon Darwinian principles, the new science of sociology. The idea of natural selection had been originally suggested to Darwin by the writings of an economist, and the time had come for biology to pay back the debt with interest. What could be more obvious than to apply the principle, by virtue of which mud had become man, to human society, in order to ensure continuous upward progress? It must have seemed a very simple affair to men whose minds were untrained in the subtleties of philosophy, and to whom the new master-key sufficed for all locks. So at least it seemed to Spencer, who found it admirably suited to justify his own individualism. The duty of Government was plainly to stand

aside, in order to perpetuate a pitiless struggle between man and man, in which the weakest might go to the wall. The highest function of legislators was to keep the ring. Thus the first result of the new discovery was to provide a scientific basis for the political and economic speculations of James Mill and his friends. This was convenient for the class from which Spencer and Mill were drawn.

But it was not long before it became apparent that evolution might turn out to be a fatally convenient instrument in the hands of sociologists. It was found that with proper manipulation, it might easily be made to justify any faction or policy whatsoever, according to the taste and circumstances of the user. The problem of introducing a biological principle into society was really insoluble, because it was beyond the wit of man to determine how and to what it was applicable, it was as though some timid parvenu were to say "yes" to everything that he heard in the company of gentlefolk. At the outset, questions presented themselves that could be answered either way with equal plausibility, and upon the answer that happened to be given everything else depended.

One of these difficulties became apparent after Huxley's famous Romanes Lecture in 1893. Natural selection might admittedly have performed wonders in the past, but that was not necessarily a reason for perpetuating it. Kindness and sympathy with the weak were also products of evolution, and who could say whether a stage had not been attained at which the struggle for existence might and ought to be suspended? Nature is no more bound to natural selection than she was to sexless generation. Both have served their purpose, and one may be discarded as easily as the other. Are we to follow Spencer and encourage competition, or follow Huxley and check it, or patch up some compromise between the two?

Darwinism has no answer, and the majority of its exponents have different ones.

Even if we suppose this question settled, making the unwarrantable assumption that natural selection is good alike for man and beast, further difficulties are in store for us. Between whom or what is the struggle to be waged? Spencer, true to his middle-class beliefs, says that it should be waged between men, pointing out with much truth that social bodies are different from those of animals, a fact to which he was blind as a general rule. But as the century drew to a close, individualism began to go out of fashion, and evolutionists cast about for means to bring sociology up to date. So it was assumed that the struggle was to be one of nation against nation and kingdom against kingdom, and that the interests of the citizens were to count for nothing against those of the State.

But then the very word "struggle" is an elusive one. What sort of a struggle is it to be? The nations of the world can hardly be expected to repair annually to Armageddon, and fight it out tooth and nail, and if the good old customs of the beasts are to be discarded, the whole justification for natural selection seems to have vanished. We can only retain the word "struggle" by changing its meaning, and it may be a contest of commerce or brains or art or righteousness according to taste. And who are the combatants? The ox and ass, that have no understanding, have at least fairly definite bodies, an advantage that is not shared by all modern communities. Are we to regard the war between the North and South of America, the Irish struggle for Home Rule, the competition between Liverpool and Southampton, the disputes of Modernist and Ultramontane, as normal and beneficent incidents in the fight for existence, or as diseases, crippling this or that combatant? The social body, so far from being an example of progress, would appear to have gone back to the condition of the starfish,

which can be torn asunder without either half suffering vital injury !

And how far, in the view of recent discoveries, can natural selection be regarded as furnishing anything like a complete explanation, even of biological evolution ? The very quicksand on which we build is perpetually shifting. Are we to have Mendelism in society, or use-inheritance, or entelechy, or pangenesis ? Are we to change our politics and our political science with every fresh discovery about the markings of butterflies or the breeding of sweet peas ? Must statesmen and reformers be at the mercy of a theory that yields a different result in the hands of each successive exponent ?

There was scarce a party in Europe that did not claim the sanction of evolution for its proposals. Grim soldiers applied it to show that war was rooted in the nature of things ; disciples of Nietzsche loudly claimed it in support of aristocracy ; Spencereans used it to bolster up the bourgeoisie ; Socialist followers of Karl Marx proclaimed themselves to be the orthodox Darwinians ; Dr. Benjamin Kidd has made it do duty on behalf of imperialism ; while it is only too obvious how natural selection can be enlisted in the ranks of naked anarchy. All the ambiguities and contradictions of this new intellectual fashion were passed over or explained away. Evolution was science, and to question any use that might be made of it was to oppose the march of truth. Its priests were not long in veiling its ritual beneath a cumbrous and esoteric jargon, so that it was difficult for the uninitiated to convict them of absurdity, and easy for themselves to rebut any attack with a charge of ignorance. " Demogenic association," " social karyokinesis," " sympodial development," " difference of potential," " psychogenetic insufficiency," are such terms as sprinkle the works of the more advanced sociologists, and the mental confusion involved in such methods is only equalled by the futility

of their results. To borrow a phrase from a modern statesman, sociology has proved itself a very pompous, pretentious and futile study.

Not that all its exponents have bowed the knee to Darwinism; there are those who, like M. Tarde, have systems of their own for explaining the development of humanity, but in general, sociology has been the daughter of biology and, in particular, of evolution. The sister science of psychology has also received copious lip homage, but it is doubtful whether it has yet helped any sociologists to the discovery of aught, that was not already known to every moderately shrewd observer of character. "Social psychology" is a thing much talked of, but about which nobody has yet discovered anything worth the telling. A typical case is that of a Scottish professor, who describes gratitude as a binary compound of tender emotion and negative self-feeling, and who has illustrated by a few lines, circles and letters the "neural bases" of love and hate, with the following comment: "Let A be the object of a sentiment of hate, and B be the object of a sentiment of love; but let $\alpha$ in our diagram stand for the complex neural disposition whose excitement underlies the idea or presentation of A, and let $\beta$ be the corresponding disposition concerned in the presentation of B. Then we must suppose that $\alpha$ becomes intimately connected with R, F and P, the central nuclei of the instincts of repulsion, fear and pugnacity, and less intimately with C and S, those of curiosity and submission, and not at all with T, the central nucleus of the tender or parental instinct," and so on. The result of all this science is to establish such an amazing and original conclusion as one already noticed in the "Hibbert Journal," that if "the reproductive instinct could be abolished in any people, that people would soon disappear from the face of the earth," that this instinct is less strong in some people than in

others, and that " many (!) adults put their heads under the bed-clothes to shut out the strange noises of dark nights," though whether we are to understand by these the screeching of cats or the squeaking of ghosts " social psychology " does not condescend to explain. That such information can be imparted to the world by a gentleman who has gained three university degrees, a fellowship, and a readership in mental philosophy, that it should be accepted without question as a serious contribution to scientific literature, suggests the most disquieting reflections as to the state and value of modern culture.

Towards the end of the century a reaction, tacit and almost unconscious, had begun to set in with regard to the social " sciences." Unshaken from without, and bastioned by authority, they were unsound within, and their witness did not agree together. In the " Synthetic Philosophy " it seemed as if sociology had been brought into line with other sciences, and definitely settled in its main outlines. Spencer had stated his case with such unquestioning confidence, everything had seemed to follow so clearly from a few simple principles, that it might well have seemed as if only details remained to fill in. But when system after system appeared with hardly a result in common, the high claims of the new science began sensibly to abate, and though treatises on sociology were more frequent than ever, though it was assigned a definite and important place in the curriculum of universities, it became ever more esoteric in its methods and more uncertain in its conclusions. A precisely similar change was taking place in political economy.

Much more than sociology, the science of wealth had exercised its influence over statesmen and public opinion. Whatever else might have been said against the classical economists, no one had any doubt as to their main conclusions or the policy they enjoined. John Mill's treatise was a model of lucidity, or " offensive transparency," as

one ill-natured critic described it. Popular writers like Harriet Martineau and Mrs. Fawcett were at hand, to expound in simple phrases the "laws" of diminishing return and wages and the rest of the code, for the benefit of the uninitiated. But after Mill's surrender to Thornton, and the heresies of Jevons and Cliffe Leslie, the whole structure began to crumble, and economics gradually lost its authority. The very character of its exponents underwent a change. The great economists had hitherto almost without exception been men of distinction in other spheres. There was Adam Smith, the philosopher and man of affairs, Ricardo, the banker and politician, James Mill, the psychologist and historian, his son, whose activities were legion, Bagehot, the man of letters, Jevons, the logician. Such men, however absurd their conclusions, could at least claim to speak from some knowledge of the world with which they dealt, and their opinions gained proportionately in weight. But modern economics has passed into the hands of specialists, men who breathe the academic air, and whose training has actually unfitted them for dealing with affairs of life or State. The exceptions are one or two keen partisans and wirepullers on either side, whose economics are notoriously subordinate to the demands of faction. For many modern economists, to specialize on the whole of their subject is too great a task, and they select some branch of it to which they devote practically the whole of their lives, so that it is not improbable that professorships of economics will some day go out of fashion, and we shall have separate chairs for such subjects as statistics and mathematical psychics and whatever else may be deemed relevant to the science of human wealth.

The not unnatural result of these tendencies has been that the social sciences have come to the verge of bankruptcy, and have ceased to meet the demands made on them, even in false coin. An immense amount of useful,

and sometimes necessary work is indeed turned out under the guise of economics, in the way of history and description, and for these their authors are worthy of all respect, but this ought not to blind us to the fact that such work could have been done as well or better, if no "science" of economics had ever been formulated or thought of, and that any serious attempt to make an intelligible statement of its principles or apply them to life has been tacitly abandoned. In this connection we may cite the recent inaugural address of the present Cambridge Professor, who is reputed to be in the first rank of living economists. It is remarkable, because it is a virtual confession that a science of a hundred and fifty years' standing has not yet succeeded in establishing one result that is unattainable by the native wits of a moderately intelligent and well-informed layman.

Economics, we are told with admirable lucidity, cannot lay down precepts, but "its function is to furnish data by exhibiting the effects that are likely to follow from causes." This it does by criticism and analysis, and in order that there shall be no doubt as to what this means, the Professor supplies us with examples of the kind of work his science does in either branch. As for criticism, it is able to correct gross specimens of the fallacy "post hoc ergo propter hoc," which usually emanate from party journalists, and into which few people think of falling who do not want to do so. Besides, it seems superfluous to call in the aid of economics to correct an abuse of reason shunned by Aristotle and the schoolmen, and by all sensible men before or since. The same remark applies to the next fallacy economics undertakes to correct, that of mistaking part of the effects of a cause for the whole. As for analysis, exact results are admittedly unobtainable. "It is quantitative and not qualitative information as to the effect of causes that has the greatest value for practice. Capacity to provide *that* information economic science at

present almost entirely lacks." Analysis must be qualitative, that is to say that it must not aim at precision. The economist is able to make one or two common-sense observations about the difference between time and piece work, that are equally obtainable by any master or man who has reflected on the conditions of industry; he knows that the causes of commercial fluctuations are complex and that anything tending to mitigate them may mitigate unemployment too, and finally that a man, who is put to unprofitable work by the Government, may be kept out of the workhouse and save public money that way. There is nothing in any of these observations, as the Professor states them, that might not have been said in the course of an ordinary railway carriage or even tavern discussion. In the days of the Mills, economic science was at worst a definite and formidable collection of fallacies, now it has silently vanished, and left behind nothing but a staff of professors, and a number of big words and long curves to impress the uninitiated.

We may pass over the nebulous and abortive "political science" because, though it has been much talked and lectured about, it has found no Smith or Spencer to set it on its feet, and return to sociology. The biological jargon remains, and ever and anon from Columbia or Chicago comes a portly textbook, but such attempts to take the "science" seriously are daily becoming of less importance, and in England, at any rate, the word has degenerated into a useless and misleading label, for a treatise on any social matter which cannot be ticketed as economics or political science. A book on the history of religions, or the marriage customs of cave-men may be called sociological or anything else, provided that the word means only "dealing with society" and is not held to imply the existence of any science or system. In the Goldsmiths' room of the Cambridge library the following books are a fair selection from those classed as "socio-

logical": "English High Schools for Girls," "My Prison Life," by Jabez Balfour, "Encyclopædia of Accounting," "Speeches of F. E. Smith," "X-rays in Freemasonry," a Life of "Laura Bridgman," "American Railways as Business Investments," "Broad Lines in Science Teaching" and "The Construction of the Balance according to underlying scientific principles and according to its special purpose. For use by manufacturers of weighing instruments, as also for technical colleges and schools." So that the social science of Comte and Spencer has been whittled down to a clumsy term that means nothing in particular, and might just as well be given up altogether. We are as far from any genuine social science as we were before either of them had written a word, perhaps further still, for the continuous attempts of half a century have only served to demonstrate their own futility.

> "Mysterious even in open day,
> Nature retains her veil despite our clamours.
> That which she doth not willingly display
> Cannot be wrenched from her by levers, screws, or hammers"

It is easy to perceive how vital is the bearing that such speculations must have upon the question of patriotism. Divergent and contradictory have been the attempts to apply science to society, but they agree at least in this, that they tend to exclude the sense of mystery and religion. It is an attitude of bigoted and complacent materialism that is the greatest foe to patriotism, and the man who has come to treat the Motherland with scientific impartiality, who can withhold the meed of reverence from her dead heroes, and who regards love and loyalty as things to be doled out by rule and measure, imperfect experiments in a blind evolution, is not only cutting himself off from the possibility of clear or fruitful thought, but is so blunting his feelings that only the dullest and most feeble of them remain. Social science is the training-ground for cosmopolitans.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE DECADENT MOVEMENT

THE passion for specialism, the straining after freedom through isolation, has its counterpart in art. It is in the middle of the century that the doctrine, rightly called decadent, of art for art's sake begins to make its appearance. "Let art be free," cried the æsthetes; "Let history be free," said the historians; "Get rid of the religious, the educational, the patriotic 'bias,'" had been the counsel of Spencer to sociologists, and it is easy to see how such desires originate. When national life is at a low ebb, the interests of citizens become, as it were, detached, the sense of unity is faint, and there is little impulse to sink the individual mind and will in that of a greater being. Sophocles had been intoxicated with Athens, Dante with Florence, Shakespeare with England, and not only in poetry, but in all the higher ranges of thought have men been inspired by the life around them. Those who have thought and written greatly about life have been those most intimately in touch with it, those who have created music or beauty have succeeded in proportion to their nearness to the central stream of things—art and eccentricity are mortal enemies. The instinct is a correct one that prompts us to characterize certain kinds of art as unhealthy, just as we shun poison, even in a jewelled chalice. Such art is generally imitative. As it cannot draw its inspiration from life, it has to build entirely on what has gone before, and produces monstrous and distorted caricatures of the original. It has been said of Swinburne, though with partial justice, that he expressed in verse what he found in books, as passionately as a poet expresses what he finds in life.

Without entering into a detailed account of later Victorian art and poetry, we may affirm with certainty, that it is marked by an increasing tendency to separate art from life, to make the artist a specialist in art though not necessarily a specialist in any one branch of it, and in consequence to introduce diseased and even unnatural features into his work. It cannot be denied that such work has often possessed exquisite and immortal beauty, but it is the beauty of autumn woods, and winter follows close on its heels. Nor is it just to reproach the artist that he was born out of due time. Genius has its proper atmosphere, and greater artists than Kingsley have echoed his cry,

"No bird can pipe to skies so dull and grey."

A superhuman and perfect being might rise superior to everything, and feel himself in such close communion with God that he might remain unweakened and steadfast in spite of the coldness of men, and one such Being has indeed walked upon earth, but only one. This book will have been written in vain if it has failed to show how intimate is the connection between the artist and his age, how a pre-Elizabethan Shakespeare, or a Turner of the Walpole era is inconceivable. The bard does not break forth into song for a utilitarian audience, nor does the fire descend from heaven upon the altars of Mammon. In the autumn of poetry the leaves burn an awful and fantastic red, but it is because the sap has ceased to flow through them, because they want to separate themselves from the mother tree, and mingle with the cold ground.

"From too much love of living,
From hope and fear set free,
We thank with brief thanksgiving
Whatever gods there be
That no life lives forever;
That dead men rise up never,
That e'en the weariest river
Winds somewhere safe to sea."

The early work of Swinburne manifests all these tendencies in an extreme form. He is the most interesting of the decadents, because his abounding life and genius enabled him, in the end, to break at least some of the shackles of his youth. But in the "Poems and Ballads," which burst forth upon the world like a new star of baleful omen, he gave himself up to the very luxury of despair; it was as if he had found the Temple of God defiled, and had gone forth into the wilderness to worship the devil. The passion for imitation that we have found to be characteristic of decadence is displayed on every page, the gossamer veil of Technique is his own, but through it shines the inspiration of Shelley and Hugo and Baudelaire. The old faiths are driven out of the world with curses and blasphemies, and then the world itself is denounced as utterly evil, a place of feverish and agonizing pleasures under the rule of "our lady of pain," and with extinction as the supreme goal of human desire. In his masterpiece, the "Hymn to Proserpine," his youthful philosophy is set to music as flawless and hopeless as the last movement of Tschaikovsky's "Pathetic Symphony." Proserpine is extinction, the "sleep eternal in an eternal night." The climax of the poem is the roll and thunder of the wave of the world, whose salt is of all men's tears, whose spray is bitter as blood, and whose crests are fangs that devour. And then, after the old and new have been dethroned, appears the goddess of eternal sleep, superbly beautiful, like Aphrodite out of the sea. And to her the spirit turns, and the music drops almost to a whisper as it hymns the praises of eternal nothingness, in terms of such passionate longing that the darkest pages of Schopenhauer seem hopeful in comparison.

"Sleep, shall we sleep after all? for the world is not sweet in the end;
For the old faiths loosen and fall, and the new years ruin and rend."

From this world of loathing and despair, of strange sins and feverish beauty, Swinburne was destined to emerge. His career falls roughly into three periods, the first decadent, the second revolutionary, the third inspired with a love of England so intense that it dwarfs every other passion. His intermediate phase, that of the "Songs of Sunrise," is shaped by the influence of Victor Hugo and Shelley, and is inspired by a passionate humanitarianism that was different from the respectable theories of the English Brights and Spencers.

"Glory to man in the highest, for man is the master of things!"

It is plain during this period that his heart yearns towards England, he applies to her the sacred word "mother," but he is republican first and Englishman afterwards, and he loves her no more than—perhaps not so much as Italy. England has slept for two hundred years, she is only kept alive by the love of her Miltons and Shelleys, she is ground down by loyalty:

"Love turns from thee and memory disavows thy past"

But at last he came to love her absolutely and unconditionally, to love her with such superb abandonment that his very republicanism became a secondary consideration. The cause is not far to seek. From his earliest days he had loved the sea, he was as much her child as Byron, and for his love she had given him her music. With the sea England is almost invariably connected in his mind, and in the year 1887, the Jubilee year, he was able to lay his tribute of affection and loyalty at the feet of Victoria his Queen, and England his mother:

"The sea, divine as heaven and deathless,
Is hers, and none but only she
Hath learnt the sea's word, none but we
Her children bear in heart the breathless
Bright watchword of the sea."

Next year he borrowed ocean-music to celebrate the downfall of the Armada. It is one of the few noble patriotic poems that are definitely atheist, for in it Spain stands for God, the God of the stake and the Inquisition, and England for the sea. But his atheism did not withhold Swinburne from admiration of England's Christian hero, Charles Gordon, nor from scathing hatred of the statesman, Liberal though he was, who had allowed him to be done to death :

> " The hoary henchman of the gang
> Lifts hands that never dew nor rain
> May cleanse from Gordon's blood again."

The old republican was caught up, like Tennyson, and swept down the full tide of imperialism. His passion for freedom never died, but when Gladstone started his Home Rule campaign, Swinburne became an uncompromising Unionist, and denounced a freedom which seemed to him only to be free for crime. When we were involved in war with the two Dutch Republics, his word was " Strike, England, and strike home ! " Perhaps his love of the sea would never have made him the patriot he was had it not been for this new quickening spirit, this dawn beyond the night of a prose age, that was beginning to fire the imaginations of Englishmen. Perhaps he had visions of a spring-time in which decadence and Proserpine could have no place, and nobler than the desire to sleep was the sentiment that closed " The Armada " :

> " England, none that is born thy son, and lives by grace of thy glory, free,
> Lives and yearns not at heart and burns with hope to serve as he worships thee ;
> None may sing thee : the sea-wind's wing beats down our song as it hails the sea."

But we must return to the middle of the century, and the decadence in art that was the counterpart of materialism

in thought. The Pre-Raphaelite movement may perhaps suggest itself in this connection, but to speak of Pre-Raphaelitism as essentially decadent would be unwarrantable. Holman Hunt, who was perhaps the leading figure in the original brotherhood, was inspired by a genuine, if somewhat narrow patriotism, that made him impatient of French models and desirous of returning to the tradition of Romney and Gainsborough. There is, in his "Lady of Shalott," an identity of spirit as well as name with the work of Tennyson. Madox Brown, despite his foreign training, was at heart an English painter, he loved the details of life, the brawny arms of workmen, and the commonplace sights of farm and street; one of the most deeply felt of all his works expresses the wistful, restrained agony of two ordinary people who are leaving England for a long time. He is no less devoted to his country's past, and he paints with equal pride the beginning of her second city, and the persons of her great men, of Chaucer, Wycliffe, Milton, Cromwell. Certainly Holman Hunt and Madox Brown are the reverse of decadents, and whatever else may be said of Millais, the desire to break away from life will hardly be charged against him. Ruskin, to whom, more than any one else, the movement owes its success, was both healthy and a patriot.

It is to the greatest spirit that we must look if we want to understand art's message. Neither Holman Hunt nor Millais, not even Madox Brown, is likely to be numbered in the first rank of modern artists. Perhaps this may seem an ungenerous view to take of Millais, but there is a lack of depth, a sort of journalism, in his art that makes him popular in supplements to Christmas numbers and on the walls of lodging-houses, but militates against his claim to rank among the immortals. Thus, though his pictures are instinct with life and often inspired by the love of England and the sea, they are relatively unimportant, because it is difficult to say how much of his art was

inspired, and how much popular in the bad sense. The case is different with his Pre-Raphaelite colleague Rossetti, and Rossetti's pupil, Burne-Jones, who stand upon a higher plane, and each in his own sphere, created an art whose tendencies we may deplore, but of whose inspiration there can be no question. Holman Hunt and Madox Brown are remembered hardly so much for what they accomplished as for their importance as pioneers, but Burne-Jones and Rossetti can never be remembered for anything but their own sake.

Rossetti was a friend of Swinburne, and though he has not his fierceness and abandonment of passion, his work runs on the same lines as the first book of "Poems and Ballads." He was without hankering after the "roses and raptures of vice," and did not set himself to strive against God, but his art is an escape from the world, and the kiss that hovers on the full lips of his women is that of Proserpine. It is no wonder that Rossetti was the first to break away from the Pre-Raphaelites, for his conception of art and theirs were widely different. Their idea had been to return to life for inspiration and rejoice in the loveliness of earth, and thus Millais's "Ophelia," in which every flower and weed is treated with equal and tender minuteness, was rightly regarded as a manifesto of their teaching. Rossetti did not love the world that God made, but yearned after a remote, sensuous realm of his own imagining, which lies on the far shore of Lethe.

He was proud to be ignorant of the science that was the chief boast of his age, and in the only one of his important poems in which he deals with his time, warns England of the fate of Nineveh. In poetry, as in painting, he has abandoned the stress and tragedy of life, and sees everything through a mist, the very truths and legends that have been the solace or battle-cry of centuries, are treated by him as pretty groundwork for a ballad or picture, and the people who move through them are not characters,

but types, it would not be so wide of the mark to say one type, beautiful, sensuous, but of little strength or depth. Not otherwise does Burne-Jones paint, except that with him sensuousness takes on a mask of asceticism, and that lithe-limbed, delicate lady of his is twin sister to her of the bud mouth and full throat, the Lady Lilith and Beata Beatrix of his master. For with all the world-weariness that underlies their art, neither Burne-Jones nor Rossetti has wings to soar into those spirit realms through which Beatrice walked with Dante. This will not be in doubt if we compare them with those Italian masters who exercised so powerful an influence over them both. Contemplate any one of the prophets and sibyls above the Sistine Chapel, Fra Angelico's Christ at San Marco, Botticelli's Nativity in the National Gallery, or those two bent apostolic heads of Aretino, and you have the sense of gazing through clear waters of unfathomable depth, the certainty that what the mind grasps is but an infinitesimal part of what is there written for ever in line and colour. Only affectation could pretend to such a feeling with regard to Rossetti or even Burne-Jones, their loveliness is as the surface of some sequestered garden lake, that dreams deliciously beneath August moons but lies no deeper than the roots of the lilies. It seems cruel to compare the Delphic Sibyl of Michelangelo, her eyes aglow and her form aquiver with mysterious fire, yet with unspeakable wonder and pity suffused in her gaze, with the gaunt consumptive model who stares at a bunch of leaves on the canvas of Burne-Jones.

The fact is that neither Rossetti nor his pupil regarded his subjects with real seriousness. Michelangelo may or may not have believed in the existence of sibyls as an historic fact, but the idea of inspiration with which he associated her of Delphi was one that welled from the deep of his soul, and gushed forth into those twelve terrific figures who sit on twelve thrones overlooking the

Last Judgment. Behind Burne-Jones's sibyl there is only the flickering ghost of an idea, a striving after a spirit-world in which the artist does not quite believe himself. Except in the solitary instance of the "King's Tragedy," these modern seers behold the past as one sees figures in a dream, without its dust and blood, without its godhead and manhood. They walk delicately among the heroes, and look for the picturesque even in heaven. They both dealt with the legend of Arthur, only to show how incapable they were of understanding the least part of it. The Launcelot who stoops to kiss Guinevere in Rossetti's picture has the face of an undistinguished Chelsea artist, while the dreaming Launcelot of Burne-Jones is a delicate boy or girl who appears to have sunk beneath the weight of a light suit of armour, for if we were to judge by their features alone, it would hardly be possible to distinguish one of Burne-Jones's men from one of his women. Here begins that strangest of all freaks of the modern mind, a mysticism founded upon materialism, morbid, pensive, but as melancholy-sweet as dying woods.

The separation of art from life, which is the mark of decadence in both, became more pronounced in the 'seventies and 'eighties. Ephemeral literature and mediocre pictures were, of course, produced of an edifying and robust optimism, and it is only among the more refined spirits that we can trace the down-going of the Muses. Walter Pater founded a cult of beauty and a prose style as self-conscious as Spencer's "Ethics," hanging upon the moment, and always overshadowed by the wings of Azrael. He is like Spencer, too, in that he rejects the cruder forms of pleasure-hunting and follows a path not very different from that of Epicurus himself. His aim is receptivity rather than happiness, and even sorrow has its place in his scheme. But his culture has no more joy than spontaneity, his very word music is languorous and funeral slow. More frankly decadent was that other

Oxford man, the brilliant, ill-fated Oscar Wilde, who proclaimed, and acted upon the ideal:

> "To drift with every passion, till my soul
> Is a stringed lute on which all winds can play."

Despite his pose of levity, Wilde was an eloquent and passionate propagandist. He regarded art as a goddess remote from, and frequently opposed to life, and would have sacrificed everything to her. The more unreal it was possible for art to be, the better. Such a conception is implicit also in Pater, who was shy of the turmoil of life, and, recluse that he was, wished for the society and audience of a cultured few. "Different classes of persons," he says, "at different times, make, of course, very various demands upon literature. Still scholars, I suppose, and not only scholars, but all disinterested lovers of books, will always look to it, as to all other fine art, for a refuge, a sort of cloistral refuge, from a certain vulgarity in the actual world."

Wilde, too, looked upon art as a refuge, but he was more keenly affected by the ugliness and vulgarity around him. He could not retire to the society of books, his ardent, full-blooded nature craved appreciation and discipleship. So instead of fleeing from life, he rebelled against it. His work marks a more advanced stage of decadence than anything we have seen hitherto, even in Swinburne. He was extremely susceptible to influence, and had come under the spell of the French decadents. His professed indifference to morality was self-deception, for he was sometimes as fanatical in the cause of the devil as any fallen angel. In the masterpiece of his youthful poems, "The Sphinx," a flawless specimen of workmanship, bejewelled with a rare profusion of exotic imagery, he revels in the suggestion of the monstrous and unnatural.

> "The hidden harvest of luxurious crime
> Blowing by night in some undreamed-of clime."

Supreme artist as he was, he was able to tune his lyre to other strains than those of revolt. The Bulgarian massacres moved him, for a moment, to pity, and he even caught some of the dawning glory of imperialism, but about nothing in life was he really serious, except about escaping from it. Sometimes he flies to the wistful, kindly mood of "The Happy Prince," where gentle creatures, the swallow and the nightingale, are impaled upon the thorns of a callous world, sometimes it is to the frivolous topsy-turvy existence of Cicely Worthing and Lord Arthur Savile, and sometimes to an opiate, terrible dream-land in which sin has lost in strength only to gain in refinement, and which is peopled by such forms as Herodias and Griffith Wainwright, the Sphinx and Dorian Gray.

Contact with the world he brands as defilement. "It is a question whether we have ever seen the full expression of a personality, except on the imaginative plane of art." But the very theory of art that he advocates is the most fatal ever put forward from the point of view of the artist himself. Cut him off from life, deprive Phidias of his Athens and Turner of his England, and their art is not free but starved. The separation is even more sharply drawn by Whistler, who despite his American origin, properly ranks among English artists. In his famous "Ten o'Clock," a prose masterpiece as perfect in its way as the "Carlyle" or the "Miss Alexander," he proclaims that the master stands in no relation to the moment at which he occurs—a monument of isolation—hinting at sadness—having no part in the progress of his fellow-men. Art is entirely wayward and capricious, and the majority of people have no business with her whatever.

Wilde had conceded that it was possible for art to beautify ordinary existence, but Whistler denies even this. It is a natural consequence of his teaching that she is

independent of nationality, and makes no distinction between good and bad. History was not Whistler's strong point, or he would have been chary of citing the case of Switzerland to prove that patriotism and art do not march together. It is because the Swiss for the greater part of their national existence were a nation of mercenaries, imperfectly united and protected by their mountains from the stress and conflict of Europe, that they produced so little art.

One of the most important, as well as one of the most dramatic events in artistic history was the famous duel between Ruskin and Whistler. No doubt as far as the actual duel was concerned, the honours rested with Whistler, and not unjustly. Anybody who reads Ruskin's criticism, and Whistler's answers in court and subsequent comments, must admit that the reputation of the elder man received a cruel shock, that he was, in the phrase of Lillibullero, put out, and looked like an ass. But those who go beyond the wit and rapier play of controversy will see that Ruskin was championing a cause, which he belittled and betrayed by his own besetting sin of egotism. He did not like Whistler's work, and he had an excellent reason for taking exception to it. But with his wonted lack of humility he forbore to be just, and rushed headlong into a contemptuous, pontifical attack upon one of the most consummate painters that ever lived. He might have had some sympathy with his opponent, for they had much in common. Both were passionately devoted to the service of their goddess, and the characters of both were belittled by a strain of ignoble egotism that too often made Ruskin absurd, and Whistler odious. It is not with venom that the immortals should contend.

Ruskin's real quarrel with the picture of Old Battersea Bridge, had he had the patience to formulate it, was the result of no capricious dislike, but the sense that here was

not so much a coxcomb, coxcomb though Whistler undoubtedly was, as a devil, a being of celestial form who was working to destroy the fair world of art. If he had been a student of Oriental art, he would have recognized the influence of Hiroshige, who, with Hokusai, another of Whistler's Japanese masters, dominates the decadent, Ukiyoye period. It is characteristic of Whistler that he should have come under the spell of Ukiyoye, for he would have had small delight in the strong line of Sessiu or the stormful energy of Motonobu's "Shoriken." There lurks in his art the defect that clogs even the most vigorous Oriental work, in that he aimed at too little, he was an artist of moods, an Impressionist.

What he accomplished by his correct recognition of the laws of vision may be readily granted, especially by those who have been repelled by the harshness of Pre-Raphaelite colouring, but this was a small part of the change which, following French and Japanese precedent, he actually brought about in English art. He did not try, as did Rembrandt, to penetrate into the soul of what he painted, but rather to catch some fleeting unessential aspect of it, to paint, not a portrait, but a harmony in grey and green, or an arrangement in flesh-colour and black. Such harmonies and arrangements are a joy forever in that they succeed in what they set out to accomplish, but as, in mathematics, there are different orders of infinity, so in art there is a perfection of the eagle and another of the butterfly, and it is sometimes better to fall a little short of the one than to achieve the other.

No less than four of our English masters essayed the task of portraying Carlyle, and their different success is a fair measure of their art. Millais seizes on the obvious and most flattering aspect, as he does in the case of Gladstone, and paints a rugged leonine old man, very terrible and magnificent; Madox Brown, who introduces him into his "Work," brings out his sardonic humour,

but shows him strong and sound of heart, rejoicing in the sunlight and the sight of labour ; Watts has a less obvious and more profound conception, " a crazy labourer," Carlyle said of it, with less indignation than truth, though he might have added " a bewildered hero " ; but Whistler's Carlyle is neither hero nor workman, nor has the artist even tried to get to the secret, the divine, human source of him, but contents himself with catching and fixing one mood, one glance, wistful, pathetic, but as transitory as a cloud shadow over the face of the deep. As a piece of craftsmanship, that is to say as far as the adjustment of means to ends is concerned, Whistler's portrait may rank first among the four, but for all that it indicates one of the most complete surrenders that have ever been made in the name of art. She who was once the queen of life is now relieved of her kingdom, lest it should prove too burdensome, that she may freely disport herself amid the lawns and arbours of her walled palace garden.

Herein lies the fallacy of the comparisons that it is the fashion to draw between Whistler, and such of his predecessors as Rembrandt, Velasquez and Turner. The resemblance is one of technique only and not very pronounced at that, for there is a strength and scope in the craft of all these masters that is denied to Whistler. From one of their portraits you learn more than could be put into many biographies ; Rembrandt's " Christ at Emmaus " is, for the discerning eye, a Gospel on canvas, and behind that terrible admiral at the National Gallery, whom scientific criticism grudges to Velasquez, looms the whole tragedy of Imperial Spain, her pride, her chivalry, her dark and cruel fanaticism. No fathomless depths lie beneath the delicate surface of Whistler. Between Whistler and Turner the analogy is more plausible, for in many of Turner's pictures, particularly when he is using the more fragile medium of water-colour, he is un-

doubtedly recording moods, but this is only a slight and subsidiary phase of his art, what is play to him is all the world to Whistler. When Turner sets himself to wrestle with nature for her secret, when he commands the storms to rise, or the red sun to stand still behind the "Temeraire," Whistler's harmonies and nocturnes are no more to be matched with his achievements than some Swiss peasant's wood-carving with the Venus of Milo.

The movement initiated by Whistler is epoch-making in English art. A similar school of painting had already arisen in France, and Whistler's Parisian training as well as his own nature inclined him towards it. The corruption of art and literature had proceeded apace in France since the latter half of the July Monarchy. After the death of Balzac, Victor Hugo was left to carry on the tradition of 1830, and he was driven into exile after the *coup d'état*. In the Second Empire the French people, or at any rate the Parisians, found a ruler worthy of themselves and their art. Napoleon III was possessed of what the cant of our day calls the artistic temperament, in that he had keen sensibility with hardly any character. He could be unmanned at the sight of a battlefield, yet wade through innocent blood to a throne; by his shifts and artifices he made himself the mystery of Europe, only to become wax in the hands of a Bismarck; he was a coiner of happy phrases, he wanted to be an historian, he was gracious and kindly, all the while that he was propped up in uneasy splendour by a gang of swindlers and scoundrels, in the midst of a scandalous Court under the shadow of crime, a weak fatalist, pitiably dodging and doubling to escape Nemesis. Perhaps one might call him the Impressionist Emperor, the man of moods.

It was appropriate that such a man, and such a régime, should have seen the full development of "art for art's sake." In poetry even more than in painting, the moral breakdown of Paris, the heritage of the Revolution, was

revealed. The Empire saw the zenith of Baudelaire and the beginning of the Parnasse, it saw vice and putrescence not only tolerated but even sought after, it saw the beginning of a cult of ugliness and grovelling realism which culminated in Zola's " La Terre," and the blatant beastliness of Félicien Rops. The student of national character will not find it difficult to understand how it was that the whole regular army of this Empire collapsed in a month. It is not with impunity that nations turn infidel.

Neither in painting nor literature did England witness the excesses that were in vogue across the Channel, and Whistler, however much he may have surrendered, was in no sense a diseased artist. Even Wilde falls far short of his master Baudelaire in the worship of evil, and Aubrey Beardsley, a disciple of Ukiyoye in pencil, for all his Messalinas and Salomes, never approached the grossness of Rops. But there was sufficient cause for alarm. Gradually there were forming two camps, the one of materialists who despised art and everything else that interfered with their materialism, the other of artists who, adopting the tactics of Fox's Whigs, withdrew themselves altogether from contact with the majority, and allowed the world to go to the devil in its own way. The narrowness and confusion that prevailed in the intellectual sphere were only the complement of similar tendencies in that of art, and both of them the natural outcome of a prose age.

How England had lost credit in the 'eighties, and was even beginning to forfeit her own self-respect, we have seen in our survey of Gladstone. The materialist propaganda associated with the name of Evolution was at its height, differences of opinion had not yet obtruded themselves, the great figures of mid-Victorianism were either dead or past their prime, and those who filled their places were manifestly cast in a smaller mould, or else

tainted with the beauty of decay. There was an evil antithesis between the popular and the artistic, which resulted on the one hand in the progressive degradation of public taste, and on the other in the heartlessness of specialism in the higher branches of art. The development and interaction of these tendencies produced the strangest consequences.

## CHAPTER X

### DISRAELI AND YOUNG ENGLAND

IT is time to turn to the party in the State which had received such a smashing blow in the first Reform Bill, and was injured even more by the defection of Peel fourteen years later. The history of the Tories in the Queen's reign is the history of one man. Such names as Derby, Bentinck, Northcote, Smith, Salisbury, only serve, by their comparative insignificance, to add a brighter lustre to the genius of Beaconsfield, and as for Peel, he will go down to history as the man who wrecked the party which Beaconsfield reconstructed and led to victory. But the saviour of his party was no mere party man. In the roll of philosophic statesmen which includes such names as Pericles and Marcus Aurelius, Burke and Frederick, he will assuredly occupy no mean place.

To a certain extent, even among his friends, the name of Beaconsfield is under a cloud. The touching and beautiful tribute to his memory by virtue of which his anniversary has been christened "Primrose Day," testifies to the loyalty which masses of the people still cherish for his memory, but it has been the fashion, among those who set the tone to thought, when they do not actively disparage him, at least to damn him with faint praise. The vulgar idea of his character is that of a cynical adventurer, a man whose supreme object in life was his own aggrandizement, such a man as his own Vivian Grey.

Dismissing as beneath contempt the attempts of the baser sort of political journalism to blacken his memory, we must perforce admit that such an attitude is the natural consequence of Disraeli's own foibles. For he who would keep his fame unspotted in the political world must either be a mediocrity or else, like the younger Pitt, almost without visible or tangible shortcomings. He must wrap himself up in a seamless garment, and if he has weaknesses he must hide them behind a mask. Charity is a virtue almost unknown in estimating the character of political opponents, and the grave is no protection against calumny. If your opponent has any joint in his armour, it is almost a breach of party loyalty not to thrust at it.

Disraeli, by his very genius, stands in a more unfortunate position than his great rival. The vigilant and self-conscious virtue that never forgot itself nor suffered others to forget it, was a thing to which he was a stranger, he was too human and warm-hearted, too much the creature of his emotions, ever to conform to the mid-Victorian standard. The legend of the mysterious, saturnine Jew, who never unlocked the key of his heart, and treated his fellow-creatures like pawns on a chess-board, is not only mistaken, but so flagrantly at variance with all the facts as to throw some doubt upon the honesty of those who foster it. His besetting weakness was a chivalrous impetuosity that made him too quick to rush into battle, that involved him in the bitter humiliation of his first speech, and made him the loser in the famous duel with Gladstone that led to the defeat of his first budget. Any one who reads the obviously sincere appeal he makes to Gladstone in 1858 to bury the hatchet and be magnanimous, and Gladstone's immaculate refusal, will hardly doubt which was the more impulsive and warm-hearted of the two.

There is no more beautiful spectacle in the life of any statesman than the intense and pathetic affection that

Disraeli lavished on those nearest to his heart. There are two stories, related by Froude, that show him in a very different character from that usually attributed to him. He had married a widow considerably older than himself, and one day some dandies of his set were chaffing him about it. "Gentlemen," he said, as he left the room, "do none of you know what gratitude means?" "This," says Froude, "was the only known instance in which he ever spoke with genuine anger." On another occasion, when he was getting out of his carriage to enter the Commons, he crushed his wife's finger in the hinge of the door, and she, knowing his love for her, and fearing lest his eloquence should be marred by the thought of her injury, bore the excruciating pain without wincing till he was out of sight. Men who give and inspire such affection are rare. His relations with his sister are hardly less tender. "Poor Sa, poor Sa," he murmured, years after her death, on becoming Prime Minister, "we've lost our audience, we've lost our audience," and then dismissed the subject as one too painful to recall.

His letter to her, announcing the death of Meredith, her betrothed, shows how passionate was his love for them both. "Oh, my sister, in this hour of overwhelming affliction, my thoughts are only for you. Alas! my beloved, if you are lost to me, where am I to fly for refuge? I have no wife, I have no betrothed; nor since I have been better acquainted with my own mind and temper have I sought them. Live then, my heart's treasure, for one who has ever loved you with a surpassing love, and one who would have cheerfully yielded his own existence to have saved you the bitterness of this letter. Yes, my beloved, be my genius, my solace, my companion, my joy. We will never part, and if I cannot be to you all our lost friend, at least we will feel that life can never be a blank while guided with the perfect love of a sister and a brother."

This is hardly what we should expect from the cold Sphinx, the scheming adventurer, of the popular fiction. While he was abroad he wrote some lines, which, whatever be their merits as poetry, may at least be regarded as a sincere expression of his feelings, for they were only brought to light after his death:

> "Bright are the skies above me,
> And blue the waters roll;
> Ah! if but those that love me
> Were here, my joy were whole."

Surely his countrymen have grievously misunderstood that tender, passionate nature which craved for sympathy as a flower for the sunlight, which was never false to a friend nor petty towards an enemy, which the breath of scandal never dared to touch, and whose memory is even now cherished by an aged and dwindling band with feelings of loyalty and gratitude.

His detractors will point to "Vivian Grey" and to the diary in which its author says that the story was written to portray his "active and real ambition." This is a statement that requires qualification, in the light both of the context and the known facts. The book was written when its author was little more than a schoolboy, and is the adventures of a brilliant but unscrupulous youth who signally fails in what he undertakes. Perhaps Vivian is not such a monster as he is usually painted, he certainly is tender-hearted enough to be prostrated with an almost fatal illness, brought on by the horror of having killed in a duel a man who had grossly insulted him; but he is not too nice a character. "Vivian Grey" is a boy's first attempt to dive into the recesses of his own complex and hardly formed character, and is more of a warning than an ideal. The boy may be father to the man, but he seldom has much insight into the son's character; youth is attracted by action rather than introspection, and the books that delight boys are stories of adventure. Many

a boy has wanted to be a Sherlock Holmes, few have had yearnings after the rôle of a Hamlet. In "Vivian Grey," Disraeli has not quite emerged from the pirate and detective dreams that form the "active and real ambition" of every healthy boy, and Vivian Grey is only one of the most brilliant members of a class that includes the heroes of Marlowe, and such modern favourites as Dr. Nikola and Don Q. There is one circumstance, however, in which Marlowe and Disraeli display an insight that is lacking to the modern journalist, in that they recognize the Nemesis that awaits upon those who set themselves above God's law. Besides, nobody saw the defects of this tale better than its author. He would never have republished it if he had had his way, and only a few years later he writes of it under the thin disguise of "Manstein": "It was altogether a most crude performance, teeming with innumerable faults. It was entirely deficient in art. The principal character, though forcibly conceived, for it was founded on truth, was not sufficiently developed." So much for a novel upon which the popular Disraeli legend is largely founded.

Even in the fatal and misunderstood passage about his "active and real ambition" Disraeli is careful to state that his ideal ambition and the poetic side of his nature are to be found in other and later books. It is probable that not for many years to come was he to attain complete self-comprehension, but those who seek honestly for the real Disraeli will find less of him in "Vivian" and "Alroy" than in the more subtle and introspective study of "Contarini Fleming," a book that aroused the enthusiasm of no less a critic than Heine. Wayward and Byronic as are certain phases of its hero's career, he has one overwhelming passion that subdues every other, one which we have already traced in the character of his creator, the craving for love and sympathy. Even in his childhood, which

is in this respect curiously similar to that of Jane Eyre, the starving of this craving is a burden almost too heavy to be borne. There is a rare pathos in the scene where the little Contarini is found weeping bitter tears because nobody loves him, and where, in response to the first words of real affection he has ever heard, he exclaims, "O Christina! love me, love me always! If *you* do not love me I shall die!" Years later, when Contarini, now on the threshold of manhood, first meets his father, the Premier, who inquires the reason of his unhappiness, he replies, "Because I have no one I love, because there is no one who loves me." He leaves the Court, he throws away his "active and real ambition" because, in his own words, "I recognized myself as selfish and affected. . . . I had nothing to assist me in my knowledge of myself, and nothing to guide me in my conduct to others." For a few brief months he satisfies to the full his thirst for love, and then, when the cup is dashed from his hands, he tries to end his life. We leave him gradually feeling his way towards a nobler ideal—"Act, act, act; act without ceasing," counsels his mentor, in the true spirit of Carlyle, "and you will no longer talk of the vanity of life," and the book closes upon the words, "What is the arch of the conqueror, what the laurel of the poet! I think on the infinity of space and feel my nothingness. Yet if I am to be remembered, let me be remembered as one who, in a sad night of gloomy ignorance and savage bigotry, was prescient of the flaming morning-break of bright philosophy, as one who deeply sympathized with his fellow-men and felt a proud and profound conviction of their perfectibility, as one who devoted himself to the amelioration of his kind, the destruction of error and the propagation of truth." Is it not strange that those who attempt to judge Disraeli from his early novels should turn to "Vivian Grey," and hardly deign to notice the more profound and mature "Contarini"!

There is one phase of his character that undoubtedly lends some colour to the Disraeli legend. He was one of the most flamboyant of a set of fops and dandies, and his eccentricities of pose and costume created as much sensation as Oscar Wilde's experiments half a century later, of walking down Pall Mall in knee-breeches carrying a sunflower, or appearing in Chelsea "in the combined costumes of Kossuth and Mr. Mantalini." In both cases dandyism was an innocent and superficial affectation, but it did untold harm. It is easier to laugh at the green velvet breeches and well-oiled ringlets than to appreciate "Contarini Fleming" or the "Vindication of the Constitution," and for most men, more congenial. The foibles of the great are the opportunities of the little, and that is why the mistakes of genius have ever been pursued with more bitter hatred than the crimes of mediocrity. This dandyism was the weak side of Disraeli's nature, but one at which we can hardly wonder. He felt within him the consciousness of power and the generous desire to give it scope, but he was struggling with almost untold disadvantages. He came of a class inferior to that of his associates, and knew that he was a member of a despised race. The most powerful controversialist of his day had not hesitated to taunt a young and presumably powerless opponent with his relationship to the impenitent thief on the cross. Disraeli was keenly sensitive alike to insult and admiration. Nobody but a sensitive man could have conceived of Contarini—natures that give and demand love must needs be sensitive. His youth was passed in an heroic struggle against what to any other man would have been overwhelming odds, and it is hardly wonderful that he should have put on a mask of cynicism, that was at least an effective shield against an unsympathetic world. We can follow the process in the case of Contarini, the extraordinary bashfulness that he experienced upon his first entry into a room full of people, and the studied and

somewhat pert manner by which he gradually won the confidence of himself and others. But whatever may be urged in extenuation, this foppery was a blot on Disraeli's character, and his admirers would be wise to recognize it frankly.

It would be well if the case against Disraeli stopped short at vanity. But we have to acknowledge evidence of a fault more serious, and one that gives some countenance, however slight, to the current conception of Disraeli. He speaks of a time in Contarini's career when he threw himself into the aims and ambitions of the world and acted as if selfish aggrandizement were the sole object of life. That Disraeli ever wholly surrendered to such baseness is incredible, and not borne out by the facts. But that he was tempted to do so, and even, at times, coquetted with dishonesty, there is reason to believe. It was not easy to learn the lesson of Contarini and to sink his own personality in the service of a cause, to despise power and fame, and the quickest means of coming thereby. The very steepness of the path to success must have tempted him to esteem success itself as the object of the pilgrimage.

The young Disraeli had not the best of reputations. Much of the suspicion which undoubtedly attended his actions may be put down to the prejudice naturally excited against his race, more still to his own cynical habit of self-depreciation, but not all. It is difficult to acquit him of having uttered a deliberate lie on the floor of the House of Commons, when he said that he had never solicited Peel for office. Only by a quibble is it possible to put a different interpretation on the famous letter of 1841, which Peel was unfortunate enough to have mislaid. Even more serious was his overture, recorded in Cobden's biography, to the Manchester Party in 1852. An alliance with these men must have necessitated a sacrifice of declared principle, as great as that involved in the Fox-

North alliance. And yet, after having unsuccessfully sounded both Manchester and the Whigs, he fulminated against coalitions. Such conduct may not be excused by the custom of politicians, unfaith and cynicism are foul things at all times and under all circumstances, and such a man as Disraeli ought not to be acquitted by the standards of Taper and Tadpole.

We must face the facts, and the faults of Disraeli, without seeking to extenuate either. Only thus can we appreciate the heroism of the man, or defend him from the calumnies of his detractors. We grant that amid a struggle against difficulties almost insuperable, a struggle waged with undaunted bravery and in despite of every discouragement, he once or twice acted in a manner unworthy of himself and his genius. But that he did so by habit or deliberate preference, that he was a conscious charlatan and false at heart, is a supposition we refuse to accept, and one to which the whole of his career gives the lie. His case is that so eloquently described in "Contarini," of a high-strung and ardent youth striving to realize that which is in him, stumbling, falling at times, and at last emerging, wounded but victorious.

In his weakest moment, it may truly be said of him that he did nothing common nor mean. Even when he sinned he did so boldly and without cant or self-deception. If he hit hard, sometimes too hard, it was always at a powerful opponent, a Melbourne, a Peel, an O'Connell, a Gladstone, and he did not bear malice ; though a Jew and constantly embarrassed with debts he was open-handed and scrupulously honourable in money matters ; he was a generous critic of others and never lacking in loyalty. Above all, he deliberately imperilled his own chances of success, and earned the admiration even of his sternest opponents, by his persistent championship of his race. Had he been the Disraeli of the popular fiction, he would have taken some such name as Mowbray or Montacute,

and perhaps been violently anti-Semite; never was man less of a snob. But the pose he adopted led him at times to neglect the counsel of one of his own characters: "Never apologize for showing feeling. Remember that when you do so you apologize for truth." He was too apt to let fall cynical remarks with regard to his own motives, and these were treasured up against him and survived him. When he assailed Peel, one of the most transparently honest acts imaginable, he made a remark implying that he had done it to make himself conspicuous by attacking "a big dog."

This phase was superficial, and never influenced his more serious actions. We read of one of his early speeches at Taunton how, before he had got into touch with his audience, and was obviously ill at ease, he adopted all the airs of dandyism, repeatedly showing his rings, but how, when he warmed to his subject, all this was forgotten amid the golden flow of his eloquence. In his old age the better side of him had finally triumphed, and the serene dignity with which he bore his honours and his last heart-breaking defeat is witness to the completeness of his victory over himself. He had one belief that more than anything else kept him true to his highest nature; he was never without the sense of God's presence, and in contrast to the materialism of his age, he was an ardent and practical mystic. He had studied the Kabbalah, and one fruit of his studies was the awful vision of Solomon and the Kings of Judah which appears in "Alroy." This mystic element constantly recurs in his novels, in Contarini's vision of his dying bride, in Lothair's dream in the Colosseum, and in Tancred's sublime experience upon Mount Sinai. It was not his nature to adopt the ostentatious piety of a Bright or Gladstone, but in as true a sense as they he was a God-fearing man, though the God that he, the descendant of the prophets, worshipped, had little enough in common with Him of Gladstone's

apologetics, and still less with the business-like Jehovah of Rochdale.

A survey, however brief, of Disraeli's career would be incomplete if it did not deal with the question of how far his actions can be explained by his Semitic origin. While admitting that Hebrew in him is probably as important as the Liverpool in Gladstone or the Rochdale in Bright, we must altogether dissociate ourselves from the pretentious theorizing that would explain everything he did from the cradle to the grave by the fact that he was a Jew. According to one version he is a Shylock, without Shylock's redeeming qualities, assiduously feathering his nest at the expense of the Gentiles; or again, he figures as a devotee of the conception, strenuously refuted by the prophets, of a merciless and partisan deity, leading his chosen people to victory. By a very moderate amount of skill in the selection, suppression or reversal of the facts, these, or any other theories, can be worked up into something resembling plausibility.

The easiest way of exposing their hollowness is to apply them to other statesmen who were not Jews at all. The name that most naturally occurs is that of Gladstone, and we will suppose that by means of some cryptogram, document or other scientific expedient it is discovered that Gladstone and Disraeli were changed during their infancy. How easily does such a supposition fit in with the facts of Gladstone's career! His genius for finance, the financial motive that dominated his policy, how consonant with everything we know about the Jewish temperament! His sympathy with Oriental races, passionately and recklessly expressed, with the Afghans (whom some regard as the descendants of the lost tribes), with the Dervishes, with the Armenians, with the semi-Oriental Bulgarians, how racial, how unmistakably Semitic, especially when we remember his lukewarmness about the Poles, the Hungarians, the negro slaves of the

Confederacy, and above all the fact that of the two Oriental races he assailed and oppressed, one was descended from the taskmasters of Israel, the other had stepped into the place of Rome and Babylon, and held in sacrilegious domination the city of Jehovah! It is remarkable in this connection that almost the only thing which Gladstone condescended to admire in Disraeli was his championship of the Jews.

We may add to these indications Gladstone's love of ceremonial in religion, another Jewish trait, coupled with his readiness to sacrifice Christian Churches on the altar of disestablishment. Indeed, nothing is more striking than his ostentatious indifference to Gentile concerns. The neglect of English interests which is so often urged against him is explicable at once by our theory; it was like a Jew to abandon Gordon to Oriental fanaticism, and the surrender to a people saturated with Old Testament ideals, a people who feared Jehovah, was justified by a verse out of the Hebrew Psalms about blood-guiltiness. Gladstone's political progress (as the unfriendly critic might go on to remark) shows with what cynical skill the quick-witted Oriental can feather his nest at the expense of the ungodly. His abandonment of the Tories in the eclipse of their fortunes, his skill in allying himself with a democratic sentiment he obviously distrusted, his extraordinary volte face over Home Rule, show at once his understanding and his contempt of an alien civilization. And if the case were not already proved beyond a doubt, we might dwell upon Gladstone's supreme conviction that he was the elect of the Lord. Such an overwhelming array of facts, which can be reinforced by everything we know about Gladstone, can hardly fail to carry conviction, at least to those who hold and accept the commonly received anti-Semite views about Disraeli, and the old culinary proverb about geese and ganders.

But if we agree to take one and all of such theories *cum grano*, we shall perceive that the leading characteristics of Disraeli that are supposed to be due to his Semitic origin, demand no such explanation. The flamboyant dandyism of his youth is what we should expect from a man whose early associates were a set of flamboyant dandies, and Disraeli was no more extravagant than d'Orsay. His love and understanding of the East, though undoubtedly stimulated by his pride of descent, was what we should naturally expect from his travels and early surroundings. The beaux of the late 'twenties, like the young Romantics in France, were the devotees of an Oriental fashion largely derived from Byron, and Disraeli himself made Byron one of the heroes of his fiction. And if, in the course of his struggle against desperate odds, Disraeli once or twice diverged from the path of strict rectitude, must that be put down to the Jew in him? We would, for the honour of our statesmen, that such an explanation were necessary! If we must look for the evidence of the Jew in Disraeli, we should be inclined to cite neither his dandyism, nor his Orientalism, nor yet his sins, but a certain tendency to put race before nationality, which we shall find colouring his foreign policy, and which we believe was the Achilles' heel of his statesmanship.

The basis of his philosophy was his hatred of materialism. Not Carlyle himself was more scornful of the pig philosophy. With Benthamism and the whole system of happiness-mongering he waged implacable war, and for the heartless doctrines of the classical economists he never had a friendly word. By temperament and upbringing he was a philosopher, he was, he said, born in a library, and though he was not deeply versed in the subtleties of metaphysics, no thinker of his day surveyed its problems with a more penetrating insight. He differs markedly from Gladstone in this respect. Throughout

the Liberal leader's career, it is impossible to discover any principle or coherent system of thought which links the whole together; the theology comes from Oxford, the economy from Liverpool, the liberty from Naples. It is this incoherence, this lack of backbone, that has consigned nearly everything that Gladstone wrote or spoke to oblivion, and this it is that lends its sting to his rival's immortal taunt "sophistical rhetorician." As far as thought is concerned, it was Gladstone and not Disraeli who was unprincipled.

Disraeli's career is the opposite of this. He openly despised the pedantic consistency of little men, who proudly shackle themselves to every one of their past errors, but the nobler and less obvious consistency that binds thought to thought, and thought to deed, he possessed in full measure. For names and forms he cared little, as to the best practical means of attaining his objects he might change his opinion, what he looked to was the root of the matter. Never did statesman make so little concealment of his principles, never was action so firmly, so inevitably based upon them. He was just that happy blend of philosopher and poet of which the ideal politician is compounded, never bent towards the earth, never in the clouds. While Gladstone's torrential eloquence has glided, imperceptibly, away, the words of Disraeli stick in the memory, and his best speeches are evergreen as those of Burke. The problems of "Coningsby" and "Sybil" are burning to-day, the "Vindication of the Constitution" might have been written about the present situation. When all Gladstone's polemics are forgotten, Disraeli's famous statement of the evolution problem will remain as the summary and final verdict upon the whole controversy—"Is man an ape or an angel? I, my lord, am on the side of the angels."

And so, when we come to examine his first, youthful speeches, we find in them this difference from the early

efforts of the ordinary unfledged politician, that already they are marked by the originality and detachment that only belong to the philosopher. It is true that the edifice has not yet assumed the magnificent proportions of later years, many a Remus may overleap the rising walls, not always without scathe, but the foundations are laid deep and unchangeable, and the rest is but a matter of time and patience.

It is no wonder that on his entrance into politics he should have hesitated under which banner to fight. Everything was in a state of bewildering flux, and it looked as if all the old landmarks were about to be removed, and the Constitution smashed to pieces. It seemed to Disraeli as if the aristocratic principle had been destroyed by the collapse of the Lords' opposition to the Reform Bill, and as if both of the existing parties had shown themselves incompetent to hold office. He therefore came forward with a programme of his own, which, of course, was a failure as far as catching votes was concerned, and included such apparently revolutionary propositions as the Ballot Act and Triennial Parliaments. When he was reproached for trying to catch Tory votes for such doctrines, he was able to demonstrate with the utmost coolness that he was only reverting to the principles of Bolingbroke and Wyndham and the fathers of Toryism. What seems in him to be change of position is only change of name. If he coquetted with Radicalism, he had nothing in common with the Radicals of his day, except that, for entirely different reasons, one or two of his proposals happened to be the same as theirs. It was not long before he realized that his quarrel was not with the Tory cause but with such men as Lord Eldon, "Lord Past Century" as he is called in "Vivian Grey," who had allowed it to degenerate into a selfish class policy. His purpose was to get back to the true principles of Toryism, however much they differed from the vulgar or

interested notions of those who adopted the name without embracing the idea.

And now we come to the principle that dominates Disraeli's career, and is the explanation of all his apparent shiftings of position. Such causes as aristocracy and democracy, Church and property, however important they might be, shrank into insignificance when compared with that of the nation itself, the mystic being that includes and transcends all these. Perish the upper or any other class rather than that England herself should come to harm! In a brief but explicit statement of his principles in 1833 he begs Tory and Radical to drop their "nicknames" and to unite in forming a national party. "It would sometimes appear," he writes, "that the loss of our great Colonial Empire must be the necessary consequence of our prolonged domestic dissensions. Hope, however, lingers to the last. In the sedate, but vigorous character of the British nation we may place great confidence. . . . Great spirits may yet arise to guide the groaning helm through the world of troubled waters; spirits whose proud destiny it may still be at the same time to maintain the glory of the Empire and to secure the happiness of the people."

Jew though he was, he regarded the land that had given him birth with a devotion such as very few Englishmen have equalled. "Oh, England," he cries, in one of his early novels, "Oh, my country—although full many an Eastern clime and Southern race have given me something of their burning blood, it flows for thee. . . . I am proud to be thy child. . . . Worthier heads are working for thy glory and thy good; but if ever the hour shall call, my brain and life are thine." It was only when he was convinced that the Tory Party was, and had been, the national party, that he definitely threw in his lot with it, and even then he fought in its ranks not as a slave, but because he held to its principles and its philosophy, even

in despite of his leader, and the prejudices of nearly all his comrades.

This brings us to the detailed exposition of his political faith in the form of a letter to Lord Lyndhurst in 1835. The period of transition is over, and though the mind of Disraeli never ceased to develop, it was on the lines sketched out in this treatise. His philosophy has now come of age, and indeed, this mature statement of his views is entitled to rank among the first of English contributions to political thought. It is not only of importance because it gives us the key to the policy of one of the least understood of our statesmen, but because it carries on the Tory philosophy of Coleridge and his two friends, and forms a link in the chain that reaches back to Shakespeare. There is such a similarity between the political conclusions of Disraeli and those of Coleridge in "Church and State," that it is hard to believe that the young man was not acquainted with that treatise, but of this there is no evidence, except perhaps the use he makes of the word "commonalty." There can be no suggestion of plagiarism, for the two reach their conclusions from entirely different standpoints, and if Coleridge excels in metaphysical subtlety, he falls short of Disraeli in clearness, in interest, and in historical range. It is in spirit only that they are one.

Therefore, we need not be surprised to find Disraeli opening his vindication by exposing the fallacies of utilitarianism. He is wise to concentrate his attack not so much upon the heartlessness of the Benthamites, for this would have rather gratified them than otherwise with the sense of their intellectual superiority, but upon the meaningless futility of their fundamental conceptions. This leads him to the condemnation of abstract and theoretical systems of politics, and in particular of such plausible notions as the divine right of majorities and

the necessity for universal suffrage. A tyranny may be no less wicked because it is exercised by three-fifths of the population.

These false systems leave out of account an influence which was ever present to the mind of Disraeli, that of national character. "The national character," he was to write a few years later, "may yet save the Empire. The national character is more important than the Great Charter or trial by jury." The partnership of living and dead and unborn, the personality of nations, was in his eyes no figure of rhetoric, but the most important fact with which a statesman has to deal. It is just as absurd to apply abstract systems to practical politics, as was Baron Munchausen's attempt to turn greyhounds into dachshunds by cutting short their legs, yet this is what the "hard-headed" Benthamites are constantly attempting. Disraeli very appositely contrasts the evil effects of the French paper Constitution with the wisdom of the King of Prussia in refusing to humour the democratic theorists among his own subjects, and this he supplements by instances from the New World. He then, in an extraordinary original and suggestive review of our own history, shows how the wisest statesmen, from Stephen Langton onwards, have been content to tread the path of reform with infinite caution and respect for the past. The typical Benthamite sneer at the wisdom of our ancestors is shown to be at variance with reason and history alike.

There are two ways of looking at Political Institutions; we may value them by their conformity with some abstract system, or by their results. Disraeli does not bother his head about the rights of man or majorities, but asks of every institution, "How does it work? is it in harmony with the national character? is it for the good of the nation?" The absolute government of Prussia is justified because it represents the choice of its subjects

to a greater degree than any assembly of delegates sitting at Berlin, a fact that Bismarck was destined to take advantage of, thirty years after Disraeli had predicted, with remarkable accuracy, the fate of Prussian constitutional government. On similar principles he denies that a House of Commons must necessarily be more representative of the nation than a House of Lords, or an hereditary sovereign. He shows in some detail how the election of Members of Parliament was, in its origin, a crude and often unpopular expedient for attaining certain ends of government, and there is no reason to believe it has acquired any talismanic properties through the lapse of years. Those who have studied the working of representative institutions in our own days of party machinery in House and country, will realize more than ever the truth of Disraeli's words, and how little connection there is between election and representation.

It is conceivable that the country may be rushed into an election upon an issue imperfectly realized; that an actual minority of electors may return a majority of members; that these electors may be themselves a minority of the population; that the Government thus installed in office may be compelled to pass drastic and tyrannous measures to conciliate small sections of its supporters; that members may be driven like sheep into the division lobbies to vote down opposition; that even discussion may be silenced by the guillotine; that the most important business may be settled by backstairs negotiation; that the counties may legislate for the boroughs or vice versa; that England may govern Ireland against her will, and that part of Ireland may revenge itself by dictating to England; that Dissenters who vote for prosecuting a war may find that they have assisted in putting the Church on the rates; that a Unionist supporter of Free Trade may find that he has voted for Home Rule. If we look at the actual working

of elections, the farce of popular choice becomes even more glaring—the organized and cynical unfairness of party newspapers; the shamelessness of the appeals made to the electoral intelligence from platform and hoarding; the type of man, perhaps a voting mute, or pushing lawyer, who is put up for the seat by the party caucus; the sort of reason that sways the free and independent elector in his choice of a representative. "I shall vote Conservative," remarked an aged man of Kent the other day, "because I 'ear as 'ow, if they Radicals gets in, they'll take away Mr. Blank's land, and that is the land as I poaches on, and I won't have that!" Those who talk as if the nation's will were expressed by the elective system and no other, would lead us to doubt of their candour, did we not remember the innate tendency of mankind to be led by words rather than facts. As it is, Disraeli is perhaps the only writer in our language to point out clearly and explicitly what might have been obvious to every one.

There is nothing paradoxical in the opinion that the Tory Party is, or should be, both national and democratic, the constitutional party, in opposition to the Whig oligarchy and despotism. We need not trace all the historical arguments by which Disraeli establishes his conclusion, it is enough if we grasp the principles which he believes to actuate either party. The Whigs, he maintains, have ever used the formulas of democracy for the establishment of oligarchy, as in the days of the Rump, of Shaftesbury, of William III, of Walpole, of Fox, and of the Reform Bill. But there is a second characteristic of Whiggism, intimately connected with the first, the love of centralization. It is, of course, the aim of root-and-branch reformers, in other words, of Radicals, to wish to turn out everything after one pattern, and levelling equality is a friend to despotism. The tendency of the Whigs has been to crush the various and seemingly

irrational institutions that are part of a nation's life, and to subordinate everything to a central Government only nominally representative of the nation.

The exact opposite of this is the true policy of Toryism. It proceeds, so to speak, from the bottom upwards, and is tenderly respectful of custom and precedent. In "Contarini Fleming," Disraeli speaks of the transition from feudal to federal principles, and the desirability of federal as contrasted with centralized methods is ever present to his mind. He was never tired of insisting upon the importance of character and individuality, things which are not likely to flourish beneath the unrestrained sway of majority or oligarchy. On these principles he is able to justify a bench of bishops, a monarchy, and an hereditary peerage. A House of Lords is at least as democratic, at least as representative, as a House of Commons. He even shows how such apparently servile doctrines as divine right and passive obedience had once testified to the democratic character of the party, since the majority of the nation were anxious to curb the oligarchy by exalting the powers of the Crown.

Though he championed all institutions that have been the bugbears of democratic theory, Disraeli had no part in snobbish or merely obstructive tactics. It may be pleasant enough for a disciple of Eldon to be told that the policy of his party is historically that of the nation, but it may be less pleasant to him to be informed that the only justification of its existence lies in that correspondence. The Toryism that identifies itself in any form with class selfishness is doomed, and a utilitarian conception of nobility is, if possible, a baser thing than utilitarian democracy: *noblesse oblige*. Those who are called by birth or merit to exalted stations are not meant to be happier than other men, but only to bear a heavier burden of responsibility, to conform to a more exacting standard, even as it is the glory of British officers to

expose themselves more than their men. "My lord, the Whigs invoke the people, let us appeal to the nation."

Upon his entrance into Parliament, we find Disraeli steadily developing these principles. Confronted with an alarming crisis in the Chartist disturbances of 1839, his attitude was as bold as it was startling in a follower of Peel and Wellington. Though he believed the Chartists to be mistaken, his sympathies were with them as against the bourgeoisie, and he pointed out the anomaly of investing all power in a class that performed no corresponding public duties. He also admitted that the grievances of labour were genuine, and that the capitalist class was not likely to be a fair judge of the wages question. At a time when it was scientific to ignore, and fashionable to deride, the claims of labour, this was a remarkable concession indeed.

We now come to the period when Disraeli emerges into the power and prominence that were his due. The struggle between him and Sir Robert Peel had long been inevitable, for loyalty to his leader must have involved disloyalty to his principles. Never were two men less fitted to agree, than the glowing champion of political faith and the respectable opportunist of the Treasury Bench, and Peel was born to be the opponent of Disraeli as he was to be the friend of Gladstone. It was only when the Minister who had come in on a definite policy, remained in to defeat it, that the fire in his follower kindled, and burst forth in open revolt. In his "Life of Lord George Bentinck," Disraeli has left us a character sketch of Peel so generous and impartial that history has nothing to add to it. He extenuated none of his merits, he honoured his memory, but he pointed out the fatal defect of his character, he lacked imagination, and therefore lacked perspicacity. Perhaps it was only by following a middle-class leader that the Conservatives were able

to achieve the triumph of 1841, but Nemesis waits upon such tactics, and the triumph was dearly bought by their long humiliation, from which they were at last rescued by one who had, from the first, refused to budge from his principles.

It is during this period that we find Disraeli at the head of the short-lived and much-derided Young England Movement. Brimful of energy, and chafing at the lukewarmness of his party, it was but natural that he should try to rally to his banner a few sympathetic spirits, who, it might reasonably be expected, would leaven their countrymen with their own enthusiasm. Splendid as were his own ideals, Disraeli was unfortunate in his comrades. They included some of the "Cambridge apostles," brought up in the brilliant but shallow tradition which almost marred the genius of Tennyson. An impression got about that they were but aristocratic sentimentalists, with no serious desire to enter into the feelings, or benefit the condition of the masses. A satirist of the movement hit off the prevailing feeling in lines:

> "Here comes riding my Lord John Manners
> With Roncesvalles upon his banners!"

and this Lord John Manners had done more than any satirist to make his cause ridiculous by his notorious couplet:

> "Let wealth and commerce, laws and learning die,
> But spare us still our old nobility."

Disraeli afterwards summarized the Young England propaganda in the preface to the collected edition of his novels: "They recognized imagination in the government of nations as a quality not less important than reason. They trusted much to a popular sentiment, which rested on an heroic tradition, and was supported by the high spirit of a free aristocracy. Their economic principles were not unsound, but they looked upon the

health and knowledge of the multitude as not the least precious part of the wealth of nations. In asserting the doctrine of race, they were entirely opposed to the equality of man, and similar abstract dogmas, which have destroyed ancient society without creating a satisfactory substitute. Resting upon popular sympathies and popular privileges, they held that no society could be durable unless it was built upon the principles of loyalty and religious reverence."

There was nothing snobbish or sentimental about this policy, as it appeared to the leader of the movement, and as it was expounded in his novels "Coningsby" and "Sybil." Those who imagine that Disraeli contented himself with a milk-and-water democracy for the flattery of the upper class, had better read a few pages at random from "Sybil." He would be an eccentric scion of the aristocracy who could derive much satisfaction from the character and fate of Lord Marney or Captain Grouse, or some of their associates. We know the wicked nobleman of the fashionable novel, a personage who excites the envy and reprobation of his readers in about equal proportions. Something of these feelings might be aroused by the immortal portrait of Lord Monmouth in "Coningsby," but the wicked nobleman of "Sybil" is as base as he is heartless, and his meanness towards his own mother is as disgusting as his treatment of his cottagers. The unromantic foibles which are least pleasing to an aristocratic ear are exposed with a ruthless hand, the sentimental patronage for which Lady Maud gets snubbed by Sybil, the habit of making a good profit out of game after a big shoot, and, above all, the exceedingly slender pretensions of some titled families to either antiquity or nobility. In the heat of recent controversy hard things have been said about the real or imaginary deficiencies of the peers, but the coroneted and ermined tyrant on the poster is a pleasant old gentleman compared with

Lord Marney, and the invective of Limehouse is less scathing than the quiet analysis of "Sybil."

Disraeli had not come to flatter the upper class, but to warn them in the most solemn and impassioned language at his command. He would be dull, indeed, who should miss the symbolism of that opening scene, where the men who ought to be leaders of the nation are lounging and betting and killing time in some luxurious club, while outside rages, unheeded, the awful thunderstorm. "It seemed a scene and a supper where the marble guest of Juan might have been expected." After this glimpse of splendid and insolent well-being, we are plunged into the hellish reality that lies hidden beneath its surface. Disraeli had made a close study of the condition of the poor, and some of his descriptions will bear comparison with those of Dickens. The ghastly humour of Master Joseph's "tommy" shop and Hell-house Yard, the account of child-labour in mines, of the fever-stricken den in which poor Devil's-dust was brought up, of the squalid, reeking cottages on Lord Marney's estate, are worth more than many treatises on sociology and economics. "A mortgaged aristocracy, a gambling foreign commerce, a home trade founded on a morbid competition, and a degraded people," such is his estimate of the state of the nation, one that Karl Marx himself would have found little to quarrel with.

It was strange, too, in the heyday of the classical economists, to hear such sentiments as those of Disraeli's starving weaver, quoted with obvious sympathy: "The capitalist flourishes, he amasses immense wealth; we sink lower and lower; lower than the beasts of burden, for they are fed better than we are, cared for more. And it is just, for according to the present system, they are more precious. And yet they tell us that the interests of Capital and Labour are identical." Such arguments will appear less scandalous in the mouth of

a Conservative leader, when we remember that Disraeli was only working on the lines already laid down by the three Lake Poets. He is of one mind with Wordsworth about the poor man's right to live, and that most unlovely measure of modern times, the Bumble Poor Law of 1834, for all its science, fails to please him.

Such sentiments as those we have just noticed, and many more that we might quote from the same source, may appear flat Socialism. But Disraeli was no more a Socialist than he was a sycophant. He had his own idea as to the right way out of the difficulty, and he burned to impress it upon his countrymen, particularly upon those who had wealth and power. He still believed that it was possible to make the Tory Party the national party, and it was to the youth of that party that he looked for the means to restore it to its true function in the State. Through the mouth of Coningsby he sums up his requirements in the words, " political faith instead of political infidelity."

But Disraeli bases his political system upon the twin foundations of faith and nationality. The climax of his propaganda is reached in " Tancred," where the young man, weary of the shams that surround him at home, goes on a pilgrimage to the East, and on the summit of Mount Sinai the angel of Arabia appears to him in a vision, and tells him how the revolt and blind discontent of the European nations are due to their having hankered after other gods than Him of Sinai and Calvary. " Now they despair. But the eternal principles that controlled the barbarian vigour can alone cope with morbid civilization. . . . In the increased distance between God and man have grown up all those developments that have made life mournful. Cease then to seek in a vain philosophy the solution of the special problem that perplexes you. Announce the sublime and solacing doctrine of theocratic equality. Fear not, faint not, falter not."

It is therefore not to be wondered at that Disraeli assigns to the Church an important place in his social system. Here again he is at one with the Lake Poets, particularly in his view of the Reformation. Other Churches, he tells us, have been pillaged, but the Church of England was the only one to be robbed for the benefit of private individuals. He shows, too, the influence of the Oxford Movement in his belief in ceremonies, and his championship of dogma as against the easy Christianity of the Broad Churchmen. But he differed from the greatest of the Tractarians in that he did not despair of keeping the Church national. "If," he says in 1862, "you do not favour a dissolution of the union between Church and State, you must assert the nationality of the Church of England." He relates how, when the interests of the Church were under discussion in a Parliamentary Committee, he opposed even Archbishop Sumner, who was in favour of surrender. He puts forward definite proposals of his own for asserting her nationality, which are not essentially different from those of Wordsworth. These postulate that the Church shall undertake the education of the people; that there shall be a moderate increase in the numbers of the episcopate; that there shall be an increased recognition of the lay element in the conduct of spiritual matters; that the parochial system shall be maintained inviolate, and that the staff of the Church shall be rendered more efficient by an increase in the number of curates and the provision of adequate stipends.

In his Young England days he had the utmost confidence in the ability of a national Church, working upon national principles, to bring about the regeneration he desired. Looking back upon his own aspirations, after the interval of a generation, he is forced to admit his disappointment. "There were few great things," he says, "left in England, and the Church was one. Nor

do I now doubt that if, a quarter of a century ago, there had arisen a churchman equal to the occasion, the position of ecclesiastical affairs in this country would have been very different from that which they now occupy." But he had come to perceive the flaw which marred the Tractarian Movement. Its leaders had departed from the Anglican national tradition, and these great matters fell into the hands of monks and schoolmen, who sought refuge in medieval superstition. It is only to be expected that Disraeli's attitude towards the Church of Rome should have undergone a corresponding change. In "Coningsby" he treats her, through her representative, Mr. Lyle, with respect and even with enthusiasm, but in "Lothair," the product of the early 'seventies, he views her policy and its agents with a profound apprehension, not untinged with a certain æsthetic appreciation. He essayed in portraying Cardinal Grandison the same task as Browning in his Bishop Bloughram. But whereas Bloughram is a sympathetic and entirely human character, Grandison has about him something terrible, something less human than catlike. He is Jesuitical in the most malign sense of the word, his conscience is that of the Church, and her welfare is an end that justifies any means. Disraeli had always a full, perhaps an exaggerated, perception of the influence wielded by secret societies, and the Church of Rome was in his eyes a secret society on a huge scale. More than ever in face of the twin dangers of Rome and infidelity, was it necessary for the Church to look to her armour, more than ever did it behove England to hold fast to her connection with the Church. In this respect, despite his partial disillusionment, Disraeli sees no ground for despair. On the contrary, despite the Tractarians, despite the staggering blow the Church had sustained by the defection of Newman, "often apologized for, never explained," he detects a more beneficent revival within her pale, "I

see in the Church," he says in 1872, "as I believe I see in England, an immense effort to rise to national feelings and recur to national principles. The Church of England, like all our institutions, feels it must be national."

The idea of nationality, of patriotism, becomes even more dominant in the mind of Disraeli. It is the active and poetic side of his doctrine of race, one that constantly recurs in his works, and receives its most emphatic expression in his tribute to Lord George Bentinck. "The truth is, progress and reaction are but words to mystify the million. They mean nothing, they are nothing, they are phrases and not facts. All is race." In his inaugural address at Glasgow, more than twenty years after this pronouncement, he is equally emphatic in declaring that the supremacy of race is the key of history. The word "race" is an unfortunate one, as it is apt to be associated in the modern mind with a fair amount of pseudo-scientific pedantry that did not trouble Disraeli. He is probably wise not to enclose an idea so vast and complex within the prison of a definition, but it is to be regretted that he never gave a doctrine so fundamental, and withal so clear to his own mind, the advantage of a more formal and detailed exposition. It is the key to much of the policy of his later years.

It had been originally impressed upon him by the study of the race from which he himself had sprung. Centuries of dispersion and persecution had only served to intensify the racial pride, the distinctive characteristics of the Jews. He was led to consider other examples, and he found that the very principle which had prevented Spain from exterminating her Jews had enabled a few hundred of these very Spaniards to overthrow mighty empires in America. Everywhere it was character and not numbers, spirit and not matter, that had prevailed. But what did Disraeli mean by race? Surely not the kinship that is determined by the measurement of skulls and the man-

breeders' statistics of modern ethnologists. Though he nowhere explicitly states it, it is evident that he regards race as being primarily a spiritual bond, working for spiritual ends. "A civilized community must rest on a large realized capital of thought and sentiment; there must be a reserved fund of public morality to draw upon in the exigencies of national life. Society has a soul as well as a body. The traditions of a nation are part of its existence."

This was spoken in 1873, and in 1852 he had written that the greatness of a race did not depend upon numbers but "results from its organization, the consequences of which are shown in its energy and enterprise, in the strength of its will and the fertility of its brain." The first consequence of this principle is best developed in the noteworthy passage that follows: "The Jews represent the Semitic principle; all that is spiritual in our nature. They are the trustees of tradition, and the conservators of the religious element. They are a living and most striking evidence of the falsity of that pernicious doctrine of modern times, the natural equality of man. The political equality of a particular race is a matter of municipal arrangement, and depends entirely on political considerations and circumstances; but the natural equality of man now in vogue, and taking the form of cosmopolitan fraternity, is a principle which, were it possible to act on it, would deteriorate great races and destroy all the genius of the world. What would be the consequence in the great Anglo-Saxon republic, for example, were its citizens to secede from their sound principle of reserve, and mingle with their negro and coloured populations?"

This brings us back to the hatred of utilitarian theories which was the starting-point of Disraeli's philosophy. Ricardo and Bentham had treated all men as if they were mathematical units, but Disraeli sees that the highest merit of the statesman lies in the perception of those

subtle differences that are stamped with the seal of centuries. It was this that had made him see how the merit of the English Constitution lay in the fact that it was suited, not to human nature in general, but to English nature in particular. We must deal, in passing, with an objection that may possibly be raised in this connection. How, if Disraeli was a Jew, could he conscientiously lay claim to the title of English patriot? The question arises out of a pardonable misapprehension of Disraeli's position. He never said nor implied that it was impossible for members of different races to combine to form a larger spiritual unity. On the contrary, he was fully alive to the advantage that comes of such blendings, and even while he is enlarging upon the continuity of the Jews, he is emphatic in his condemnation of those Spaniards who, with more folly even than cruelty, drove them out of their land, and the very chapter in which these remarks occur is a plea for the removal of Jewish disabilities in England. In the Glasgow address, when he is speaking of patriotism, he instances the love of Scots for Scotland, after the manner of Sir Walter Scott, and not even their enemies will accuse Scott or Disraeli of wishing to loosen the attachment of Scotsmen for the Empire. This is not to imply that races are capable of blending indiscriminately. It would be no degradation for an English girl to marry a Jew or a Scotsman, but the blood of any decent man would boil at the thought of her marrying a negro. That which unites races is an all-pervading attraction, and extends to the smallest and most subordinate communities. A religious body, a town, a hamlet, a regiment, a college, all of these have their little heritage of tradition, every one of them constitutes a personality, and it is out of the union of many such communities that the grand personality of the State is made up. Disraeli's doctrine of race is only an application of the federal ideal of "Contarini" and the "Vindication."

Just as he conceived it to be the duty of English statesmen to map out the broad lines of their policy upon a study of English nature, so, in details of their domestic policy, they were not to aim at centralization and the rigid application of abstract theory, but rather to strive after cherishing local and sectional peculiarities, to seek the unity of Amiens Cathedral in preference to that of a row of Brixton houses. It was not in vain that he was wont to contrast English with French notions of equality. It was the boast of a French Minister that every child in France was repeating the same lesson at the same moment, and this bureaucratic heaven would have been hell to Disraeli.

The same profoundly spiritual view of society that made Disraeli oppose Socialism, made him such an uncompromising lover of his country. The new philosophy, he tells us again and again, is the mortal foe of patriotism. Based upon abstract and unimaginative theory, it ignores everything that it cannot classify or formulate, it is unresponsive to those spiritual influences which unite the hearts of millions, yet extend their ramifications down to the most intimate details of private character, it is the dull letter that killeth. Not patriotism, but cosmopolitanism, blunts men's understandings with regard to other nations. It is because the Englishman understands that he is separated from his neighbours by a gulf wider than the narrow seas, it is because he realizes that the old England which lies in front of him and behind him and pervades his whole being is poles and centuries asunder from " la patrie," that he is able to appreciate and join hands with a people whose prowess as an enemy he has long since had cause to respect. Above all, no statesman who is sensitive to spiritual influences can afford to think lightly of national honour or prestige, he knows that if he would have peace, he must be ready, on occasion, greatly to find quarrel in a straw, and that an insult to the flag must, if

all else fails, be resisted even at the cost of universal war. Under such leadership, insults to the flag will be rare, and wars still rarer.

We must, however, admit that Disraeli was capable of pushing the doctrine of race to a dangerous extreme. It was, we think, responsible for that lack of sympathy with little nations which sometimes marred his policy. It partly explains the persistency with which he clung to the idea of a regenerated Turkey, and in his fear of Panslavism, underrated the strength of Bulgarian nationality. The idea of race domination may account for the ill-judged severity of his Afghan policy, and perhaps even for his error in wishing to retain the colonial Crown lands. For a too exclusive cult of the Anglo-Saxon race may have led him slightly to underrate the individuality of the daughter nations. The danger of imperialism has always been that the Motherland may be swallowed up in the Empire, and the only way of avoiding it is by the thoroughgoing application of Disraeli's federal principle, by combining empire with freedom. Nor is there any fundamental inconsistency of the federal principle with the doctrine of race. The harmony is all.

On the whole, the Young England movement cannot be held to be definitely imperial. Disraeli was concerned more with the regeneration of England than her expansion, and had not come to realize that the two may perhaps be inseparable. It will be observed that there is no mention or hint in his summary of the Young England propaganda, of colonies or Empire. The motive power, so to speak, of his proposed reformation was "the high spirit of a free aristocracy." Now there is reason to believe that, towards the end of his life, his belief in this power had weakened, and to understand the causes that probably influenced him, it is necessary to take into account a change in the upper ranks of society, as momentous as

the corresponding change in the middle class which has already engaged our attention. It was only in its first stages during the last decade of Disraeli's career, but his eye was quick to detect the movements of society, and the crumbling of the order in which he had moved and dazzled did not escape its scrutiny.

Since the days of Young England, social conditions have undergone a radical transformation, and the reformer who would arouse " the high spirit of a free aristocracy " has, to say the least of it, a more thorny task than confronted Disraeli and Lord John Manners. That such a task is impossible even now, it would be cowardly to assert, for the most practical statesman is he who does not despair of accomplishing miracles, but it is evident that after the very imperfect success of his movement, Disraeli lost much of his faith in the aristocracy as a means of social regeneration.

That he could foresee a transformation which was only beginning in his last years was not to be expected, but he certainly thought that the old régime was in a parlous condition. His novel " Lothair," perhaps his masterpiece as far as craftsmanship is concerned, is a scathing, though delicately veiled, satire on the leisured class. To the majority of his readers his account of English society must have appeared rosy enough, but from the eye of such a critic as Froude, its real significance was not hidden. This satire is more deadly than the denunciation of " Sybil," for in that there was hope, but the note of " Lothair " is one of graceful resignation, a tolerance gloomier than invective. In the great personages who move about the gardens and halls of Brentham we see the members of a dying order, very charming and dignified, but without faith or purpose, and whose outlook on life is fairly typified by a remark of one of them : " Jerusalem ! what on earth could they go to Jerusalem for ? I am told there is no sort of sport

there. They say, in the Upper Nile, there is good shooting." Vanitas vanitatum!

We may not know what workings of thought were masked by that inscrutable countenance during the twenty years' exile of the Tory Party, with its two mocking glimpses of unreal power. It must have been a bitter disappointment to Disraeli when Lord Derby's timidity threw away the one real chance of retrieving their fortunes, but he gave no sign. It is the least articulate period of his career. His "Life of Lord George Bentinck" appeared in 1853, and between that and "Lothair" no considerable literary product came from his pen. The last of the Young England novels had been in 1846. He was, of course, fully occupied by the wear and tear of parliamentary debate, and one or two of his most interesting speeches on Church matters were made during this period. If his belief in the aristocracy had suffered eclipse since the Young England days, his faith in the Church had, if anything, increased, as his breach with Rome and ritualism widened. In one of his greatest speeches he paid a warm tribute to the renewed energy she was everywhere displaying, in spite, or even by virtue of, differences within her fold. We shall find that, when he again emerges into the full light, when he again makes public statement of his principles, he has made a notable step forward since his Young England days. Not that he has changed any of the cardinal doctrines of his youth, in fact he triumphantly reaffirms them, but experience has taught him to apply them with matured wisdom.

We must remember that Disraeli's Toryism was never, in its essence, a class partisanship. The Tory Party was, in his eyes, not the aristocratic faction, nor the Church faction, though it might and did strive to preserve both Church and aristocracy, but the Constitutional, or in other words, the National Party. His theory of race was a more developed statement of the same case, it is the

British nation, the British race for which he stands, and whose interests outweigh all others in his mind. Not a concourse of economic men or "natural" men, not even the sum of living Englishmen, but Burke's partnership, to which we cannot too often recur, of living and dead and unborn. The English nation had been the idol of Disraeli's youth; read "empire" instead of nation and we have the key to his last phase. He had learned in the 'thirties that the Tory Party was historically the national party; in the 'seventies it was his crowning achievement to make it imperial.

The Young England ideal had broken down, and what was left to Disraeli? The prop on which he had leaned was rotten, while as for the Whig ideal of middle-class rule, he had always detested it. It is not wonderful that he should have felt less hesitation than ever in committing the national cause frankly into the hands of the masses. It is extraordinary that friends and opponents alike have reproached him with cynical inconsistency for the part he played in carrying the Reform Bill of 1867. Dicta of Lord Derby, who was about as capable of understanding his colleague as Sidmouth might have been of interpreting Castlereagh, are quoted against him as if they were his own. And there is probably a general impression among those who have not gone into the facts, that it was Disraeli and not Derby who boasted of having dished the Whigs. The critics have, in this instance, gone astray by saddling Disraeli with their own prejudices, and then assailing him for betraying principles which he never held nor professed. The case against him rests upon the assumption that Toryism is a creed of the upper-class reactionaries, that it thrives upon the denial of all trust and all liberty to the people, and that a statesman who deliberately lowers the franchise and opens the floodgates of democracy must of necessity be a traitor to Tory principles.

It must be obvious from our study of his career that not only did Disraeli never give the slightest countenance to doctrines which he had satirized in the character of Lord Monmouth, and explicitly condemned again and again, but that he was equally averse to the new Conservative policy of Peel, which was to resist all change as long as it was safe, and then to run away to the next tenable stronghold of obstruction. Once grasp that Disraeli was sincere in his loyalty to a national and not a class party, and his conduct, under circumstances of unexampled difficulty, appears perfectly honourable and straightforward. To quote the words of his own defence, the great Edinburgh speech of '67, than which nothing could be more explicit or more convincing, "I have always considered that the Tory Party was the national party of England. . . . It is formed of all classes, from the highest to the most homely, and it upholds a series of institutions that are in theory, and ought to be in practice, an embellishment of the national requirements and the security of the national rights. Whenever the Tory Party degenerates into an oligarchy, it becomes unpopular; whenever the national institutions do not fulfil their original intention, the Tory Party becomes odious—but when the people are led by their national leaders and when, by their united influence, the national institutions fulfil their original intentions, the Tory Party is triumphant, and then, under Providence, will secure the prosperity and the power of the country."

It must be admitted that in this respect Disraeli was more enlightened than the majority of his colleagues. The spirit of Eldonian Toryism had taken root, and many there were who would have literally followed the counsel of Lord John Manners and sacrificed everything in the country to the preservation of one order. The "Quarterly Review" was the organ of the most reactionary section

of the Tories, and was severe in its denunciations of the "surrender," and the chorus of abuse was swelled by its ponderous rival, the "Edinburgh." Disraeli treated these denunciations with an amused contempt—"The 'boots' of the 'Blue Boar' and the chambermaid of the 'Red Lion' embrace, and are quite in accord in this—in denouncing the infamy of railroads." When the Bill was mooted in the Cabinet, three of the most important members handed in their resignations. But their disapproval was mild compared with the fury of the old school of Whigs, who saw their idol of middle-class domination bartered away by the very hands to which they had looked for its preservation.

It was this, most of all, that must have convinced Disraeli of the necessity for reform. He had never ceased to deplore the effect of the first Reform Bill in upsetting the balance of the Constitution, not only at the expense of the upper, but of the labouring class. The experience of thirty-five years had been enough to show him that no fate the country might suffer at the hands of democracy, could be worse than the domination of Manchester principles as represented by Cobden or even Gladstone. And the problems with which we were faced were more than ever passing beyond the competence of burgher statesmanship. The year of Disraeli's Reform Bill was the same that saw constituted the Dominion of Canada. Imperialism was knocking at the door, and in this very Edinburgh speech he shows that the momentousness of the problem was not lost on him. "When I remember that upon the common sense, the prudence, and the courage of the community thus circumstanced [he is referring to the British nation], depends the fate of uncounted millions in Asian provinces, and that around the globe there is a circle of domestic settlements that watch us for example and inspiration . . . I declare I often wonder where is the strength of thought and the

fund of feeling that are adequate to cope with such colossal circumstances."

There was only one decision possible for him. He had failed to rouse the aristocracy to its task of leadership, the middle-class domination he eschewed, and it only remained for him boldly to trust the democracy, who were at least likely to be more patriotic than Bright and more magnanimous than the utilitarians. He, at least, had faith that with proper leadership they would not allow their country to come to shame, and he prophesied that history would some day pass her verdict upon them, "This is a great and understanding people." It was with infinite tact and patience that he set about his task. He had, as he frankly admitted, to educate his party, and it was only by consummate leadership, and in the teeth of some of their most cherished prejudices, that he secured the passage of his measure. The result justified his wisdom. Within a few years the electorate had pronounced, for the first time since 1841, a decisive verdict against the principles of the Manchester school.

## CHAPTER XI

### IMPERIUM ET LIBERTAS

NOW that we have investigated the foundations of Disraeli's patriotism, we are able to advance to the consideration of the last and greatest part of his career. His mind, as we have seen, was always expanding, but the main principles of his philosophy were knit together by bonds stronger than adamant, and he never shuffled nor shifted his ground. He had started by laying especial stress on the spiritual ties that united small communities, this was his theory of federalism ; in the middle of his career he put forward his theory of race, which served him as a support for his patriotism ; as he approaches old age we see the same ideal taking root in his mind, and blossoming forth in the imperialism with which his name will always be associated. It is a common sneer on the part of his detractors to pretend that the policy of his later years was a cynical attempt to play upon the worst instincts of the nation, and distract attention from the shortcomings of his domestic policy. This is peculiarly disingenuous, because to any one who endeavours seriously to study his career, it must be obvious that the road by which he travelled led inevitably to its imperial goal, and unless he were deliberately to have barred the gates of knowledge on himself, he could not have missed it. And in one who was wont to study and even anticipate the spirit of his age, such blindness would have been doubly inconceivable.

Patriot he always was, but his imperialism was a plant of slower growth. It was always latent, and save for a too characteristically flippant and jesting sentence in a private letter, about the colonies being like millstones round our neck, he said nothing to contradict it. The third of his early novels, "Alroy," which he said was an attempt to depict his ideal ambition, shows how the idea was germinating in his mind. The hero is a Jewish Prince of the House of David, who conceives the idea of restoring the throne and glories of his ancestors. Up to a certain point success crowns his dreams, and he enters Babylon a conqueror. It is at this point, however, that his real difficulties commence. His chief counsellor and friend, the High Priest Jabaster, is what we might call, in our modern slang, a little Israelite.

He is horrified beyond measure when he finds that Alroy's ambition aspires beyond the bounds of a restored Palestine, and that he aims at establishing an empire. To Jabaster the Jews are the peculiar people and the law of Moses holds good for all time. "We must exist alone. To preserve that loneliness is the great end and essence of our law. What have we to do with Bagdad or its people?" Alroy has learnt to take a more enlightened view, "Is the Lord of Hosts so slight a God that we must place a barrier to his sovereignty and fix the boundaries of omnipotence between the Jordan and the Lebanon?" And again, "Universal empire must not be founded on sectarian prejudices and exclusive rights." Alroy fails, and fails through the defection of Jabaster, but when Disraeli spoke of his ideal ambition, it was surely to the Prince and not the priest that he referred.

Of the famous passage in "Tancred," in which the cession of Cyprus is foreshadowed, perhaps too much has been made. That it should have ever occurred to Disraeli at all is evidence of his extraordinary grasp of Eastern problems, but the value of the pronouncement is dis-

counted by the character through whose mouth it is uttered. Fakredeen is an unbalanced and ambitious young sheikh, a grandiose dreamer, whose dreams follow one another with the rapid inconsequence of cloud patterns on a windy sky. His schemes are pitched in a strain of unconscious humour, and Disraeli did not intend his readers to take them as a serious statement of his own opinions. It may be conjectured, however, that on occasion he used Fakredeen as Hamlet used his madness, and that there is a pregnancy in some of these apparently aimless vapourings that hinted at ideals to which he could not, as yet, definitely commit himself. Thus, amid some nonsense about O'Connell appropriating half the British revenue and Louis Philippe *taking Windsor whenever he feels inclined*, Fakredeen lets fall the suggestion that the Queen of England might with advantage assume the title of Empress of India.

At the period of "Tancred," which is the last of the Young England novels, Disraeli's imperialism appears in a somewhat vague and chaotic state, like the nebula which contains within itself the promise of a universe. His descent, his travels and the natural bent of his genius, all combined to engender an interest in the East, and the intimacy he displays with the problems of what we now know as the Near East can have been equalled by few Englishmen. But our Colonial Empire does not, as yet, occupy a very prominent place in his imagination, though in "Contarini Fleming" there is certainly a passage in which he contrasts modern colonies, which are commercial enterprises, with the political settlements of the ancient Greeks. Considerations of sordid utilitarianism actuate our colonial policy, but "the ancients, when their brethren quitted their native shores, wept and sacrificed." He believes "that a great revolution is at hand in our system of colonization, and that Europe will, before long, recur to the principles of her ancient polity."

But apart from this very significant utterance, and the fact that the whole doctrine of modern imperialism was implicit in the transition which he foresaw, from feudalism to federalism, the colonies do not appear to have been of vital importance to him. He even admits that he once wavered in his attachment to them, which is sufficient evidence that he had not yet made the mental transition from insular patriotism to imperialism. But he stoutly defended the West Indian sugar colonies when they were injured by Peel's Free Trade policy.

It was during the six years of waiting for the harvest of his Reform Bill, that Disraeli gave utterance to what may be taken as the noblest and final statement of his principles. The speeches at Manchester and the Crystal Palace in 1872 and the address to the Glasgow students in 1873, which for some reason does not appear in the collected edition of his speeches, are an admirable summary of his political and personal faith. The gaudiness and vanity have been purged away in the crucible of time, and though the satire is as deadly and the enthusiasm as glowing as ever, there is over it all, and pervading it, the serene and gracious beauty of old age. The persistent and merciless efforts to depict him as a low type of Jew, a vulgar sycophantic charlatan, had failed of their object, and even those who liked him not were fain to respect him. It was the common people, whom he had enfranchised, and on whose patriotism he reposed his confidence, who first recognized him, not as a brilliant leader whom it paid to follow, but as a wise and good man, worthy of their love, one who could say to his country:

> "My true love hath my heart, and I have his,
> By just exchange, one for another given."

It was not the poor who were responsible for the Disraeli legend.

The importance of the Manchester speech is somewhat

overshadowed by that of its successor, but up to that time it was probably its author's masterpiece. It starts with a defence of the Constitution, on the lines already traced in the "Vindication" of nearly forty years earlier. The principles are the same, but the touch is surer and the eloquence more majestic. First comes the classic defence of the throne, an answer to republican and disloyal theorists for all time, to which nothing needs to be added and from which there is nothing to take away; then follows the House of Lords, and a final statement of the functions of an aristocracy, which is an appeal to those whom it defends as much as to those to whom it is addressed; and finally a vindication of the Church, upon the principle of nationality. After this comes an attack on Gladstone's Ministry, and principally on the ground of their having weakened the services and compromised our prestige. Though Disraeli counselled firmness, he was averse to a turbulent and aggressive policy; and he reminded his audience that the relations between England and Europe had undergone a vast change in recent years, they were no longer the same as in the days of Frederick the Great and Chatham. "The Queen of England has become the Sovereign of the most powerful of Oriental States. On the other side of the globe there are new establishments belonging to her which will, in due time, exercise their influence over the distribution of power. The old establishments of this country, now the United States of America, throw their lengthening shades over the Atlantic, which mix with European waters. These are vast and novel elements in the distribution of power." The words on which the speech closes are of the deepest significance, and one that Disraeli fully realized. "I now deliver to you," he says, "as my last words, the cause of the Tory Party, the English Constitution, and of the British Empire."

This was but as a prelude to the memorable speech that

he delivered some two months later, at the Crystal Palace. It is an ordered and complete statement of faith, and as such, it holds a unique position in nineteenth-century oratory. It is comparable with some of the pronouncements of Burke, or with the oration of Pericles over the Athenian dead, for at times the politician is lost in the philosopher, and it is not improbable that in remote ages, when the name of Beaconsfield is remembered with those of Cromwell and Chatham, this speech will convey to the hearts of our children's children an appeal as solemn and touching, as when it thrilled through the stillness of a midsummer afternoon forty years ago.

He starts by the appeal he had often made, that the Tory Party should revert to its true principles. Once again he makes an explicit and even passionate repudiation of class policy, in words which might convince the most irreconcilable of his detractors, "Gentlemen, the Tory Party, unless it is a national party, is nothing. It is not a confederacy of nobles, it is a party formed from all the numerous classes in the realm—classes alike and equal before the law, but whose different conditions and different aims give vigour and variety to our national life." But by what principles is the national party to be actuated? Here, again, he is explicit. Its objects are threefold: to maintain our national institutions, to improve the condition of the people, and to preserve the Empire.

What the first of these signified to him we know already, and need only remark how the subject of our institutions evoked from the reformer of 1867 another splendid outburst of confidence in the labouring class: "I mean that the people of England, and especially the working classes of England, are proud of belonging to a great country, and wish to maintain its greatness—that they are proud of belonging to an imperial country, and are resolved to maintain, if they can, their empire—that

they believe, on the whole, that the greatness and empire of England are to be attributed to the ancient institutions of the land." And referring to the doctrines of revolution and class hatred which had been sedulously propagated among them, he cries, "I say with confidence that the great body of the working class of England utterly repudiate such sentiments. They have no sympathy with them. They are English to the core. They repudiate cosmopolitan principles, they adhere to national principles."

It is in such words that the born leader of men, the hero statesman, makes his appeal. The language of the party tactician, of the demagogue of either label, is not for him. He has too much respect, for himself and for his audience, to grovel and cringe before Demos, to conjure him with servile appeals to his vanity and greed, and to offer him bread and doles in return for the pickings of office and national disaster. It is not true, in spite of social psychology and worldly wisdom, that masses of men are as beasts without a heart, incapable of responding to worthy leadership. A nation has gone far in decay when her meanest citizens have sunk to the utilitarian level. It is, indeed, fatally easy to appeal to the baser passions of the crowd. Greed and panic and cruelty are strings on which the Cleons and Marats of all ages have known how to play, until the people have gone mad, and rushed headlong, through crime, to their own destruction, trampling their very false prophets underfoot. It is the highest form of political faith to evoke God's spirit from His image, the trust that made even eighteenth-century England rally to the call of Chatham, that made the Highlanders of Balaclava answer their leader's "You must die where you stand" with "Aye, aye, we'll do just that, Sir Colin." "You have nothing to trust to," said Disraeli, "but your own energy and the sublime instincts of an ancient people."

He did not, however, intend that such an appeal should serve him or his party as an excuse for shirking the problem of social amelioration. On the contrary, he spoke of the "policy of the Tory Party, the hereditary, the traditionary policy of the Tory Party, that would improve the condition of the people." The fires of "Sybil" had not grown cold. He believed, in the teeth of the classical economists, that it was possible to shorten the hours of labour and increase its reward without injury to the nation's wealth. The health of the people was of peculiar concern to him, and under this head he included such reforms as housing, inspection of labour and provisions, and the proper enjoyment of air, light, and water. One of his opponents had scoffed at this as a policy of sewage, to which he replied that a workman, who had seen his children stricken down by fever, might view the matter in a different light from a Liberal Member of Parliament.

Such are the first and the third of the principles that Disraeli laid down for the guidance of his followers. But it is the second, the maintenance of the Empire, that is the crowning point of his political edifice, and on this subject his remarks are of such importance as to merit transcribing them in full:

"If you look to the history of the country since the advent of Liberalism—forty years ago—you will find that there has been no effort so continuous, so subtle, supported by so much energy, and carried on with so much ability and acumen, as the attempts of Liberalism to effect the disintegration of the Empire of England.

"And, gentlemen, of all its efforts, this is the one that has been nearest to success. Statesmen of the highest character, writers of the most distinguished ability, the most organized and efficient means, have been employed in this endeavour. It has been proved to all of us that we have lost money by our colonies.

It has been shown with precise, with mathematical demonstration, that never was a jewel in the Crown of England so truly costly as the Empire of India. How often has it been suggested that we should at once emancipate ourselves from this incubus. Well, the result was nearly accomplished. When those subtle views were adopted by the country under the plausible name of granting self-government to the colonies, I confess that I myself thought that the tie was broken. Not that I, for one, object to self-government. I cannot conceive how our distant colonies can have their affairs administered except by self-government. But self-government, in my opinion, ought to have been conceded as part of a great policy of Imperial consolidation. It ought to have been accompanied by an Imperial tariff, by securities for the people of England for the enjoyment of the unappropriated lands which belonged to the sovereign as their trustee, and by a military code which should have precisely defined the means and the responsibilities by which the colonies should be blended, and by which, if necessary, this country should call for aid from the colonies themselves. It ought, further, to have been accompanied by the institution of some representative council in the metropolis which would have brought the colonies into constant and continuous relations with the Home Government. All this, however, was omitted because those who advised that policy, and, I believe, their convictions were sincere, looked upon the colonies of England, looked even upon our connection with India, as a burden upon this country, viewing everything in a financial aspect, and totally passing by those moral and political considerations which make nations great, and by the influence of which alone, men are distinguished from animals.

" Well, what has been the result of this attempt during the reign of Liberalism for the disintegration of the

Empire? It has entirely failed. But how has it failed? Through the sympathy of the colonies with the Mother Country. They have decided that the Empire shall not be destroyed, and in my opinion no Minister in this country will do his duty who neglects any opportunity of reconstructing, as much as possible, our Colonial Empire, and of responding to those distant sympathies which may become the source of incalculable strength and happiness to this land."

Such was the ideal that Disraeli put before his countrymen, and the process of time has vindicated the wisdom and prophetic insight of his words. Only in one point are they open to question, and this is in the detail of the Crown lands. To have retained these would almost certainly have caused serious irritation, if not resistance, on the part of the colonies, and it is probable that, if he had been concerned with the matter officially, he would have found cause for waiving the claim. But, even allowing for this defect, the speech will hold, in relation to the Imperial faith, a similar position to that of the Apostles' Creed in the Christian theology. We must remember that in the early 'seventies the star of Empire was only just above the horizon. After the American War of Independence, the colonies and the Empire, with the partial exception of India, occupied a minor place in the thoughts of statesmen. The revolutionary and Napoleonic wars had, unlike the two preceding Anglo-French struggles, been fought almost exclusively upon European questions, and though we acquired the beginnings of our South African dominion, it was a by-product of the war hardly noticed at the time.

In "Contarini Fleming," the young Disraeli had described the bond that then united us to our dependencies. They were as commercial enterprises, and the fact is perhaps some excuse for the utilitarians, who

wished to cut them adrift for commercial reasons. The feeling of the colonists themselves was little understood or regarded; the missionaries' policy of favouring the black man against the white which caused the great trek in South Africa, and the less noxious tyranny of "Bounty" Bligh in Australia, are fair examples of our colonial system early in the century. High Tories like the Duke of Wellington were for asserting the authority of the Crown, on the lines laid down by Doctor Johnson in his American pamphlets, and Radicals like James Mill were for getting rid of it altogether.

With the prevalence of Whig ideas, the general tendency was to run to the latter extreme. There is no doubt that the Liberal principles of men like Lord Durham and Buller were a beneficent change from those which had previously obtained, and that the bureaucracy of Downing Street, which had already produced one rebellion in Canada, could not be a permanent system for rapidly maturing communities. It would have been well had our statesmen proceeded on the course subsequently indicated by Disraeli, and so relaxed the bond as to have relieved our kinsmen of all sense of constraint, without in any way weakening it. It would have been possible to have established not only a preference, but a customs union between the different parts of the Empire, and to have made a far-sighted provision for imperial defence and federation. Unfortunately the time was not favourable for such a policy. With the exception of a few wise spirits of either party, politicians did not concern themselves to any considerable extent with colonial affairs, except in so far as the emancipation of slaves formed a convenient substitute for bettering the condition of white men, or the suspension of the Jamaica constitution was a means of defeating Lord Melbourne's already tottering Government.

Lord John Russell was, of the Whig leaders, the

staunchest upholder of the imperial connection, but even he confessed to doubts about its permanence, while as for Palmerston, he was too much occupied with European politics to spare his attention for business appertaining to the Colonial Office. The question of retention or of separation was quite an open one in the middle of the century, and for eleven years the Permanent Under-Secretary for the Colonies was a man who believed that beyond the possibility of doubt their destiny was independence, and that all we could do was to make the separation as amicable as possible. The belief in the magic of Free Trade, which followed upon Peel's surrender, had resulted in the doctrine being forced upon the colonies in spite of considerable loss and inconvenience at the time, and permanent weakening of the connection. Just before Bismarck set about accomplishing German unity by means of a zollverein, our statesmen were wantonly clearing the way for a system of mutually exclusive tariffs within the Empire.

Things were at their worst during the preponderance of the Manchester school. Cobden had advocated the abandonment of India, and he and Bright never lost any opportunity of weakening the Empire, even though they professed a platonic sympathy with the colonists themselves. Gladstone's attitude was characteristic. He denied that he wished for separation, and he was as warm in theory and cold in practice as he was about national defence. His passion for economy and hatred of responsibility were here, as usual, the guiding principles of his policy, and as long as the colonies gave no trouble whatever, and did not cost a penny, he was only too glad to see them loyal and prosperous. It was during his first ministry that Lord Granville, who afterwards distinguished himself as Foreign Secretary by his infamous plea for betraying Gordon, was inflicted on the colonies. Here he acted conformably to his nature by

withdrawing the British troops in the midst of the troubles with the Maoris, and despite the passionate remonstrances of the colonies. "It is difficult," says Mr. Egerton, "to suppose that any other Minister could have treated the sufferings of the colonists with such cool and well-bred indifference as was shown by Lord Granville." The loyalty of New Zealand to the Mother Country is, in every way, one of the most astonishing things in modern history. Surely in the heart of every one worthy the name of Englishman must echo the words of the German poet: "I cannot act dishonourably to one who has behaved so honourably to me."

It was during this first ministry of Gladstone that the fortunes of the Empire were at their lowest ebb. It seemed the deliberate policy of England to turn her children adrift, as the British admiral was supposed to have said to his captains at the bombardment of Sevastopol, "You can all go to the devil in your own way." Perhaps this is to take too flattering a view of the case, for as the New Zealanders said, they were expected to bear the responsibilities of independence without enjoying its powers. But fortunately all Englishmen were not of the type of Lord Granville, and another spirit was beginning to make itself felt with regard to our dependencies. We have observed, in the course of the preceding chapters, how, in the higher branches of literature, there was a tendency to supplement patriotic by imperial ideals. The influence of Carlyle was potent, and it will be remembered how, as early as in the 'thirties, he had preached the gospel of Empire in terms as emphatic and explicit as those long afterwards employed by Disraeli, whom he hated and misunderstood. Indeed, there is nothing more lamentable than the ungenerous prejudice with which Carlyle pursued one who was his natural ally, and it was characteristic of Disraeli to heap coals of fire on the white head of his detractor. Ruskin and Froude were the two who

came most under the spell of Carlyle. How Ruskin flung himself into the cause we know already. Froude's powers were exercised in another and not less important sphere.

More than once we have had occasion to notice how the study of history has been an index to the spirit and patriotism of nations. In the middle of the century by far the most powerful influence was that of Macaulay, who was a patriot indeed, but a Whig patriot, and who, despite his essays on Clive and Chatham, did little, if anything, to forward the imperial cause. Indeed, he speaks with tolerant patronage of the sentiments aroused in the bosom of Burke by our Indian Empire, and shares Burke's prejudice against one of the greatest of our administrators. On the other hand, there were the fathers of the scientific school, who masked a bias which was usually unpatriotic under a pretence of detachment. Froude, however, takes a view of our history that may fairly be described as imperial, and in his monumental work on sixteenth-century England he regards that period as a sort of prelude to British expansion, and shows how our subsequent development was prepared and rendered possible by the Reformation and the struggle with Spain. His " Life of Cæsar " is the apotheosis of the greatest of all Empire builders, and here the splendour of Cæsar's ideal is contrasted with the selfish exclusiveness of the senators who murdered him. In 1885 he wrote an account, based on his own travels, of Australia and New Zealand, hasty and imperfect in execution, but whose chief value lies in its last chapter, with its brilliant plea for a wider conception of our responsibilities, and its desire to tighten in every way possible the bond with the colonies. Careless and inaccurate Froude may have been, and these are grievous faults which admit of no excuse, but his mistakes are not more glaring than those of his assailant Freeman, and pale into insignificance beside the monstrous unfairness of Macaulay. His " History,"

which came out between 1856 and 1870, opened a new vista to his contemporaries, and showed how even Henry VIII might rise up against Manchester and condemn it. This view of England, not as a stationary, but as an expanding and imperial power, was reinforced by Seeley's brilliant "Expansion of England."

One of the first signs of the imperialist spirit is the tendency to dwell upon the glories of Elizabethan England. Such books as Kingsley's "Westward Ho!" turned men's thoughts seaward, and taught them to take a larger view of their country's mission than they were likely to derive from the philosophy and politics of their own day. It was not possible to be at the same time an admirer of Drake and a disciple of Cobden. One of the best products of Tennyson's last, or imperial, phase, was his ballad of the "Revenge." Indeed, Tennyson's conception of history, as evinced in his three plays, is not different from that of Froude. "This trilogy of plays," he wrote, "portrays the making of England," and his son says of them, "In Harold we have the great conflict between Danes, Saxons and Normans for supremacy, the awakening of the English clergy and people from the slumber into which they had, for the most part, fallen, and the forecast of the greatness of our composite race. In 'Becket' the struggle is between the Crown and the Church for predominance, a struggle which continued for many centuries. In 'Mary' are described the final downfall of Roman Catholicism in England, and the dawning of a new age; for after the era of priestly domination comes the era of the freedom of the individual." It is in the dying prophecy of Edward the Confessor that we find Tennyson's vision of the world-power of which he had portrayed the birth. One common feature of Froude, Kingsley and Tennyson, was their opposition to the Church of Rome as an anti-national power, and this leads Tennyson to glorify Cranmer, and

Kingsley to speak of one of his characters as no longer a man but a Jesuit.

In his Crystal Palace speech Disraeli had condescended to refer to a Radical politician who had uttered some impertinence against the Throne, and who had thereby provoked a riot. But, curiously enough, this very politician was a man who, despite his disloyalty, had already done yeoman service in the very cause which Disraeli had most at heart. It was Charles Dilke's "Greater Britain" that first gave the ordinary reading public some conception of what the empire really was. Not only did it contain disquisitions upon all sorts of colonial problems about which the ordinary man had understood nothing and cared less, but it was throughout informed by a spirit definitely imperialist, that condemned a too narrow nationalism on the one hand and cosmopolitanism on the other. "The idea which in all the length of my travels has been at once my fellow and my guide—a key wherewith to unlock the hidden things of strange new lands—is a conception, however imperfect, of the grandeur of our race, already girdling the earth, which it is destined, perhaps, to overspread." Such words might have come from Disraeli himself.

It is remarkable how many of the leading figures of Victorianism ended their days in the imperial faith. Among them we have found Tennyson, Swinburne, Carlyle, Ruskin, Disraeli, Froude, Seeley and Dilke. Even Mill had made admissions that almost entitle him to be included, and we might add the name of Watts It is only by slow and imperceptible stages, like the wave on wave of the swelling tide, that nations begin to adapt themselves to a wider horizon But the change will be manifest if we compare the year of the Queen's accession with that of her Diamond Jubilee. In 1837 very few people gave so much as a thought to the Empire; in 1897 the wonder of the world was fixed on the loyalty that brought the

representatives and hearts of the daughter nations to the throne of their common sovereign. And be it remembered that this change of feeling was in no wise originally connected with any class or party. Some of the earliest practical imperialists—Durham, Buller and Molesworth—were Radicals; Ruskin, Carlyle and Froude were certainly no flatterers of the upper class; Dilke was coupled with another rising politician, Joseph Chamberlain, as representing the extreme left wing of Gladstone's following; Swinburne was a fierce republican; Disraeli himself had written "Sybil." This was not wonderful, considering that the colonies themselves were soon to lead the world upon the path of democracy, the most Socialistic of them all being the most conspicuously loyal.

When Disraeli gathered up the scattered threads of imperialism, and made it the policy of one of the great political parties, he was only following out principles to which he had been educating his followers. His original idea of Toryism had been the pursuit of a national policy under the leadership of the aristocracy. This had failed because the aristocracy had proved themselves unable to rise to the opportunity, so he had appealed to the people themselves to work out their country's salvation. But for this, something more than a merely national policy was needed. In the early 'seventies the European system afforded little scope for English statesmanship. The policy of befriending small nations had passed out of the sphere of practical politics, for Italy was free, Hungary was settling down into the Austrian constitutional system, Poland was finally crushed, and with the other little states there was no present danger of interference. The position of England was a singularly easy one; little danger was as yet to be feared from a broken and humiliated France, or from a Germany without sea power. As a member of the European family, England was reduced almost to a cipher, especially as the "Alabama"

arbitration and the tearing up of the Black Sea Treaty had made it generally understood that she could be insulted and imposed upon with impunity.

Such a state of things, however admirable in theory, was extremely unsatisfactory in practice. A nation that has no policy and no responsibilities is likely before long to fall into habits of selfishness and indolence. To remain in a state of self-absorbed isolation—buying as cheap and selling as dear as possible—was, to say the least of it, not an inspiriting ideal. Besides, it must have been evident, even then, that this state of things could not last for ever. Greater rivals than the France of the third empire confronted us, nations superior in resources and population, with every male citizen a trained soldier, and hedged round with protective tariffs. Russia was stretching out octopus arms towards India; the competition of the United States was already making itself felt; explorers were beginning to reveal vast and unappropriated tracts that must ere long fall under the influence of one or another European power; the Eastern problem was unsolved, and would soon be clamouring for solution; the colonies were coming to maturity. It was no time to cast aside our armour and thank God that we were not as other nations, but a period of solemn preparation against what was likely to be the sternest ordeal even in our history. To strengthen and fortify ourselves against the time when we should be face to face with steel-clad Armadas and a Continental System grown world-wide, that we might still retain our headship of the nations, as the hammer of tyrants and the champion of all that is best in civilization, such was the object of the threefold programme—the maintenance of our institutions, social reform, and the strengthening of the Empire.

For these are objects that can only be pursued in unison, and that one should be cherished to the exclusion of the others is a danger nearly as great as the neglect of

all three. The maintenance of our institutions may degenerate by itself into a blind and reactionary Conservatism, whose end is slow death or revolution. The improvement of social conditions is fraught with even deadlier peril, for it is too easy, in the absence of high ideals, to whet the appetite of democracy for plunder, to teach them that the material interests of their class are the only things worth caring about, to inaugurate an epoch of class war and political bribery, reckless and unpatriotic, plunging the nation into a chaos soon to be terminated by the *coup de grâce* of some eager rival. Nor is imperialism itself without its dangers. Not only does it attract a swarm of parasites, men whose interest in the Empire is of a sinister and financial import, but it may be set up as a blind by plutocracy, in order to divert the attention of the lower class from any kind of social improvement. There is a type of mind, increasingly common under the conditions of modern life, that brings the cause of empire into disrepute, by making it the excuse for the peculiarly offensive braggadocio which has acquired the nickname of jingoism. No one who remembers the outburst of vulgarity which made the patriotism of our non-combatant populace the laughing-stock of Europe during the South African War, will be at a loss for an example. Above all things, restraint and dignity, "a proud reserve" as Disraeli expressed it, are necessary for those who aspire to be members of a governing race, whether in ancient Rome or modern London.

> "By all ye cry or whisper,
> By all ye leave or do,
> The sullen, silent peoples,
> Shall weigh your gods and you."

It is, after all, the spirit and not the letter that tells, and the wisest schemes of government will fail if unsupported by the steadfastness and enthusiasm of the governed. Christianity itself has been the excuse for

some of the foulest crimes that have blackened God's earth, and there is no cause so sacred that it cannot be turned to baseness. It will assuredly be of little avail that we have talked and shouted of Empire, if selfishness and greed have been the motive springs of our conduct. No man is worthy the name of patriot if he secretly values his class, or his interests, or life itself more than the Motherland. The road of the wisest policy is fraught with danger every step of the way, and if the spirit of the nation is rotten, the wise man's counsel will fare even as the fool's. This must be remembered by those who would blame patriotism and imperialism because they are too often the last resort of scoundrels.

It has often been a subject of regret or criticism that Disraeli did not do more, during his six years of office, to carry out his social programme. If we consider the conditions against which he had to fight, the only wonder will be that he accomplished so much. The secrets of his Cabinet are not revealed, and we do not know how much his schemes suffered at the hands of his colleagues. That they did suffer is certain. It is wrong to assume that any modern Minister, no matter what his majority, is an autocrat who can impose his will upon his colleagues and his supporters, however much his opinions may be in advance of theirs. Disraeli had to rely upon the support of the old Conservative Party, still imperfectly educated, and prone to distrust too adventurous a policy, whether at home or abroad. The idea that was uppermost in their minds was to enjoy some peace after five years of Gladstonian legislation, somewhat after the fashion of Leo X: "Now that we have the Papacy, let us enjoy it." The Cabinet included the Lord Cranborne, now Lord Salisbury, who had denounced "the Conservative surrender" of 1867 in "The Quarterly," a man of much ability but restricted ideals; Lord Carnarvon, who had resigned office once and was to resign again rather than

be party to his chief's policy; Lord Derby, a little-Englander who was ere long to find a place among Gladstone's following; Sir Stafford Northcote, a Conservative Free Trader of the Peelite tradition; and the Lord John Manners of Young England notoriety. With such a following, it is obvious that no Prime Minister could have embarked upon any drastic schemes of social reform without the certainty of defeat. Besides, the time was not yet ripe for any startling change. It was necessary to proceed with the utmost circumspection, in the absence of experience and in the teeth of "political economy," lest the country might be plunged into worse evils by hasty legislation than those she had suffered under laissez-faire. The menacing situation abroad made it imperative for the Government, after their first two years of office, to concentrate attention upon foreign and colonial affairs. But in a quiet way they made solid progress, and Lord Cross's administration of the Home Office marks a definite break with the tradition of letting social reforms take care of themselves. In pursuance of Disraeli's motto "Sanitas sanitatum," an important Act was brought in dealing with the housing problem, and giving the local authorities compulsory powers of purchase; a Merchant Shipping Bill was passed and subsequently strengthened; the Factory and Workshops Consolidation Act was carried in 1878; the status of the trade unions was placed upon a satisfactory basis, and a number of useful measures of minor importance swelled the list. It is not as striking a performance as we might have expected from the author of "Sybil," but Ministers must work with the material they find to hand, and in politics there is no place for Don Quixote.

What was the ultimate purpose of Beaconsfield's Eastern Policy? Here we are in a region of speculation and hypothesis, and it is not likely that the secret which was buried with Beaconsfield will be brought to full light

for many years. But it may be permissible to suggest that the assumptions upon which contemporary criticism is based are likely to ignore the essential motives of his conduct. He had relied upon the influence we had acquired at the Porte, which was bound to us by every tie of interest and gratitude, to enable us to play a leading part in the regeneration of the Turkish Empire. That such an idea was unwarrantable is not to be entertained, for there was no reason why England, with her natural and historical advantages, should have failed to retain an influence that was usurped by Germany. Beaconsfield's policy was never given time to develop, and was deliberately reversed by his successor. He believed, and not unnaturally, that the people who had loaded him with honour in '78 would not condemn him in '80. If there had been any doubt as to Gladstone's intentions, it was soon removed when England assumed the office of bailiff for Greece and Montenegro, and lost no opportunity of showing that she meant to repudiate her friendship with the Turk. Is it to be wondered at that Abdul Hamid should have cherished a resentment against England as bitter as that of Frederick the Great after his betrayal by Lord Bute? It is to be feared that the vicissitudes of our party system have more than once lent colour to the reproach "*perfide Albion.*"

Beaconsfield had his own scheme for dealing with the Armenian problem, and facing the solemn responsibility that devolved upon us when we resisted the advance of Russia in these regions. Professor Ramsay, who is probably the greatest living authority on the subject of Armenia, speaks of Great Britain as holding, after the Treaty of Berlin, the Protectorate of Asia Minor, champion of the Christians in Armenia, checking by a system of military consuls the administration of the country. He speaks of these consuls as "a beacon of hope to the oppressed Christians of Eastern Turkey, encouraging

them to crave for justice, and fostering in their hearts the inclination to demand the elementary right of personal safety for the person and the family. It was a crime of deepest dye to plant this hope in the minds of the Armenian Christians and then to withdraw from the position in which alone we could help them." When Mr. Goschen replaced Sir Henry Layard at the Porte, the consuls were left unsupported, and the Sultan was deaf to their representations. The Government took the first opportunity of withdrawing them, and Gladstone fell back upon his cherished policy of invoking the concert of Europe. Before long, Bismarck contemptuously informed him that Germany was indifferent to the subject of Armenian Reform. The rest of the Armenian tragedy is written in blood.

It is more than probable that Beaconsfield's Asian policy at the Berlin Conference did not stop short at Armenia. One of the most hostile of his critics has singularly overreached himself when trying to convict him, not only of unscrupulousness, but of stupidity. Why, he asks, did he not stipulate for Egypt, instead of Cyprus? Why, indeed? Whatever else may be charged against him, not even his detractors deny that he was among the most acute of modern statesmen. Why, then, did he allow himself to be fobbed off with Cyprus, when he might in all probability have secured a more substantial and, for that matter, more dazzling acquisition? It is at least probable that Cyprus meant for him more than another naval station in the Mediterranean, or a counterpoise to Russia's acquisitions in Armenia.

The clue to the problem probably lies in Lord Derby's statement that the reason for his resignation was the Premier's proposal, under certain circumstances, to seize not only Cyprus but a point opposite to it on the Syrian coast. In occupying Cyprus, then, Beaconsfield was looking not towards Suez or Malta, but eastward, as we

might have expected from the perusal of "Tancred." And to eastward lay the rich plains of Mesopotamia, a land so favoured by nature as to be the reputed site of Eden, and only waiting to be developed by the resources of civilization. Even if the purchase of the Suez Canal shares had not already paved the way for our occupation of Egypt, here was a prize of far greater value, and one which, if it did not fall to us, was certain to go to some other European power. Ever since the 'thirties, when Chesney commenced his explorations, the so-called overland route to India had been a field for British enterprise. A firman had actually been obtained from the Sultan for the construction of a railway to the Persian Gulf, but Palmerston refused assistance, and the scheme hung fire. As late as 1875 the Government had been asked to guarantee such a line, and though they declined to do so they expressed a hope that it would be constructed.

That it is of importance to this country to prevent any other power obtaining control of the Euphrates valley, must be obvious to the most superficial observer. The power that controls the railway can hardly fail to obtain a footing and eventually a naval base upon the Persian Gulf, which is bound to be a menace to our Indian Empire. Again, when once this route is opened out, no small part of the trade of India will tend to flow through it. It is impossible with the advance of civilization that one of the richest districts in the world, a trade route known to Alexander the Great, can remain permanently undeveloped, and it ought to be unthinkable that it should fall into the hands of one of our military and commercial rivals, who would thus be planted astride our communications with India, and capable of shutting us out from what might be one of our most valuable markets. We may therefore conjecture that in acquiring Cyprus Beaconsfield intended to provide us with a point of vantage, from which we could control one end of the

proposed line from the Levant to the Persian Gulf. Our undisputed supremacy in the Gulf would have sufficed for the other end, and the influence we had acquired at the Porte would have smoothed any difficulties there might have been as to our control of the scheme. There is a passage in Sir Stafford Northcote's diary that lends support to this theory. Speaking of the momentous council where Lord Derby resigned on account of this very proposal to seize Cyprus, Sir Stafford says: "We had some reason to apprehend a still more inconvenient advance to the coast of Asia Minor, where they [the Russians] might seize points which would threaten the Suez Canal and the Euphrates Valley, and so intercept our communications with India."

It is impossible to deny that Beaconsfield's policy was one of the most brilliant and comprehensive that have ever occurred to a British statesman, and that his mingled strength and tact in its pursuit justly earned him a reputation hardly second to that of Bismarck among the statesmen of his time. And yet, in one vital respect, we must admit that he made a grievous error, that he was emphatically in the wrong where Gladstone was in the right. For in dealing with the newly created Christian principalities of the Balkans, he took no account of the strength of nationality, he did not recognize that the best barrier against Russia consisted in the breasts of free men. It must be reckoned as the darkest blot upon his record that he handed Macedonia back to the Infidel.

If he failed, he failed greatly, and it was in no unworthy or unimaginative spirit that he conceived his policy. But we believe that a close study of his career will reveal one of those subtle and philosophic limitations which are the common property of the vast mass of mankind, but which sometimes prevent the greatest of them from attaining to supreme greatness. We must go back to the Don Pacifico affair, and follow up the clue given us in his

contribution to that famous debate. In England's interests, we have seen, he was ready to condone Austrian rule in Italy. In other words, provided England prospered, he would consent to see her turn a blind eye to tyranny and injustice. This view is borne out by a yet more significant utterance towards the end of 1877, when Russia had gone to war on behalf of the oppressed Slav populations and England remained neutral. "Cosmopolitan critics—men who are the friends of every country save their own—have denounced this policy as a selfish policy. My lord mayor, it is as selfish as patriotism." Is it too much to say, in the light of this pronouncement, that Beaconsfield's love for England, a passionate and magnificent devotion, was yet tainted with this fundamental misconception, that the object of patriotism is to pursue the interests of the Motherland regardless of principle, that policy is to be governed by no ideals more exalted than those of brutes or economic men? Not so did Cromwell, not so did Chatham, conceive of our imperial mission, but such is certainly the counsel of Machiavelli.

But to bracket Beaconsfield with Machiavelli would be too sweeping and ungenerous an account of his philosophy. The imaginative sympathy that would have thrown the Tory Party upon the support of the humblest of the people, that could conceive of an Empire buttressed upon liberty, could not stop wholly short at our frontiers. Beaconsfield could, on occasion, speak in a very different strain. "It is not on fleets and armies," he said, after the Treaty of Berlin, ". . . that I alone or mainly depend in that enterprise on which this country is about to enter. It is on what I most highly value—the consciousness that in the Eastern nations there is confidence in this country, and that, while they know we can enforce our policy, at the same time they know that our Empire is an Empire of liberty, truth and justice." These are indeed noble words,

worthy of Beaconsfield's genius and the greatness of England, but it is impossible to read his later speeches without seeing that he was more inclined to defend his policy on the ground of England's interest, than of her honour as a Christian nation.

And hence, we suspect, arises his lack of passionate sympathy with the little nations, that made him treat them more like pieces on a chessboard than communities of free men. His miscalculation was connected to some extent with his favourite doctrine of race. He was conscious of those vast racial sympathies, overflowing the frontiers of nations, that were becoming a force to be reckoned with in the Europe of later nineteenth century. He feared what he himself described as "that Panslavist confederacy and conspiracy which has already proved so disadvantageous to the happiness of the world." This fear of Russian aggression had long haunted the mind of Beaconsfield. It is a proof of the singular consistency of his mind that in the early 'forties, when he was still a struggling and disappointed Member of Parliament, he had taken a precisely similar line on the Eastern Question. "The great question of foreign policy," says his biographer, recording his speech on this occasion, "was simpler than statesmen were inclined to admit. If they looked at the map, they would see that the two strongest positions in the world were the Sound and the Dardanelles. . . . Russia was approaching them gradually, regularly, sometimes even rapidly, and if she obtained possession of one, the balance of power would be disturbed, while if both fell under her authority, universal Empire would be threatened. Our true policy was, therefore, by diplomatic action to maintain Turkey in a state to hold the Dardanelles."

His fears were the aspirations of Russia. The policy of the Tsar, at San Stefano, was undoubtedly to create a vassal State weak enough to be at his command, and

strong enough to overawe Constantinople. Gladstone's political achievement lay in his perception of the fact that Bulgarian patriotism would prove stronger than the kinship and domination of Russia. Beaconsfield accepted the Russian theory, and by a masterpiece of diplomacy prevented Russia from achieving what was already impossible.

Thus his European policy at Berlin, though unsurpassed as a *tour de force*, was like a house built upon the sand, owing to this limitation of his outlook. It is true that no one could have foreseen the infatuated brutality by which Russia was to drive the Bulgarians to mutiny against her yoke, nor the revival of Islam in the early 'eighties which was to be fraught with such dire results in three continents. And Beaconsfield's policy of reforming the Turk by English influence was never given a chance to develop. Such considerations may palliate, but cannot justify, his handing back of Christian Macedonia to the Infidel, and the perverse ingenuity with which he divided Bulgaria into two, even taking care that the name of the lesser portion should be "Eastern Roumelia," and not "Southern Bulgaria," for fear, as he said, of "constant intriguing to bring about a union between the two provinces."

Despite our belief that Disraeli's Macedonian policy was founded on a mistaken hypothesis, we must admit that his method of enforcing it was a classic of statesmanship. To have forced Russia to abate the terms exacted by her victorious armies at the gates of Constantinople, and to have done this without sacrificing the life of a single British soldier, was an achievement which earned the admiration of Bismarck himself, and fully justified the applause with which his countrymen greeted Disraeli on his return from Berlin. He had secured peace by grasping the problem as firmly as if it were a nettle, by his ordering up the fleet to Besika Bay, by his obvious and

peacemaking readiness to back his words by arms, and, above all, by his magnificent realization of the possibilities of Empire. To the future historian, the dispatch of the Indian troops to Malta may bear a significance of which we hardly dream. It marks the coming of Greater Britain as a factor in international politics, and of what stupendous drama this may be the commencement it lies with us and our children, by God's grace, to determine.

That Beaconsfield was able to do little directly to promote the cause of unity with the colonies, is not to be wondered at. The Constitutions could not be tampered with, and to deal with the questions of Imperial defence or preference before public feeling on either side was ripe for the change, would have been worse than useless. The best that could be done was to refrain from aggravating the mischief, and by dealing with the colonies in a generous and sympathetic spirit. To this end the appointment to the Colonial Office of Lord Carnarvon, a very different type of statesman from Lord Granville, was well made. The triumphant administration of Mr. Chamberlain would not have been possible twenty years earlier, and in any case Disraeli had not such a man at his command. As for the two little wars that brought the Ministry to its fall, for the Zulu War they were not answerable, and after the first Afghan War it must be admitted that they made a grave miscalculation, one that cost the life of the gallant Cavagnari. The situation was one of the utmost difficulty, and it was imperative upon us to assert our prestige after the reception of a Russian mission and the rejection of our own. But their management of the whole affair must be counted as the darkest spot upon the record of the Government, and Gladstone's reversal of their policy was, in this instance at any rate, justified by results.

There is something in Beaconsfield that puts us in mind of the first great leader of his race, who brought the

people to the verge of the Promised Land, and yet, owing to one last defect, was not held worthy to enter therein. He weaned the great party of which he was a member from a selfish opportunism to a noble trust in the people; he bequeathed three cardinal principles for its guidance—social reform, Imperialism and the maintenance of our Constitution; he broke decisively with the tradition of shirking responsibility and governing by a tradesman's calculation of profit and loss; above all, he opened the souls of Englishmen to the consciousness of a free Empire, a calling and a dignity not inferior to that of Rome. Had he gone on to proclaim an Empire not only powerful, not only world-wide, but unselfish and Christian, who should deny him the place among statesmen that Shakespeare occupies among men of letters? It is his Nemesis that those who have followed in his footsteps should tend less to emulate his virtues than to exaggerate his faults.

Beaconsfield failed only in not acting up to the height of his ideals. In adopting the language he sometimes adopted the thought of Rome, and in so doing violated the first of his principles, the maintenance of the Constitution. For the strength and the glory and the soul of that Constitution is liberty, and he who loves liberty will not endure to crush it, nor to see it crushed in others. It may yet be the destiny of Britain to reveal to the world the possibility and the example of an Empire invincible only for good, and held together, not by uniformity of government, not by crushing the individuality of her provinces, but even as a wheel that moveth equally, by the Love that moves the sun and the other stars.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE TRANSFORMATION OF SOCIETY

IN the middle of the century, the upper class enjoyed an opportunity and power such as was never to recur. It is true that the days of pocket boroughs had gone forever, and the enmity of a peer was no longer little short of death sentence; the Reform Bill had placed the reins of government in the hands of the middle class, but the social influence of the aristocracy and landed gentry was unimpaired. They had shared in the influx of wealth that had followed on the industrial revolution, and land was still a profitable investment. Even for some time after the repeal of the Corn Laws this continued to be the case, and it was not until American grain came to be imported in vast quantities, that the first pinch of agricultural depression began to be felt.

The state of society which then prevailed, and lives in the memory even of middle-aged people, is almost inconceivable to those of us who have grown up under another régime. The word feudal, which has now come to be nothing more than a transparent term of political abuse, was a formidable reality in the days of our grandfathers. The country magnates, the big landowners, wielded an influence out of all proportion greater than that of their present successors. Obedience on the part of their tenantry was expected and usually conceded as a matter of course. The squires, with comparatively few exceptions, would take a paternal interest in their dependents,

but they expected in return a more than filial compliance with their wishes. On one almost model estate, for instance, a couple of tenants were summarily dismissed for having joined a labourers' union. Open difference in politics was equivalent to a personal insult, and dealt with accordingly. The quaint and forgotten treatises from which the youth of an earlier generation imbibed its moral instruction, reveal the superstitious veneration that hedged a coronet. In one typical instance, the narrow way is compared to a path through Lord A's estate, his lordship repeatedly figuring throughout the comparison in the rôle of the Deity. Nor was the benevolent despotism of squire and parson resented by the majority of those subject to it. It was easy to indulge in such satire as :

> " Lord, keep us in our proper stations,
> And bless the squire and his relations " ;

but loyalty is never contemptible, nor were the landowners wholly unworthy of it, even by the admission of Carlyle. Among the rustic survivors from those days may be found a self-respect and inborn courtesy, that are passing away from the modern countryside.

During the greater part of the Queen's reign, the upper class formed an exclusive and privileged circle, admission to which was a matter of the utmost difficulty, and only to be accomplished by men of notable merit, such as Disraeli himself. Not the least of the services that Queen Victoria rendered to her country was the social influence she exercised during the early part of her reign. The example of George IV had grievously affected the upper ranks of society, and this she set herself to counteract. She was determined that her Court should be kept free from the least breath of scandal, and the influence she wielded in this direction was wholly for good. With more than aristocratic exclusiveness and a love of etiquette that bewrayed her Hanoverian blood, she acted

as a conservative force in the social even more than in the political sphere. This force was much weakened upon the death of the Prince Consort, and the more or less secluded life she elected to lead during her widowhood. The leadership of Society soon devolved upon the Prince of Wales, who, perhaps in reaction against the terrible system of education to which he had been subjected, was in little sympathy with the somewhat rigorous notions of his mother. *Nouveaux riches*, who would never have dreamed of entering Windsor, were the habitués of Sandringham, and it was doubly difficult for subjects, however distinguished, to bar the door upon intruding wealth, while the Prince himself held it open.

The break-up of the old order has been nowhere better described than in the "Reminiscences" of Lady Dorothy Nevill, who is entitled to pronounce upon the subject with as great a weight of experience as any one now alive. "Society to-day," she tells us, "and Society as I formerly knew it, are two entirely different things; indeed, it may be questioned whether Society, as the word used to be understood, exists at all." This change Lady Dorothy attributes to the power and influence of money. The society of the middle of the century was, as she expressed it, like a large family in which every one was acquainted with every one else, and to which riches were not a passport. Life was less strenuous than nowadays, and fenced round by a more rigid etiquette. With these advantages it was possible to realize a grace and brilliance of which we can only dream. It was the period immortalized by George Meredith, and his description of Diana's dinner parties, with their bewildering rapier-play of conversation, breathe an atmosphere as strange to our own dining-rooms as that of Plato's "Symposium." It was upon such foundations that Disraeli wished to build his Young England, and there was nothing foolish or chimerical about the idea. Had the aristocracy realized their

opportunity, had they frankly and loyally thrown themselves into the task of bettering the nation morally and physically, had they come forward as leaders of a new crusade and a national party, the history of the last few years might have been written differently. But they were without a leader, and were not disposed to look for one in a Jewish parvenu, whose performances as a dandy were not the best credentials for such a part.

But the opportunity was slipping away, and the charmed circle was soon to be broken. Two factors combined to make it more and more difficult to keep intact. The age of vast fortunes in business, of the millionaires, was dawning, and at the same time a great depression had begun in the value of land. The prosperity of the agricultural interest after the repeal of the Corn Laws was illusive, and when the grain-fields of the New World came into unrestrained competition with our English farms, the contest was an unequal one. Big estates were hard hit, and in some cases the value of a property was well-nigh halved during the lifetime of a single owner. For the average country magnate there were but two expedients by which he might keep his income unimpaired. He might either, by luck or foresight, be the possessor of land in or about towns, and derive a handsome profit out of the necessities of a growing community, or else he might marry for money, and in such cases he could usually command a higher price by disposing of himself outside the pale. Such marriages were necessarily a powerful fillip in the transition from birth to wealth.

In the 'seventies, to recur to Lady Dorothy's thoughtful and temperate account, two new and powerful forces began to make themselves felt. Americans, of whom little had been previously heard, were coming to London in considerable numbers, and the Stock Exchange began to make its influence felt outside the City. The pride,

whether false or noble, which had made it beneath the dignity of a gentleman to engage in trade, was passing away, and it became a common thing for young men of good social standing, to go into business as a regular profession. At the same time rich foreigners were beginning to be admitted to Society, a tendency that was not checked by the example and influence of Sandringham.

So it came about that by the 'seventies the power of money was breaking down the old social barriers, and the process had commenced that was to annihilate Society, in the old sense, as completely as the advent of railways had superseded stage coaches. The new-comers, as soon as they had gained a footing, were able to force up the standard of pleasure and therefore of expenditure, making it even more difficult for the old families to compete with them, and thus the rate of change was an accelerating one. It was during the late 'sixties that the practice came into vogue of putting up the peerage to more or less open auction for party services, and at this abuse, it is to be feared, Disraeli himself connived. No amount of demagogic agitation has done more in the long run to injure the prestige and authority of the aristocracy, than this incursion of plutocracy into the precincts of the Upper Chamber.

By the beginning of the twentieth century plutocracy had triumphed all along the line, and the old order only lingered on in dispersion and retirement. "Now all is changed," writes Lady Dorothy, "and wealth has usurped the place formerly held by wit and learning. The question is not now asked 'Is So-and-so clever?' but instead 'Is So-and-so rich?'" She has thus summed up the difference between the two régimes: "In the old days Society was an assemblage of people who, either by birth, intellect or aptitude, were ladies and gentlemen in the true sense of the word. For the most part fairly, though not

extraordinarily dowered with the good things of the world, it had no ulterior object beyond intelligent, cultured and dignified enjoyment, money-making being left to another class which, from time to time, supplied a selected recruit to this *corps d'élite*. Now all is changed; in fact, Society (a word obsolete in the old sense) is, to use a vulgar expression, 'on the make.'"

It is easy to mistake the significance of such a change as that which we have just traced. Rhetorical and journalistic detractors are accustomed to assail Society on account of its immorality; but it is by no means certain that infusion of a middle-class plutocratic element necessarily tends to an increase of vice. How much wickedness lay concealed behind the respectable mid-Victorian mask, it is difficult to estimate, though according to one prurient and almost certainly exaggerated book of memoirs, it must have been bad enough, and it would be absurd to pretend that the days of George IV and Lord Hertford, of Old Q and Jemmy Twitcher were much purer than our own. There is no subject on which it is more difficult to collect evidence, or to view the facts in due perspective. It may fairly be maintained, however, that the scandals which come to light in our modern courts of law are marked by a pettiness and vulgarity such as Hogarth, in his most severe mood, stopped short at depicting; but this, by itself, is a consideration of minor importance.

The real significance of the transition lies not in any statistics of vice or crime, but in the fact that an upper class, in the old sense of the word, has practically ceased to exist. So rapid and silent has been the change, that in all the many treatises on modern life it has well-nigh escaped notice, and yet, whether we approve of it or not, it is probably the most important fact in modern social history. At no period, it may safely be affirmed, since England became a nation, has there been a state of affairs

remotely comparable to that which obtains nowadays. Even in the most corrupt days of the eighteenth century, even amid the license of the Restoration, the people were never without leaders. Above the vague turmoil of the mob there was always a minority who, by education and manners, were qualified to occupy the more distinguished grades of the social hierarchy, and who recognized other bonds than those of cash between themselves and their dependents. The eighteenth-century fox-hunter was neither a Solomon nor a Galahad, but on the whole he did his work better than it was done anywhere else in Europe, and he reaped his reward of loyalty during the French Revolution. The Horace Walpoles and Lord Chesterfields may have been heartless and shallow, but the society which they adorned was not wholly contemptible and, at its worst, upheld a tradition of intellect and courtesy which no other class aspired or attempted to emulate. However cynical or vicious his life might be, the gentleman of those days did at least submit himself to certain obligations and conform to certain standards, and it was not the mere fact of his being rich that was his title to gentility. The barriers were not so rigid that a few nabobs or men of distinction could not succeed in passing them, but these new-comers came in slowly enough for society to be able to absorb them.

Things are different now. The barriers are fairly down, or perhaps we might say they have become toll-gates, through which anybody may pass who can pay enough. This is so notorious as hardly to stand in need of elaboration, and it only remains to estimate briefly the significance and probable effects of the change. The new-comers who have conquered society may be roughly divided into the *nouveaux riches* from the middle class, the Americans, and the other wealthy aliens. These last are perhaps not very formidable as regards numbers, but the fabulous amount of their fortunes, the power that they are known to wield

in international and even domestic politics, the unabashed and naturally unpatriotic greed which is the motive of such transactions, and their generally unprepossessing appearance and manners are a very godsend to revolutionary agitators.

The bourgeois influence has been as disastrous upon the upper class as the reverse process has been among the bourgeoisie. The immediate result has been the disappearance of the old social amenities; the art of conversation, as Lady Dorothy reminds us, is a lost one, and life has been placed upon a business footing. In particular, there is a tendency to measure pleasure by costliness, which has been fatal alike to elegance and simplicity, and things whose value is intangible, what Burke called the "decent drapery of life," have ceased to be sought after or found. It is remarkable how even the English language has had to accommodate itself to utilitarian requirements, and it is to be questioned whether the cant of Belgravia possesses any marked superiority over the slang of Whitechapel. Experts may differ as to the relative advantages of "rippin'" and "bloomin'" as indefinite adjectives, drawl and twang may each have their admirers as musical forms of expression, good taste may hesitate between the wild and sometimes unsavoury imagery of the mews, and the less exciting economy of the drawing-room, where one word, such as "sweet" or "jolly" or "awful," assumes a plurality of functions.

To the American influence may be attributed the "speeding up" in every department of life, which has affected society in recent years. In an undeveloped land, with a rapidly increasing immigrant population, and nothing to fear from other nations, a habit of feverish commercial energy was perhaps inevitable. Full of confidence in themselves, the Americans aspired to make all things new, and carried their notions with them across the Atlantic. The advent of the motor-car has done

something to strengthen this tendency, and the pursuit of pleasure is now marked in about equal proportions by the love of expense and the hatred of rest. Instead of being a calm island, a refuge amid the swirl and uproar of racing seas, the class that by some irony retains the name of "leisured" actually forces the pace of life for its imitators, and the words "sensation," "craze" and "rage" are those which it applies, with rare appropriateness, to its own caprices. To the same influence may be assigned the love of publicity, which has put out of date the traditional restraint and dignity which was supposed to be the hall-mark of good breeding. Even the rôle of public dancer has not been considered derogatory, though it is only fair to say that the leaders of society have been known to extend a reciprocal tolerance to professional ladies of the music-hall.

The result of these considerations is not, we must repeat, to prove any moral deterioration, in the stricter sense, nor to justify the ignorant and hysterical denunciations of "high life" that issue periodically from Press and pulpit, but to confirm the dictum of Lady Dorothy Nevill that "it may be questioned whether society, in the old sense, exists at all." For good or evil the social leadership of the nation has passed into the hands of a plutocracy, a community to which "illiteracy, ignorance and vulgarity are no bar—rather the contrary," and this fact, which is as momentous in its way as an open revolution, is one that has got to be faced by statesmen, and indeed it may be surmised whether some of the most ludicrous miscalculations in recent politics have not come from ignoring it. An upper class may excite the reprobation, but it cannot afford to incur the contempt, of the million.

It is in the counties that the remnants of the old order make the firmest stand. On many a country estate the representative of some old family endeavours, under circumstances of increasing difficulty, to maintain the

traditional bond between landlord and tenant. Many of these have withdrawn themselves, either from deliberate choice or lack of means, from the motley and amorphous throng that is vaguely designated " the smart set." But it is inevitable that the fashion of the town should extend its influence over the provinces, and the train and motor-car conspire to put the average country house within more or less easy reach of town. This naturally has the effect of breaking up country society, for people who rush down to their estates for week-ends and battues, and form their parties out of their town friends, have neither the time nor the inclination to cultivate the acquaintance of their neighbours. It may perhaps occur to the reader that a very similar state of things preceded, and helped to produce, the French Revolution. Agricultural depression has tended to drive the old owners off the land, and this process has been hastened in recent years by very severe legislation, including direct taxation of capital, which has resulted not in benefiting the poor so much as in transferring the estates to incompetent though often well-meaning *nouveaux riches* landlords. To these causes must, in fairness, be added a third—the backwardness of the landowners themselves in applying, either individually or in combination, scientific methods towards the improvement of their agricultural properties.

It was probably in some measure due to the increasing inarticulate pressure from below, that the bourgeoisie began to draw closer to the aristocracy, and partly to the fact that the upper ranks of society were gradually changing the pride of birth for the pride of purse, and thus making it easier than before to enter the charmed circle. The middle-class domination had not only injured the nation, but it had spoilt the rulers themselves. There is a sober, unpretending dignity of citizenship that has been the strength of every healthy

bourgeoisie, which if it has not proved equal to the government of states, has at least brought forth mayors and merchant-captains who have served their generation manfully, and did not envy nor fawn upon the noblest in the land. Such characters as we meet in Dickens, his Pickwicks, Brownlows, Micawbers, Scrooges, revolve placidly in their own orbits, and move us to laughter or tears without any suggestion or aforethought of their deficiencies as judged by aristocratic standards. The old gentleman in his office was as conscious of his importance, and impressed it as much upon other people, as the duke in his castle. Whatever may be alleged against men like Cobden, Bright and Herbert Spencer, they were the reverse of snobs.

The last twenty years of the nineteenth century saw the rapid break-up of this old order. The bourgeoisie had attained a position of such importance that their dignity as a class had been undermined; the very word "middle" had a savour of inferiority, and instead of being and breeding respectable citizens, they hankered after the status of "ladies and gentlemen." This was especially the case among the suburbs of London, for in the big northern centres there was less temptation to snobbery, and perhaps more strength of fibre to resist it. It is with the fringe of the metropolis that the terms "suburban" and "villadom" are primarily associated, seldom without some hint of contempt. It is, indeed, matter enough for alarm and perplexity, the rise of a community without traditions, without self-respect, without ideals, feverishly aping the supposed customs of its acknowledged betters. Yet it is this class that now sets the standard of intellect and taste to the nation, among which "advanced" movements of all kinds have their source, and which is catered for by a never-ending series of "new" theologians, prurient novelists, cheap-jack reformers, and their like.

It is to the women of this class that we must look for

the explanation of its peculiarities. The wives and daughters of City-going suburbans occupy a peculiar and unenviable position. They are compelled to maintain, on what may be a pitiably meagre pittance, the veneer of gentility without its reality, and their life is too often beset with anxieties, and almost always hedged round with the pettiest and most tyrannous of conventions. There is nothing about it calculated to inspire or ennoble, passed, as it is, in an atmosphere of shams as tawdry as its streets of flimsy villas. With little religion or faith of any sort except that which is imposed by social necessities, without the dignity of class feeling that invests the artisan as much as the peer, without contentment, without fixed ideals, it is no wonder that the more aspiring spirits should chafe at their fetters, and run to any excesses in order to escape from a life that offers neither freedom nor satisfaction, nor even the dignity of martyrdom. Such a conclusion will hardly be doubted by any one who has had experience of the mushroom towns where these people snatch their month or so of holiday. Let him compare the faces of the rustics or fisher-folk with those of the pleasure-hunting crowds who, in their cheap finery, throng pier and esplanade, haunted, as it were, by some demon of unrest, and recalling too vividly the dreadful lines of Poe :

> " That motley drama, oh be sure
> It shall not be forgot,
> With its phantom, chased for evermore
> By a crowd that seize it not,
> Through a circle that ever returneth in
> To the self-same spot ! "

The men of this class have enough to do, as a rule, in fighting for money under conditions of ever-increasing strenuousness, and the life of office and railway train, deadening and unnatural though it be, is at least a reality, and calls forth qualities of patience and energy

that are certainly manly and probably divine. But for their womenfolk, this mitigation of the tragedy does not exist, and they are left with much time on their hands and little opportunity for turning it to account. The large families that were the pride of the old-fashioned matron are too expensive to keep, and the spirit of domesticity is not fostered by the unrest of suburban life. At the same time the cheapening of all sorts of literature, and the smattering of education that business men are in the habit of purchasing for their offspring, provide a ready palliative for ennui.

For the majority, it is sufficient that jaded nerves should be soothed by anything that does not make a demand upon the attention. The monstrous development of the trade, as distinct from the art, of fiction is one means of satisfying this craving, and thus we find blatantly ignorant and illiterate people deriving fortunes, and the reputation of genius, from the punctual appearance of their spring or autumn novels. Again, there is the imbecile and usually prurient garbage of musical farce and the continuous debasing of journalism. These things, by themselves, would not necessarily afford ground for disquiet, since it might be argued that the illiterate majority is always with us, and such time as they have to kill may just as well be drowned in ink. Serious art and literature need not be affected one way or the other.

But, unfortunately, the matter does not end here. The most conspicuous trait of suburban character is its lack of contentment. It is inevitable that constant striving after the standard of another class should be reflected in contempt for one's own. This is the common sentiment that unites all the strange and various forms which "advanced" culture has assumed, from its plague centre at Hampstead to the utmost confines of Dulwich and Surbiton; for there is in suburbia no more scathing

epithet than "middle-class." It is this feverish and shallow culture, this straining after novelty at all costs, that have attracted and absorbed the minority, feminine for the most part, who are unable to find satisfaction in the cruder narcotics of Press and stage. This minority is quite large enough to make its influence felt beyond its own confines, and it is mainly upon its suffrages that the fame of poets and men of letters must now depend. It has, in some measure, come to set the fashion in thought.

Without hesitation it may be affirmed that this influence is for evil. There is nothing more pernicious than a culture that is without faith, and practically without education. By faith is meant not merely dogmatic theology, though it may be maintained that the purest faith does avail itself of such a form, but the deep and active certainty of the goodness of a cause. Such faith as this is hardly possible for people who have learnt to despise their own condition, and fly to culture as others turn to drink. The lack of education must be obvious to any one who considers the facts of the case. To the suburban mind the discipline which must be undergone even by poets and artists, is a thing unknown. The old-fashioned classical education had at least this advantage, that it trained the intellect to grapple with what was difficult and distasteful, and not merely to slide along the line of least resistance, under the plea of fostering natural genius. In these matters, the battle is not to the feeble.

The literature which is especially associated with this species of culture abundantly confirms the estimate at which we have just arrived. The names of its exponents, and still more their initials, by which they are affectionately nicknamed, are too notorious to need enumeration. The hall-mark of their style is its unrelieved emphasis, a journalism of thought that demands a continuous display of fireworks, rocket stars to outdazzle Sirius, crackers and

maroons to muffle eternal silences. The extravagant use of paradox, which came into vogue with Oscar Wilde, has become a hackneyed and effective trick in the hands of less gifted copyists. The substance is comparatively immaterial, what is wanted is to arrest the attention, to leave the impression upon the reader that he has been listening to something brilliant and profound, for there is little fear of reflection or analysis supervening to ascertain the truth, or even the meaning, of the dictum or epigrams in question.

It is easy to guess that iconoclasm will be an important asset to such literary adventurers. A complete lack of faith in anything whatever, a discontented mind, and a smattering of education, all naturally predispose a suburban audience to welcome an attack on anything and everything that is venerable. The most obvious victims are the recognized classics. The application necessary for the enjoyment of the "Iliad" or "Paradise Lost" is lacking, and the most popular form of literary entertainment is supplied by fashionable and highly seasoned modern masters, or more often by easy accounts of their work written by others, and by numberless attempts to boil down the classics, or serve them up in snippets. It is easier to denounce than to understand, and to talk of reverence for Shakespeare as "bardolatry," or even to hint that the critic is greater than the bard himself, to talk of Webster as a fool, a Tussaud Laureate, and a "Police News" poet, and of the man who murdered Marlowe as a benefactor to the human species, passes for a triumph of wit and acumen.

It would be well if this systematic "iconoclasm" had stopped short at the dead. Those who leave neither Launcelot brave nor Galahad pure are biting marble; but to attack the foundations of society and conduct is a more serious offence, for this clears the road for disaster and national extinction. To this atrocious work the

prophets of a new age have set their hands. The heavy respectability of the mid-Victorians has been replaced by a licentiousness of thought and speech to which the very notion of virtue is either ridiculous or out-of-date.

> "Ten thousand old, conceited Christian dolts
> Amazed by death, shall in their life-blood bathe,
> Or ever I forego one swelling pulse,
> One sumptuous tide of my superb desire,"

cries the hero of one typically "advanced" play. Another writer, in the course of a treatise on "first and last things," remarks casually that "there is honour among thieves, and I think it might well end there as an obligation in conduct." Truly we have arrived at the brazen age in literature.

Abuse of God, and sympathy for the devil or any of his reputed servants, have become less offensive than monotonous, and next to Deity, the favourite object of attack is continence. Men, and especially women, who have had the hardihood to seek fulfilment of their "superb desires" in defiance of matrimonial and decent restrictions, have been excused and belauded not only in the garbage of professedly popular literature, but in the works of practically every author who deals in "culture." Nay, the author himself will sometimes go into the public market-place, to summon all and sundry to the harvest festival of his wild oats. The strangest allies are pressed into the service. Gautama and Trismegistus find worship among the daughters of stock-jobbers, Bunyan and Nietzsche appear harnessed in common tether, like the Kings in "Tamburlaine," to the chariot of a common enemy. Strangest of all is the course adopted by one exceptionally able journalist, who caps his rivals in the matter of paradox by a rowdy championship of Christianity, a championship which includes the defence of blasphemy, and ends by suggesting that the most notable trait in the character of its Founder was a

merriment that his excessive shyness prevented him from ever revealing.

The revolt from individual restraints is, of course, supplemented by attacks upon the order of society. Nothing, it must be admitted, could be more pardonable than the desire to fly to any system rather than endure the pitiless monotony of suburban life. It is, therefore, to be expected that any revolutionary agitation will find support among members of the modern bourgeoisie, even though a majority of them can be relied upon to record their votes for what they consider to be the genteel party. The strange displays of violence that have marked the agitation for female emancipation would be incredible, were it not for the fact that with a few exceptions, those who advocate and practise criminal methods are drawn from the very class we have been describing.

The most fashionable outlet of all has been provided by the creed, or at least the name, of Socialism, though this is probably run close by the various imitations of magic, Orientalism and theosophy by which these great mysteries have been brought to discredit. It should be realized that there are two principal meanings attached to the word " Socialism " nowadays. In its original sense it represents a genuine class movement, which, whatever may be said for or against it, is an exceedingly grim and formidable affair. This is one kind of Socialism, but there is another, a delicate and sentimental creed, the participation of a few deserters from one class in the aims of another of which they know nothing. The organized and wholly unromantic efforts of manual labourers to remedy their own condition, and the injustice of property, by diverting the property of other classes to their own ends, have little in common with the vague social aspirations of those who are themselves marked down for plunder. A hearty dislike of their own surroundings, and a pathetic longing after a different,

dim-visioned state of things, are the sources of this derivative Socialism, which must be regarded by the real Socialists with much the same feelings as we can imagine a Collot or Marat harbouring towards some aristocratic disciple of Rousseau, before the fall of the Bastille.

Such a culture is plainly opposed to patriotism. The cynicism that laughs at duty is unlikely to see much that is admirable in the conduct of a Nelson or a Gordon, and an attitude of chronic rebellion against one's surroundings is not the best way of fostering attachment to the Motherland. Besides, a sentiment so time-honoured is not to be reconciled with any scheme of advanced thought. The most fashionable authors either sneer at it, or ignore it altogether, with the exception of the champion of Christianity already referred to, who defends patriotism along with a number of things that are considered indefensible except by violent paradox; these include "Nonsense," "Slang," "Penny Dreadfuls," and "Detective Stories."

Open disparagement is not so dangerous as the atmosphere engendered by this new culture. To enter into the communion of heroes requires loyalty, courage, steadiness of purpose, duty, unselfishness, reverence. But these postulate that inner soundness which was known to the Greeks as harmony and to the Christians as the peace of God, and the suburban is almost consciously diseased, a fevered patient turning and tossing on the pillows, seeking for rest in vain. A superficial mind and stunted emotions are not to be wedded to any noble cause, and the hope of improvement is frustrated by the deliberate efforts of the leaders. It is a favourite and well-practised trick to disparage virtue by putting absurd phrases into the mouths of puppets who are supposed to represent virtuous people. In the case of patriotism it is easy to suggest that any one who professes to love or serve his

country is either a fool or a hypocrite. The very word "English" is a term of scorn, and the worst features of Matthew Arnold's style are reproduced, with none of the graces that redeemed them.

We are now able to understand whence arises the impression that there is something degrading or illiberal about patriotism. The learning of the schools, the art of the studios, and the culture of the villas, have all tended to foster this impression in their different ways. But it would be wrong to regard these three as if they were separate and distinct causes, for they blend and react upon one another inseparably; Chelsea is not so far from Hampstead, nor is it difficult for the sons and daughters of the bourgeoisie to add a little sociology to their other smatterings. Still worse would it be to regard the victims of a diseased social system with other feelings than that of pity. For what chance has the poor citizen or citizeness, devoted from youth to the twin service of Mammon and Grundy, harassed by a thousand ignoble anxieties, born and bred in a little world of tinsel, and seeking pathetically for light, like those dying knights of Lyonnesse who looked up to heaven and only saw the mist?

Nor may we speak lightly of the talents, or, in one case at least, the genius, of the leaders who, if they have not caused this evil, have both helped it and battened upon it. The cheap-jack is a wearisome or farcical person, but the man in whose breast smoulders some of the divine fire, one who was born for immortal laurels, and is content to barter them away for a few guineas and a little notoriety.

> Who but must laugh if such a man there be?
> Who would not weep if —— —— were he?

While the upper class was losing its authority and the middle class its self-respect, the change amid the third estate, the so-called working class, was no less striking. After the collapse of the Chartist movement, this class

entered upon a long period of quiescence, which was not disturbed even by the measure of enfranchisement granted by Disraeli. In fact, the author of "Sybil" was the only leading statesman of the time to whom the social problem was of vital importance. Gladstone, who was supposed to be a dangerous, almost a revolutionary democrat, was content to assure the working class of the progress and prosperity they enjoyed, and the last thing he wanted to do was to spoil his budgets by experiments in redistribution. The old junker, Bismarck, was fain to embark upon comprehensive legislation that the doyen of English Liberalism would probably have considered dangerously Socialistic.

Gladstone's attitude was not incapable of defence. There is no doubt that the half-century following the repeal of the Corn Laws was, on the whole, a time of beneficent progress for the industrial, and perhaps the agricultural labourer. The horrors that had followed upon the Industrial Revolution were mitigated, little children were no longer done to death by thousands in factories, and the license of employers was curbed in several directions. Voluntary combination among the men was making notable strides, and against this not even the sternest middle-class Radical dared say much. While the central Government lagged, local enterprise displayed an increasing boldness, and the example of Birmingham showed how much could be done by a bold application of Socialistic principles in the municipal sphere. Before the last twelve years of the Queen's reign, there was no general feeling of discontent with the order of society, nor any special cause for alarm on the part of the rich.

This is partly to be accounted for by the favourable position we still held, commercially, in respect of other nations. To some extent we might still claim our title of workshop of the world, and could afford to make the

almost arrogant assertion of our superiority involved in exposing our manufactures to the unrestrained competition of the foreigner. But it was impossible that a state of things so profitable to ourselves could last for ever. In addition to the immense start which we had gained during the Industrial Revolution, the third quarter of the century brought us the advantage of peaceful development, hardly affected by the Crimea and the Mutiny, while the rest of the nations were torn by war. It was in the early 'seventies, just after the Franco-German War, that our position was most favourable.

During the long peace that followed, our rivals had the opportunity of bringing their full natural resources into play. The United States reaped the benefit of her civil war and abolition of slavery, by a unity that was economic as well as political, and Germany had ceased to be an Empire divided against itself. It is obvious that whatever policy these countries chose to adopt, they could not but develop at a much greater rate than a nation whose supremacy was so largely due to transitory causes. It is a disputable question to what extent their tariff policy served to accelerate their advance, but it is a fact that Bismarck, in 1879, threw over the Free-Trade principles of the National Liberals, and sought to foster German industry and agriculture in accordance with the doctrine of List. Eleven years later, the triumph of the Republican Party committed America to the extreme Protectionist policy embodied in the McKinley and, subsequently, in the Dingley Tariffs. These measures, it is maintained, have served to increase the advantage of our rivals by securing their immense home markets for their own producers, and by protecting their growing industries from alien competition.

The question of tariffs and their effects is one of the most hotly contested in modern politics, and there is little likelihood of anything that could be advanced on the

subject commanding an unbiassed audience. But those who would attribute to the presence or absence of State machinery every ill to which industry is heir, are blind to the lessons of history. Protectionist Italy has failed as conspicuously as Protectionist Germany has succeeded. It is the human and spiritual factor that must ultimately prevail, even in the struggle for this world's goods; and if England has been at a disadvantage as compared with her rivals, it is the fault of our men and not of our tariffs. When the head of a community is sick, it is not likely that the members will remain entirely unscathed, and the spirit of unrest and unfaith which has vulgarized the aristocracy and demoralized the old middle class has not been without its influence upon the masses.

The very fact of the rulers having lost their claim to respect must naturally have exercised a deleterious influence upon their subordinates, and it is noticeable that the working class were the last of all to feel the effect of the blight. The most ominous, but certainly an understandable feature of the change is the growing contempt for every sort of authority. The majesty of Parliament is as little regarded as that of the Church, in view of the suspicion that the game is not a clean one, and that the average representative is no more affected by the opinions of his constituents than the man in the moon. The independence of the Commons, which had reached its zenith during the 'fifties and 'sixties, was destroyed by the abnormal development of the party machines, and it has tended to become the function of Parliament passively to register the decrees of an all-powerful Cabinet.

The evil against which Disraeli inveighed in the 'forties has reappeared in an aggravated form. Political parties have ceased to stand for any intelligible principle, and approximate to the American model by competing for office with programmes, dictated more or less openly by the exigencies of the hour. Radicals boast of being the up-

holders of constitutional stability, Protectionists seldom fail to avow their loyalty to Free-Trade principles. The confusion of language which is so conspicuous a feature of modern politics has its origin in a corresponding haziness of thought. The old terms, Conservative, Liberal, Radical, Democrat, have ceased to be of importance because they have no longer a basis in reality. The party machine has no use for principles. It would be well if the matter ended here, but in one respect England has gone beyond America. There is only too good ground for the suspicion that party warfare has ceased to be an honest faction fight. It is a well-known fact that the bitterest of political opponents can be the closest of friends in private life, and that the fiercest invective across the floor of the House is no bar to secret and amicable negotiation behind the scenes.

The effect upon labour has naturally been to drive the masses to seek their own salvation. An effort was made to capture Parliament itself by the formation of a Labour Party, but the representatives soon assimilated the atmosphere of the House, and by one means or another, the new group came to stand for little more than the left wing of one of the recognized parties. The attempt of the democracy to control the legislature has so far been conspicuous by its failure. The extension of the franchise has been counteracted by the complexity and secrecy of the caucus. Power is as much the monopoly of a class as it was in the 'thirties, the difference between the two periods consisting in the fact that birth is a less important factor of success nowadays than money. Nevertheless, the old political houses have been successful in maintaining their unwritten claim upon the favours of the State, and a study of the politics of the last two or three generations, with their recurrent surnames, suggests the conclusion that the membership of certain families was, and is, a passport to office.

But the influence of money is a more conspicuous fact in our politics than that of birth. That the sale of honours is a new thing is, of course, untrue, for James I adopted this expedient, and the younger Pitt, especially, practised it on an extensive scale. But modern political corruption differs from that of former times in the fact that the aristocracy is no longer able to absorb the new elements. The cynical and systematic way in which the honour of the State is put up for sale by both parties alike is one of the most distressing features of the present situation, especially in view of the almost incredible apathy displayed on the subject. The long lists of mediocrities, or worse, in whose honour our Sovereign is constitutionally supposed to delight, passes without serious challenge, even from the most advanced representatives of democracy. A better proof of the contempt into which modern politics has fallen could hardly be required.

Nor is this the only lever of plutocracy upon our political system. In a hundred ways which never get into print the great financier contrives to impose his will upon those of responsible Ministers. The most influential papers are, almost without exception, under the control of a few very rich men, and the privilege of wealth is hedged about by a law of libel whose expense, rigour and uncertainty make exposure in the concrete a probably ruinous and certainly hopeless venture. In this respect the English plutocrat enjoys a secrecy and immunity from attack which must be the envy of his American compeer. Politicians and leading articles still make an elaborate display of principle and enthusiasm in dealing with political issues, but those who possess some elementary knowledge of the real, as distinct from the apparent, working of the machine, are more concerned to know what financial interests are at stake, who has to be squared, or who is pulling the strings. When, years or centuries hence,

the history of our time comes to be narrated, those of us who have the privilege of perusing its pages in Elysium may be vastly surprised to find that the essential facts were as little suspected by them as the agency of the showman is by the small children who shout with delight at the mimic battles of Punch and his adversaries.

The silent consolidation of plutocratic rule has not passed unchallenged. The masses were fighting in the dark, and only vaguely realized the strength and nature of the enemy. Unlike the old French noblesse, it was the policy of the new rulers to soothe and flatter their subjects as much as possible. Every politician was a democrat, every candidate, every poster, made appeal to the working man as to a sovereign. The forms of representative government were treated with respectful seriousness, and the realities were sedulously ignored, or, if necessary, denied. This was the result not so much of any deliberate conspiracy as of an instinct of self-preservation, which unites those who have possessions against those who covet them, coupled with the instinctive shrinking from reality which wealth and luxury naturally engender among their owners. A plutocracy starts with the advantage of being able to combine more readily and act more efficiently than a heterogeneous horde of uneducated men, who can usually be divided against themselves and often starved into submission.

It was impossible that a change so far-reaching in its effects could be accomplished without some protest on the part of those who were most affected. Foiled in their attempt to control the machinery of the State, there was one resort still left for the workers. They could combine to refuse their labour unless they got their own price. A Labour Party might be cozened and disarmed, but a strike was a reality that might shake the plutocracy to its foundations, a remedy which lay in the hands of the men themselves. As time went on, and confidence in

Parliamentary Government and their own leaders declined, the workers showed an increasing tendency to take their salvation into their own hands. Their strength lay in the efficiency of the trades union organization, in which respect English labour may claim to have given a lead to the rest of the world.

The development of trades unions had gone along with that of the capitalist system, and was the natural reply of labour to the enhanced power of the employer. After a great deal of initial friction and some rosy dreams that failed of realization, the trades unions found their niche in the social system, and on the whole worked surprisingly well, even from the standpoint of the better type of employer. But towards the end of the century a new and bitter feeling began to pervade the unions. There was arising between capital and labour one of those ultimate and philosophical differences which only war can decide. Hitherto it had been common ground that the existing system of society was to be preserved, and that the employer had as much right to his profits as the labourer to his hire; now it was becoming the fashion to treat the owner of capital as a robber, to assert that the workers of each trade ought to control it, or that the necessary machinery of industry should not be concentrated in a few hands for the profit of a few, but conducted for all and by all. Not long after the South African War, the trades unions were making explicit avowal of Socialist principles.

The development of plutocracy was forcing the hand of labour. It was no longer a question of one firm or employer settling affairs with the employees. Following the example of America, capital was beginning to draw together into larger and larger combinations, often united by tacit and informal understandings. It was obviously much easier for a few big entrepreneurs to act together with secrecy and celerity, than for a scattered and

mutually suspicious mob of employees. On the whole, it is difficult to withhold our admiration, if not from a moral, at least from a militant point of view, from the various ways in which labour has responded to this new and most formidable advance. It, too, has organized itself into larger and larger groups. In the great coal strike of 1912, some million of men, scattered up and down the whole of Great Britain, could act as one in the common cause. The new development of the sympathetic strike has shown to what an extent loyalty and consciousness of class interest can bind together masses of men, even to the extent of suffering and sacrifice without the prospect of immediate gain. Then again, the union organization is gradually being extended to unskilled and overcrowded trades like that of the dock labourers, poor but intensely militant associations, combined only for war. The old harmony between capital and labour is disappearing, distrust and bitterness are more and more rife; even such peace as can be patched up is often but an armistice, and solemn treaties are liable to be denounced at a moment's notice. It was the pride of the old unionism that, however severe the fight, the terms finally agreed upon should be held sacred and inviolable; it is becoming the tactic of the new to hit hard whenever opportunity arises.

The reply of the governing class has been twofold. Though the consciousness of a common interest has had the effect of drawing them together so far as almost to obliterate the old party distinctions, there is a real difference of opinion as to the best way of meeting the menace. There is the attitude of open and uncompromising hostility which finds vent in organized and frontal attacks upon the avowed enemy, which treats the men as robbers and hooligans, and their leaders as blackguards, "paid agitators," which rejoices openly in the defeat of every strike, and calls for repressive measures of the most Draconic character. But there is another and

more subtle strategy, if we may attribute that to subtlety which is more probably inspired by the instinct of self-preservation taking the line of least resistance. The grand and wintry traitors of Dante are no more, our modern Sinons are afraid to make a confidant of their own bosoms. Their stategy consists in frankly acknowledging the justice of the opposing cause, in accepting its philosophy and adopting its formulas, in enlisting among the forces of the other side in order to lure it to destruction, as Sextus Tarquinius outwitted the citizens of Gabii. This has only been rendered possible by the wealth and secrecy of the party machine, and the admirable discipline enforced upon the Press. Among its triumphs have been the emasculation and disarmament of the democratic left wing, the astute manœuvres by which the most formidable modern strikes have been outwitted and the largest of the unions financially crippled, and the diversion of popular energies from reform to measures of democratic seeming, always innocuous to the plutocracy, and often directly calculated to strengthen its hands. All this has been accompanied by oratory of a democratic and even revolutionary nature, faithfully echoed in the Press, and fortified by the stage thunders of opposition and the genuine protests of rich or old-fashioned people, who are innocent enough to take political speeches at their face value.

None the less is this latest expedient of the plutocracy fraught with extreme danger, and perhaps only to be justified by the exigency of the situation. The task of cozening a whole people, even with such immense resources as those at the command of our rulers, must always be very hazardous. The question is one of time, whether it is possible, by one means or another, to divert popular opposition, until the situation has been rendered secure enough to make an attack hopeless. There exists the danger that the masses may be roused to the reality

of the situation and take matters into their own hands, a dreadful possibility in the inflamed state of feeling necessary for such a consummation, though it may be questioned whether a new Metternich system, based upon the divine right of wealth, would be a preferable alternative.

Not that the sentiments of the upper class have increased in callousness or brutality. The very reverse is the case, and it is one of the features of our intensely nervous civilization to shrink from the spectacle of pain or brutality. The visits to Bedlam of the eighteenth-century young lady, the brutal floggings inflicted on the young and old of both sexes, the unrebuked torture of animals, are things of the past. Appeals to charity probably find a readier response than ever before, a state of things which prevailed also in France under the auspices of Marie Antoinette. But this increased sensitiveness works in opposite senses, and the tendency is to avoid the brutalities of life by putting them out of sight, or contemplating them at second hand through the comfortable medium of the daily Press.

There was never a time when there was so little communication or understanding between rich and poor. The democratic state of society that prevailed in the days of Chaucer has been completely reversed. Dives may be a protector to the poor, but hardly ever a brother, even after the fashion of old Squire Western. Disraeli's nightmare of "the two nations" is a reality now, much more than in the 'forties. For this cause, the benevolent despotism of the rich is more dangerous than their tyranny. One of the most fatal mistakes of the plutocracy is their unwillingness to leave the poor alone, a privilege which the Manchester school, with all its faults, would at least have conceded. Men are written about and legislated for as if they were animals or algebraic symbols, a minute unchristian inquisition of which the rich have no personal

experience is being established over every department of the poor man's life, the Government inspector, the guardian, are like inhuman and symbolic figures standing between him and freedom, frowning down the old spirit that laughed with Robin Hood. On the field made rich by the decomposition of the social sciences has arisen Eugenics, the last and most dismal of them all.

It would be idle to talk as if the present situation were the result of an attack by fiendish plutocrats upon an innocent and virtuous proletariat. If this were the case the remedy would be obvious, and it would be at hand. But to talk thus would be to sink the historian in the partisan. Rich men are not conspicuously wicked above all other classes, and the fact of unfitness for the Kingdom of Heaven may be no bar to a conscientious observance of the Commandments. The severity of competition, the increasing difficulty of keeping abreast of the foreigner, and the very rigour of the game, the spirit of Mrs. Sarah Battle, are compelling influences upon men whose religion is success. Often the organizer of industry may argue that his interest in the concern is small compared with that of the shareholders, and that it is his bounden duty to afford them a reasonable profit. Many of the rich genuinely believe that upon their prosperity reposes that of the community, and they regard the encroachments of labour with an abhorrence which justifies, in their eyes, any measure of repression, as the crimes of the burglar excuse the wiles of the detective.

Nor would it be fair to talk as if all the selfishness were on one side, or as if the workers were conspicuously virtuous or patriotic. It is only too apparent that the class feeling and civil strife have been bad for both sides alike. When men think overmuch of their class they forget their country, and there has arisen a situation not unlike the " stasis " in the Greek cities, when the oligarchy and democracy hated each other more than a common

enemy. It is too often forgotten that it is impossible to isolate civil strife as in the days of Cavalier and Roundhead. While master and man are struggling for the fruits of industry, the foreigner is plucking them. We are fighting a desperate and losing battle to maintain our position in the face of merciless and ever more powerful rivals. Worst of all, should we fail in vigilance or unity, we are threatened with a military disaster which would destroy not only our trade, but our very existence.

It is to be feared that the last generation has seen a change for the worse in the temper of our working class. The wave of prosperity which culminated in the 'seventies induced a false confidence and a disposition to rest upon our oars, which were the opportunity of our rivals. The plodding German, whom we despised, had come to surpass us in the cardinal virtue of humility, and the American, with his materialism and unscrupulousness, combined an energy which Englishmen neither attempted nor aspired to rival. Energetic greed for money is not the highest ideal to which man can aspire, but if it is our object to succeed in this lowest sense, it is better to be keen than slack about our business. Mr. Shadwell in his book on Industrial Efficiency has collected a number of striking testimonies as to the opinion prevalent abroad, that the English workman is more slack and luxurious than his German and American rivals. A similar criticism applies to the British manufacturer.

The spread of cheap education, however necessary it may have been, has contributed to destroy some of the old, sturdy feeling of the working class. The merest smattering of knowledge, from which religion is often, and patriotism always, excluded, may be of some use in qualifying for trade, but its value as a training for citizens is more than doubtful. A gutter literature, fermenting and battening upon the meanest passions and rendering the mind incapable of serious thought, is the best con-

ceivable expedient for rooting out faith and earnestness from the souls of its victims. To this cause, at least in part, we may trace the monstrous increase of gambling, a vice more insidious than drunkenness, and the petty revival of the Roman arena in the cult of professional sport, which has superseded, to so great an extent, the old democratic love of playing games.

Another influence which we must take into account is that of the division and consequent monotony of labour in inducing distaste for it upon the part of the labourer. In the humblest as well as the most exalted departments of human activity, the curse of the age is specialism. It is interesting to note the extremely undemocratic character of modern craftsmanship as compared with that of the Middle Ages. Then it was customary for every workman, however humble, to put something of his own personality into his work; the intense and minute individuality that inspired the Gothic uprush is the direct contrary of the modern spirit, and this accounts for the coldness and failure of the modern Gothic revival. It is the same with modern furniture, and what may be roughly designated as the minor arts, the personality of the craftsman has gone out of them, all is in absolute dependence upon the will of the designer, and his business is to imitate and not to create. Under the forms of democracy, the spirit of English industry is that of Oriental slavery, and reproduces on a huge and vulgar scale the unending, lifeless repetition of Indian design. One of the truest of modern poems is that in which a Scots engineer describes, with rapturous sympathy, the discipline, the perfect subordination, of his engine-room machinery.

The shrinking from reality, which is always ominous of national unsoundness, has affected even that class to which the facts of life present themselves in their grimmest nakedness. It is remarkable to what an extent the cause of English labour has become associated with sentimental

and irrelevant theories, which are the direct outcome of a desire to make life easy, to escape from its roughness. In the international sphere, this takes the form of a desire for peace at almost any price, a belief in international brotherhood which is strikingly at variance with the manifest facts of the situation. At a time when the whole of Europe is an armed camp, when the preparation for war is pushed forward with a thoroughness and feverish intensity never known before, serious men, champions of the people, can be found talking as if hostility could be disarmed by weakening our armaments, deserting our allies, and relinquishing our possessions in the face of the enemy. If such talk emanated only from the Common Rooms of Universities or cultured circles in the suburbs, it might be comparatively innocuous, but when it is taken quite seriously by the people themselves the case is different.

It is melancholy to think that England alone among the important nations of Europe has refused to recognize the proud obligation of each citizen to defend his country, which was the privilege of the Athenian and distinguished the Spartan from the Helot. Despite copious grumbling, the thing is a matter of course on the Continent; here it is almost unthinkable because it is known that the nation would not stand it. Allowance must be made for the well-grounded suspicion that under our present system the burden and heat of the day would fall upon those who have not enough money to shirk their obligations, and that the army might even be used, as it has been used abroad, to support the plutocracy in breaking the resistance of labour. But the soul of the opposition is avowedly a hatred to something that is vaguely described as militarism. Military service is a violation of liberty, war is a cruel thing, and the best way to avert it is that of the faith-healers, resolutely to disbelieve in its possibility. Even recruiting for the Territorials has been boycotted by

advanced democracy, even the teaching of children to drill or the display of our Union Jack is denounced as being tainted with militarism. It has been seriously maintained, amid general acclamation, that the prosperity of nations like Holland and Belgium is a reason for the relinquishment of all our greatness and all our responsibilities, as if it were the highest function of nations to eat and drink without merriment, and the first and greatest commandment were to love thy belly with all thy heart, and all thy mind, and all thy soul, and all thy strength, and the second like unto it, to deem thy neighbour as thyself.

The tendency of the extreme democratic movement is to part company from patriotism for some more or less vague ideal of international brotherhood. Here we have another instance of the connection between cosmopolitan and material principles. Modern Socialism, by the account of its own exponents, is primarily an economic creed, and more often than not has been marked by a peculiarly aggressive infidelity, for we may leave on one side its never powerful nor representative Christian offshoot. Karl Marx declared that "we make war against all the prevailing ideals of the state, of country, of patriotism. The idea of God is the keystone of a perverted civilization. It must be destroyed. The true root of liberty, of equality, of culture, is atheism." There are, of course, exceptions, but the general trend of English, as of Continental Socialism, is hostile to religion and aspires after a material Utopia. The fact that the resistance of labour to the plutocracy is so largely based upon materialism is an element of grave weakness, both to the cause of the workers and that of the country to which they belong.

The cosmopolitan tendency is not confined to the ranks of labour. One of the outstanding features of the present situation is the way in which England is changing from

the manufacturer to the banker of the world London is the centre of the international credit system, and the importance of the financier has been greatly enhanced. Now finance is essentially cosmopolitan, its leaders are seldom biassed by patriotic considerations, and even if they were so inclined, the love of very many of them would be to other lands than England. The wealth and prestige of a creditor state are in many respects unsound, and the fate of Antwerp, which was also the banker of the world, should be a warning to England. The strength of a nation is in its men, and not in the bank accounts of a few of them.

The appeal which the modern Socialist makes to the working man is twofold: "You have the power to vote down the owners of property, and it is in your interest to use the power in order to get possession of property." The appeal is strengthened immeasurably when it is possible to represent the intended victims as unworthy of respect. Nor may it be waved aside as palpably wicked or dishonest. There are few educated persons who would deny the unsatisfactory character of modern social conditions, and in particular, the brutal disparity between the luxury of the very rich and the necessity of the very poor. The wealth of the nation has increased to fabulous proportions, but its benefits have been unevenly distributed, and it is a crying grievance that honest men, by thousands, should go in doubt where to look for their next meal and the work wherewith to earn it. These and similar facts, which form the basis of the Socialist case, are, in their main outlines, indisputable, and practically undisputed, and it is not causeless to represent the system which gives them rise as wasteful, unjust, and intolerable.

But even if we grant the utmost of these assumptions, we cannot escape from the certainty that a policy founded exclusively on economic and class interests is fraught

with ruin to him that yields and him that takes. Only by sacrifice and religion is it possible for nations to achieve greatness, or even to escape destruction. More important than any scheme of political or social change is the maintenance of national character, and this, to say the least of it, is not fostered by a greedy and all-absorbing struggle between haves and have nots. If social conditions are to be reformed, as they must and shall be, it should be done as part of a larger policy, in the spirit of comradeship and not as in a house divided against itself. A society whose sole principle of cohesion is material, and whose absorbing interest is in class warfare, is too plainly marked out for destruction.

Here we must guard ourselves against a misunderstanding. It is only too common, in speaking of the great case of Lazarus versus Dives, to talk as if all the selfishness and lack of ideals were on one side or the other. The tendency of modern Socialism has indeed been towards the substitution of class selfishness for religion and patriotism, but it must not be forgotten that the fault is on the side of the rich at least as much as on that of the poor. There is a type of mind, only too common among the upper and middle classes, which we might fairly describe as anti-Socialist, and to which patriotism, empire, and religion itself are subordinate to the chief object of existence, that of retaining as much wealth as possible in the hands of their own order. We have described this as "anti-Socialist," but there is another sense in which it is the twin brother and best ally of Socialism. The selfishness of Dives and the selfishness of Lazarus irritate and intensify one another, and the reply to the old child's rhyme

> "I'm the King of the Castle,
> Get down, you dirty rascal!"

is not unnaturally

> "Why should we be beggars with the ballot in our hand?"

Such controversy may be human and supportable by arguments, but how ignoble, and how far beneath the dignity of Englishmen! Two reported utterances occur to us in this connection, which show to what depths class hatred can disgrace otherwise honourable men. One is that of a Labour representative, who pooh-poohed the notion of providing for national defence on the ground that a successful invasion was no affair of the working man, seeing that the upper class would bear the loss, and the other comes from a rich county landlord, who used words implying that if land taxes were increased, an invasion would be actually welcomed by the victims—oblivious probably of the fact that in a less tolerant age such language might have imperilled, not only the whole of his lands, but his head as well.

It is the weariness of the ordinary man with such effusions that accounts for the contempt into which modern politics has fallen. It is the most hopeful feature of the present situation that appeals to pocket and stomach, if they catch votes, at least do not arouse any marked enthusiasm. No one who witnessed the general elections of 1910 can have failed to contrast the frantic harangues of the combatants with the heavy boredom of the electorate. In the absence of worthy leadership, the main business of Parliament has resolved itself into a more or less cynical make-believe of competitive bribery. "Vote for us, we gave you old age pensions and you can trust us for future instalments," "Vote for us, we extended the pensions and will give you small holdings"—and so the bidding continues, while vital interests, national defence, the Empire, and even the proper organization of our social system, are neglected, or still worse, used as counters in the game.

These are disquieting considerations, and it is hardly possible for the most optimistic observer to regard the present state of the nation with feelings of unqualified

satisfaction. But to despair of improvement would be not only cowardly, but unreasonable. Amid all the vulgarity, the squalor and faithlessness of modern England, there is proof that the old fire is smouldering, and may yet burst forth gloriously as of old. The South African War, which revealed our unreadiness to the world, bore witness to our strength also. It showed in the trenches of Ladysmith and on the heights of the Tugela that we had officers and men who knew how to endure and to die, and above all, it showed that the loyalty of the colonies was a real and living bond, which thousands of brave men were prepared to seal with their blood. Amid much that was deplorable and much that was shameful, this spontaneous rally of the Empire stands out as the one purely redeeming feature, the one phase of the struggle upon which we can afford to look back with unmixed pride.

In many directions a watchful eye may perceive signs that the worst is past, that a spiritual revival is already stirring with the promise of resurrection. The self-complacent materialism that culminated during the 'eighties is undermined, the bold denying spirits have given place to imps, there is no longer the confidence of bigotry that dignified the old materialists. Decadence in art is itself decaying, the importations of post-Impressionist and Futurist extravagance have seemed rather like desperate efforts to resuscitate a dying tradition than heralds of a new darkness. Even as regards our social system, there is room for hope. The formulas of liberty and representative government, which have served to mask a social tyranny such as the Middle Ages never knew, are becoming known for what they are. The game of party is ceasing to be taken quite so seriously, and the oracles of the party Press have lost some of their power of creating opinion. When once men have learnt to see things instead of words, the reign of shams is drawing to a

close, and there is reason to believe that such a change is even now taking place.

And not only in a negative sense is there hope of England's awakening. It is not the spirit of the nation that is rotten, on every hand there are tokens of an ardour and capacity for sacrifice which only require worthy leadership to fan them into a blaze. It is now, as it was in the days of Charles I—men are afraid to serve for fear their loyalty should be turned to sinister ends. They are afraid of empire because they associate it with hidden financial interests; they distrust national service because they doubt the honesty of its promoters; they rush into class warfare because they feel that they are fighting for their lives against aggression. But the devoted loyalty of all classes, and particularly the poorest class, to the Crown, the general determination to keep up the navy, the overwhelming response given in 1900 to a Government which appealed to the nation on what was believed to be a straight patriotic issue, are portents of hope and consolation. The very solidarity and discipline which have ennobled our labour disputes, are capable of being turned to glorious results in the service of the nation. England is waiting for a leader.

But of all portents of hope, the chief is the devoted loyalty which, in spite of every blunder and every rebuff, the daughter nations still cherish for the Motherland. Ever since the idea of a free Empire was seriously mooted, cynics and Little Englanders have not been wanting to show, with copious display of expert knowledge, that the colonies are plunged in sordid materialism, that they regard Great Britain, at best, as a temporary milch cow, that they are calculating upon her approaching downfall and their own independence. It will probably affect neither the equanimity nor the conclusions of these gentlemen, that the colonies themselves, with a sublime and touching emulation of love, have once and for all

given the lie to their detractors. We leave the cynic and the curmudgeon to make such capital as they can out of the spectacle of the whole Canadian Parliament rising spontaneously to sing the National Anthem, before paying such a voluntary tribute as all the armies and fleets of King George might not have sufficed to wring from them. But to those who retain the least spark of British feeling, no words shall suffice to express their joy and reverent admiration at the prospect of this, our imperial dawn ; in silence and in tears will they acknowledge, that in spite of all our sins as a nation, it was sweet and glorious to have lived in such times and to have known so great a love.

The question which dominates all others at the beginning of the present century is whether England will prove worthy of the solemn heritage to which she has been called. Never has a more splendid opportunity been vouchsafed to any nation, and only by a vileness of soul which we would fain believe unthinkable, is it possible for her to miss it. There is nothing in the idea of empire to offend the most democratic conscience, and we have seen how a Labour Ministry in Australia, and what is practically a Socialist Government in New Zealand, can display a patriotism and eager generosity that put the Mother-Country to shame. Nor is the duty one which it is even safe for us to shirk, for the penalty of the refusal will be commensurate with the shame. Left to ourselves, and in competition with gigantic and organized powers whose resources we cannot match, it may be a question whether we shall be bled to death slowly, or smashed at a blow by some better organized and more self-sacrificing people.

It is not only our own interests that are at stake. Our failure would spell disaster not to ourselves only, but to mankind. In the clash of empires that the new century is preparing, we have to stand for freedom and justice

against military despotism and commercial greed, for the ideals of Chatham and Canning against those of Bismarck and Machiavelli.

The root of the matter lies not in forms of government nor schemes of policy, but in the spirit which gives them life. If faith is cold and duty neglected, there is no leader so brilliant and no counsellor so wise that he can save more than his own soul out of the general ruin. The laws of God are not weakened, though fools deny His existence, and think to escape the consequences of their folly by this or that economic or scientific or diplomatic expedient. For a time all is well, the duty of the hour is put aside with an easy sneer, the strategist of party continues to register his miserable victories, class is pitted against class and interest against interest, the pedant, the cynic and the sentimentalist go forth unchallenged, until one day the boom of guns is heard to seaward, and the nation which dreamed that God had forgotten finds itself summoned to give instant account of its stewardship. Only then, when famine and invasion walk abroad hand-in-hand, when the work of ages is toppling to ruin in a day, does that people realize what is meant by God's awful sentence: "Mene! Mene! Tekel! Upharsin!"

Whether these words shall remain unwritten upon the walls of our own homes is a matter that rests with us British citizens, and with us alone. The day of grace is not past, the last hour has not sounded. Our power is unshorn and our resources intact, daughter nations are stretching hands of comradeship across the sea. The prospect behind is glorious, that which lies ahead may be fairer still, and past and future together beckon us forward upon our imperial mission. That the present state of the country throws a cloud over these vistas may not be denied, but we at least have this consolation, that the remedy lies in our own hands. There is no man or woman

too feeble to bear a part, the mere fact of passionately loving our country is a gift not to be despised. Let us go forward, then, in God's name, trusting that the Power, which has guided our destinies so far, will not forsake us in these latter days.

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