

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

I



FOR some years the name of Friedrich Nietzsche has been the war-cry of opposing factions in Germany. It is not easy to take up a German periodical without finding some trace of the passionate admiration or denunciation which this man has called forth. If we turn to Scandinavia or to France, whither his fame and his work are now also penetrating, we find that the same results have followed. And we may expect a similar outburst in England now that a complete translation of his works has begun to appear. At present, however, I know of no attempt to deal with Nietzsche from the British point of view, and that is my excuse for trying to define his personality and influence. I do not come forward as the champion either of Nietzscheanism or Anti-Nietzscheanism. It appears to me that any human individuality that has strongly aroused the love and hatred of men must be far too complex for absolute condemnation, or absolute approval. Apart from praise or blame, which seem here alike impertinent, Nietzsche is without doubt an extraordinarily interesting figure. He is the modern incarnation of that image of intellectual pride which Marlowe created in Faustus. A man who has certainly stood at the finest summit of modern culture, who has thence made the most determined effort ever made to destroy modern morals, and who now leads a life as near to death as any life outside the grave can be, must needs be a tragic figure. It is a figure full of significance, for it represents, perhaps, the greatest spiritual force which has appeared since Goethe, full of interest also to the psychologist, and surely not without its pathos, perhaps its horror, for the man in the street.

It is only within the last year that it has become possible to study Nietzsche's life-history. For a considerable period his early home at Naumberg has been the receptacle of Nietzsche archives of all kinds, and now his sister, Elizabeth Förster-Nietzsche, has utilized this copious material in the production of an authoritative biography. This sister is herself a remarkable

person ; for many years she lived in close association with her brother so that she was supposed, though without reason, to have exerted an influence over his thought ; then she married Dr. Förster, the founder of the New Germany colony in Paraguay ; on his death she returned home to write the history of the colony, and has since devoted herself to the care of her brother and his fame. Only the first volume of the *Leben Nietzsche's* has yet appeared, but it enables us to trace his development to adult life and throws light on his whole career.

Nietzsche belonged to a noble Polish family called Nietzky, who on account of strong Protestant convictions abandoned their country and their title during the eighteenth century and settled in Germany. Notwithstanding the large amount of German blood in his veins, he always regarded himself as essentially a Pole. The Poles seemed to him the best endowed and most knightly of Slavonic peoples, and he once remarked that it was only by virtue of a strong mixture of Slavonic blood that the Germans entered the ranks of gifted nations. He termed the Polish Chopin the deliverer of music from German heaviness and stupidity, and when he speaks of another Pole, Copernicus, who reversed the judgment of the whole world, one may divine a reference to what in later years Nietzsche regarded as his own mission. In adult life Nietzsche's keen and strongly marked features were distinctly Polish, and when abroad he was frequently greeted by Poles as a fellow-countryman ; at Sorrento, where he once spent a winter, the country people called him *Il Polacco*.

Like Emerson (to whose writings he was strongly attracted throughout life) and many another strenuous philosophic revolutionary, Nietzsche came of a long race of Christian ministers. On both sides his ancestors were preachers, and from first to last the preacher's fervour was in his own blood. The eldest of three children (of whom one died in infancy), Friedrich Nietzsche was born in 1844 at Röcken, near Lützen, in Saxony. His father—who shortly after his son's birth fell down the parsonage steps, injuring his head so severely that he died within twelve months—is described as a man of noble and poetic nature, with a special talent for music, inherited by his son ; he belonged to a large and very healthy family who mostly lived to extreme old age, preserving their mental and physical vigour to the last. The Nietzsches were a proud, sincere folk, very clannish, looking askance at all who were not Nietzsches. Nietzsche's mother, said to be a charming woman and possessed of much physical vigour, was again a clergyman's daughter. The Oehler family, to which she belonged, was also very

large, very healthy, and very long-lived; she was only eighteen at her son's birth, and is still alive to care for him in his complete mental decay. I note these facts, which are given with much precision and detail in the biography, because they certainly help us to understand Nietzsche. It is evident that he is no frail hectic flame of a degenerating race. There seems to be no trace of insanity or nervous disorder at any point in the family history, as far back as it is possible to go. On the contrary, he belonged to extremely vigorous stocks, possessing unusual moral and physical force, people of "character." A similar condition of things is not seldom found in the history of genius. In such a case the machine is, as it were, too highly charged with inherited energy, and works at a pressure which ultimately brings it to perdition. All genius must work without rest, it cannot do otherwise; only the most happily constituted genius works without haste.

The sister's account of the children's early life is a very charming part of this record, and one which in the nature of things rarely finds place in a biography. She describes her first memories of the boy's pretty face, his long fair hair, and large, dark, serious eyes. He could not speak until he was nearly three years old, but at four he began to read and write. He was a quiet, rather obstinate child, with fits of passion which he learnt to control at a very early age; his self-control became so great that, as a boy, on more than one occasion he deliberately burnt his hand, to show that Mucius Scævola's act was but a trifling matter.

The widowed mother went with her children to settle at Naumberg on the Saale with her husband's mother, a woman of fine character with views of her own, one of which was that children of all classes should first be brought up together. Little Fritz was therefore sent to the town school, but the experiment was not altogether successful. He was a serious child, fond of solitude, and was called "the little parson" by his comrades. "The fundamental note of his disposition," writes a schoolfellow in after life, "was a certain melancholy which expressed itself in his whole being." He avoided his fellows and sought beautiful scenery, as he continued to do throughout life. At the same time he was a well-developed, vigorous boy, who loved games of various kinds, especially those of his own invention. But although the children lived to the full the fantastic life of childhood, the sister regretfully confesses that they remained models of propriety. Fritz was "a very pious child; he thought much about religious matters and was always concerned to put his thoughts into practice." It is curious that, notwithstanding his instinctive sympathy with the Greek spirit and his philological aptitudes, he found Greek specially

difficult to learn. At the age of ten appeared his taste for verse-making, and also for music, and he soon began to show that inherited gift for improvisation by which he was always able to hold his audience spell-bound. Even as a boy the future moralist made a deep impression on those who knew him, and he even reminded one person of the youthful Jesus in the Temple. "We Nietzsches hate lies," an aunt was accustomed to say; in Friedrich sincerity was a very deep-rooted trait, and he exercised an involuntary educational influence on those who came near him.

In 1858 a place was found for him at Pforta, a remarkable school of almost military discipline. Here many of the lines of his future activity were definitely laid down. At an even earlier date, excited by the influence of Humboldt, he had been fascinated by the ideal of universal culture, and at Pforta his intellectual energies began to expand. Here also, in 1859, when a pianoforte edition of "Tristan" was first published, Nietzsche became an enthusiastic Wagnerian, and "Tristan" always remained for him music *par excellence*; he was also attracted to Berlioz. Here, too, he began those philological studies which led some years later to a professorship. He turned to philology, however, as he himself recognized, because of the need he felt to anchor himself to some cool logical study which would not grip his heart like the restless and exciting artistic instincts which had hitherto chiefly moved him. During the latter part of his stay at this very strenuous educational establishment young Nietzsche was a less brilliant pupil than during the earlier part. His own individuality was silently growing beneath the disciplinary pressure which would have dwarfed a less vigorous individuality. His philosophic aptitudes began to develop and take form; he wished also to devote himself to music; and he pined at the confinement, longing for the forest and the woodman's axe. It was the beginning of a long struggle between the impulses of his own self-centred nature and the duties imposed from without, by the school, the university, and, later, his professorship; he always strove to broaden and deepen these duties to the scope of his own nature, but the struggle remained. It was the immediate result of this double strain that, during 1862, strong and healthy as the youth appeared, he began to suffer from headaches and eye-troubles, cured by temporary removal from the school. He remained extremely short-sighted, and it was only by an absurd error in the routine examination that in later years he was passed for military service in the artillery.

In the following year, 1863, Nietzsche met, and was for a while attracted by, a schoolfellow's sister, an ethereal little Berlin girl, who appealed to "the large, broad-shouldered, shy, rather solemn and stiff youth." To this early

experience, which never went beyond poetic *schwärmerei*, his sister is inclined to trace the origin of Nietzsche's view of women as very fragile, tender little buds. The experience is also interesting because it appears to stand alone in his life. We strike here on an organic abnormality in this congenital philosopher. Nietzsche's attitude was not the crude misogyny of Schopenhauer, who knew women chiefly as women of the streets. Nietzsche knew many of the finest women of his time, and he sometimes speaks with insight and sympathy of the world as it appears to women; but there was clearly nothing in him to answer to any appeal to passion, and his attitude is well summed up in an aphorism of his own "Zarathustra": "It is better to fall into the hands of a murderer than into the dreams of an ardent woman." "All his life long," his sister writes, "my brother remained completely apart from either great passion or vulgar love. His whole passion lay in the world of knowledge; only very temperate emotions remained over for anything else. In later life he was grieved that he had never attained to *amour passion*, and that every inclination to a feminine personality quickly changed to a tender friendship, however fascinatingly pretty the fair one might be." He would expend much sympathy on unhappy lovers, yet he would shake his head, saying to himself or others: "And all that over a little girl!"

Young Nietzsche left Pforta, in 1863, with the most various and incompatible scientific tastes and interests (always excepting in mathematics, for which he never possessed any aptitude), but, as he himself remarked, none that would fit him for any career. One point in regard to the termination of his school-life is noteworthy: he chose Theognis as the subject of his valedictory dissertation. His meditations on this moralist and aristocrat, so contemptuous of popular rule, may have served as the foundation of some of his own later views on Greek culture. In 1864 he became a student at Bonn, and the year that followed was of special import in his inner development; he finally threw off the beliefs of his early youth; he discovered his keen critical faculty; and his self-contained independence became a visible mark of his character, though always disguised by his amiable and courteous manners. At Bonn his life seems to have been fairly happy, though he was by no means a typical German student. He spent much money, but it was chiefly on his artistic tastes—music and the theatre—or on little tours. No one could spend less on eating and drinking; like Goethe and like Heine, he had no love of smoking and drinking, and he was repelled by the thick, beery good-humour of the German student. People who drink beer and smoke pipes every evening, he always held, were incapable of understanding his philosophy; for

they could not possibly possess the clarity of mind needed to grasp any delicate or complex intellectual problem. He returned home from Bonn "a picture of health and strength, broad-shouldered, brown, with rather fair thick hair, and exactly the same height as Goethe;" and then went to continue his studies at Leipzig.

Notwithstanding the youth's efforts to subdue his emotional and æsthetic restlessness by cool and hard work, he was clearly tortured by the effort to find a philosophic home for himself in the world. This effort absorbed him all day long, frequently nearly all the night. At this time he chanced to take up on a bookstall a totally unknown work, entitled "Der Welt als Wille und Vorstellung;" in obedience to an unusual impulse he bought the book without consideration, and from that moment began an acquaintance with Schopenhauer which for many years exerted a deep influence on his life. At that time, probably, he could have had no better guide into paths of peace; but even as a student he was a keen critic of Schopenhauer's system, valuing him chiefly as, in opposition to Kant, "the philosopher of a re-awakened classical period, a Germanized Hellenism." Schumann's music and long solitary walks aided in the work of recuperation. A year or two later Nietzsche met the other great god who shared with Schopenhauer his early worship. "I cannot bring my heart to any degree of critical coolness before this music," he wrote, in 1868, after listening to the overture to the "Meistersingers"; "every fibre and nerve in me thrills; it is a long time since I have been so carried away." I quote these words, for we shall, I think, find later that they have their significance. A few weeks afterwards he was invited to meet the master, and thus began a relationship that for Nietzsche was fateful.

Meanwhile his philological studies were bringing him distinction. A lecture on Theognis was pronounced by Ritschl to be the best work by a student of Nietzsche's standing that he had ever met with. Then followed investigations into the sources of Suidas, a lengthy examination *De fontibus Diogenis Laertii*, and palæographic studies in connection with Terence, Statius, and Orosius. He was now also consciously perfecting his German style, treating language, he remarks, as a musical instrument on which one must be able to improvise, as well as play what is merely learnt by heart. In 1869, when only in his twenty-sixth year, and before he had taken his doctor's degree, he accepted the chair of classical philology at Basel. He was certainly, as he himself said, not a born philologist. He had devoted himself to philology—I wish to insist on this significant point—as a sedative and tonic to his restless energy; in this he was doubtless wise, though his sister

seems to suggest that he thereby increased his mental strain. But he had no real vocation for philology, and it is curious that when the Basel chair was offered to him he was proposing to himself to throw aside philology for chemistry. Philologists, he declares again and again, are but factory hands in the service of science. At the best philology is a waste of acuteness, since it merely enables us to state facts which the study of the present would teach us much more swiftly and surely. Thus it was that he instinctively broadened and deepened every philological question he took up, making it a channel for philosophy and morals. With his specifically philological work we are not further concerned.

I have been careful to present the main facts in Nietzsche's early development because they seem to me to throw light on the whole of his later development. So far he had published nothing except in philological journals. In 1872, after he had settled at Basel,¹ appeared his first work, an essay entitled "*Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik*," dedicated to Wagner. The conception of this essay was academic, but in Nietzsche's hands the origin of tragedy became merely the text for an exposition of his own philosophy of art at this period. He traces two art impulses in ancient Greece: one, starting in the phenomena of dreaming, which he associates with Apollo; the other, starting in the phenomena of intoxication, associated with Dionysos, and through singing, music and dithyramb leading up to the lyric. The union of these, which both imply a pessimistic view of life, produced folk-song and finally tragedy, which is thus the outcome of Dionysiac music fertilized by Apollonian imagery. Socrates the optimist, with his views concerning virtue as knowledge, vice as ignorance, and his identification of virtue with happiness, led to the decay of tragedy and the triumph of Alexandrian culture, in the net of which the whole modern world is still held. Now, however, German music is producing a new birth of tragedy through Wagner, who has again united music and myth, and inaugurated an era of German art culture. This remarkable essay produced considerable controversy. It is characteristic of Nietzsche's first period, as we may call all he wrote before 1876, in its insistence on the all-importance of æsthetic as opposed to intellectual culture; and it is characteristic of his whole work in its grip of the connection between the problems and solutions of Hellenic times and the problems and solutions of the modern world. For Nietzsche the

¹ With the migration to Basel the "*Leben Nietzsche's*" at present ends; and I am, therefore, forced to rely on more fragmentary data in outlining the following years of Nietzsche's life.

Greek world was not the model of beautiful mediocrity imagined by Winckelmann and Goethe, nor did it date from the era of rhetorical idealism inaugurated by Plato. The real Hellenic world came earlier, and the true Hellenes were sturdy realists enamoured of life, reverencing all its manifestations and returns, and holding in highest honour that sexual symbol of life which Christianity, with its denial of life, despises. Plato Nietzsche hated; he had wandered from all the fundamental instincts of the Hellene. His childish dialectics can only appeal, Nietzsche said, to those who are ignorant of the French masters like Fontenelle. The best cure for Plato, he held, is Thucydides, the last of the old Hellenes who were brave in the face of reality; Plato fled from reality into the ideal and was a Christian before his time.

Between 1873 and 1876 Nietzsche wrote four essays—on David Strauss, the Use and Abuse of History in relation to Life, Schopenhauer as an Educator, and Richard Wagner—which were collectively published as “*Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen*.” If in his first essay Nietzsche may seem to appear as the champion of the modern Teuton, it was for the first and last time. He made ample amends in the essay on Strauss. That essay was written soon after the great war, amid the resulting outburst of flamboyant patriotism and the widely-expressed conviction that the war was a victory of “German culture.” Fresh from the world of Greece, Nietzsche pours contempt on that assumption. Culture, he says, is, above all, unity of artistic style in every expression of a people’s life. The exuberance of knowledge in which a German glories is neither a necessary means of culture nor a sign of it, being, indeed, more allied to the opposite of culture—to barbarism. It is in this barbarism that the modern German lives, that is to say, in a chaotic mixture of all styles. Look at his clothing, Nietzsche continues, his houses, his streets, all his manners and customs. They are a turmoil of all styles in which he peacefully lives and moves. Such culture is really a phlegmatic absence of all sense of culture. Largely, also, it is merely a bad imitation of the real and productive culture of France which it is supposed to have conquered in 1870. Let there be no chatter, he concludes, about the triumph of German culture, for at present no real German culture exists. The heroic figures of the German past were not “classics,” as some imagine; they were seekers after a genuine German culture, and so regarded themselves. The would-be children of culture in Germany to-day are Philistines without knowing it, and the only unity they have achieved is a methodical barbarism. Nietzsche attacks Strauss by no means as a theologian, but as a typical culture-Philistine. He was moved to this by the recent publication of “*Der*

Alte und der Neue Glaube." I can well understand the emotions with which that book filled him, for I, too, read it soon after its publication, and can well recall the painful impression made on me by its homely pedestrianism, the dull lack of imagination of the man who could only compare the world to a piece of machinery, an engine that creaks in the working, a sort of vast Lancashire mill in which we must spend every moment in feverish labour, and for our trouble perhaps be caught between the wheels and cogs. But I was young, and my youthful idealism, eager for some vital and passionate picture of the world, inevitably revolted against so tawdry and mechanical a conception. Nietzsche, then and ever, failed to perceive that there is room, after all, for the modest sturdy bourgeois labourer who, at the end of a hard life in the service of truth, sits down to enjoy his brown beer and Haydn's quartettes, and to repeat his homely confession of faith in the world as he sees it. Nietzsche failed to realize that Strauss's limitations were essential to the work he had to do, and that he remained a not unworthy follower of those German heroes who were not "classics," but honest seekers after the highest they knew. In this hypertrophied repulsion for the everyday bourgeois work of the intellectual world we touch on a defect in Nietzsche's temperament which we must regard as congenital, and which wrought in him at last to wildest issues.

In another of these essays, "Schopenhauer als Erzieher," Nietzsche sets forth his opinions concerning his early master in philosophy. It is a significant indication of the qualities that attracted him to Schopenhauer that he compares him to Montaigne, thus at once revealing his own fundamental optimism, and the admiration which he then and always felt for the great French masters of wisdom. He regards Schopenhauer as the leader from Kant's caves of critical scepticism to the open sky with its consoling stars. Schopenhauer saw the world as a whole, and was not befooled by the analysis of the colours and canvas wherewith the picture is painted. Kant, in spite of the impulse of his genius, never became a philosopher. "If anyone thinks I am thus doing Kant an injustice, he cannot know what a philosopher is, *i.e.*, not merely a great thinker but also a real man;" and he goes on to explain that the mere scholar who is accustomed to let opinions, ideas, and things in books always intervene between him and facts, will never see facts, and will never be a fact to himself; whereas the philosopher must regard himself as the symbol and abbreviation of all the facts of the world. It remained always an axiom with Nietzsche that the philosopher must first of all be a "real man."

In this essay also Nietzsche first expressed his conception of the value of individuality. Shakespeare had asked :

"Which can say more
Than this rich praise, that you alone are you?"

But Shakespeare was only addressing a single beloved friend. Nietzsche addresses the same thought to the common "you." "At bottom every man well knows that he can only live one single life in the world, and that never again will so strange a chance shake together into unity such singularly varied elements as he holds : he knows that, but he hides it like a bad conscience." This was a sane and democratic individualism ; in later years, as we shall see, it assumed stranger shapes.

The essay on Wagner starts from the standpoint reached in the previous essays. There is a deep analogy for those to whom distance is no obscuring cloud, he remarks, between Kant and the Eleatics, Schopenhauer and Empedocles, Æschylus and Wagner. "The world has been orientalised long enough, and men now seek to be hellenised." The Gordian knot has been cut and its strands are fluttering to the ends of the world ; we need a series of Anti-Alexanders mighty enough to bring together the scattered threads of life. Wagner is such an Anti-Alexander, a great astringent force in the world. For "it is not possible to present the highest and purest operations of dramatic art, and not therewith to renew morals and the state, education and affairs." Bayreuth is the sacred consecration on the morning of battle. "The battles which art brings before us are a simplification of the actual battles of life ; its problems are an abbreviation of the endlessly involved reckoning of human action and aspiration. But herein lies the greatness and value of art, that it calls forth the appearance of a simpler world, a shorter solution of the problems of life. No one who suffers in life can dispense with that appearance, just as no one can dispense with sleep." Wagner has simplified the world ; he has related music to life, the drama to music ; he has intensified the visible things of the world, and made the audible visible. Just as Goethe found in poetry an expression for the painter's vocation he had missed, so Wagner utilized in music his dramatic instinct. And Nietzsche further notes the democratic nature of Wagner's art, so strenuously warm and bright as to reach even the lowliest in spirit. Wagner takes off the stigma that clings to the word "common," and brings to all the means of attaining spiritual freedom. "For," says Nietzsche, "whosoever will be free, must make himself free ; freedom is no fairy's gift to fall into any man's lap." Such are

the leading thoughts in an essay which remains an interesting philosophic appreciation of the place of Wagner's art in the modern world.

"Richard Wagner in Bayreuth" brings to an end Nietzsche's first period, and may itself be said to lead up to the crash which inaugurated his later period. Hitherto Nietzsche's work was unquestionably sane both in substance and form. No doubt it had aroused much criticism; work so vigorous, sincere, and independent could not fail to arouse hostility. But as we look back to-day, these fine essays represent, with much youthful enthusiasm, the best that was known and thought in Germany a quarter of a century ago. Nietzsche's opinions on Wagner and Schopenhauer, on individualism and democracy, the significance of early Hellenism for moderns, the danger of an excessive historical sense, the conception of culture less as a striving after intellectual knowledge than as that which arouses within us the philosopher, the artist, and the saint—all these ideas, wild as some of them seemed to Nietzsche's German contemporaries, are the ideas which have now largely permeated European culture. The same cannot be said of his later ideas.

It was at the first Bayreuth festival in 1876 that this chapter in Nietzsche's life was finally closed. Many strange theories have been put forward to account for the change that then came over him. They may be thrust aside. No mere disappointment with the festival, or with "Parsifal," or with Wagner's growing conservatism, no mere offence to Nietzsche's own *amour-propre*, suffice to explain so radical an upheaval. The change was more fundamental. The excitement of the festival merely precipitated an organic catastrophe towards which he had long been tending. I have already noted passages which indicate that he was himself aware of a consuming flame within, and that from time to time he made efforts to check its ravages. That it was this internal flame which really produced the breakdown is shown by the narrative of Nietzsche's friend, Dr. Kretzer, who was with him at Bayreuth. It was evident he was seriously ill, Kretzer tells us, utterly changed and broken down. His eye-troubles were associated, if not with actual brain disease, at all events with a high degree of neurasthenia, and the physical effect of the performance was so overwhelming that he was only able to be present at a few scenes of the "Nibelungen." At Bayreuth, Nietzsche was forced to realize the peril of his position as he had never realized it before. He could no longer disguise from himself that he must break with all the passionate interests of his past. It was an essential measure of hygiene, almost a surgical operation. This is indeed how he has himself put the matter. In the preface

to "Der Fall Wagner," he said that it had been to him a necessary self-discipline to take part against all that was morbid within himself, against Wagner, against Schopenhauer, against all the impassioning interests of modern life, and to view the world, so far as possible, with the philosopher's eyes, from an immense height. And again he speaks of Wagner's art as a beaker of ecstasy so subtle and profound that it acts like poison and leaves no remedy at last but flight from the syren's cave. Nietzsche was henceforth in the position of a gouty subject who is forced to abandon port wine and straightway becomes an apostle of total abstinence. The remedy seems to have been fairly successful. But the disease was in his bones. Impassioning interests that were far more subtly poisonous slowly developed within him, and twelve years later flight had become impossible, even if he was still able to realize the need for flight.

Nietzsche broke very thoroughly with his past, yet the break has been exaggerated, and he himself often helped to exaggerate it. He was in the position of a beleaguered city which has been forced to abandon its outer walls and concentrate itself in the citadel; and however it may have been in ancient warfare, in spiritual affairs such a state of things involves an offensive attitude towards the former line of defence. The positions we have abandoned constitute a danger to the positions we have taken up. Many of the world's fiercest persecutors have but persecuted their old selves, and there seems to be psychological necessity for such an attitude. Yet a careful study of Nietzsche's earlier activity reveals many germs of later developments. The critical attitude towards conventional morality, the individualism, the optimism, the ideal of heroism, which dominate his later thought, exist as germs in his earlier work. Even the flagrant contrast between "Richard Wagner in Bayreuth" and "Der Fall Wagner" was the outcome of a gradual development. In the earlier essay Nietzsche had justly pointed out that Wagner's instincts were fundamentally dramatic. As years went on he brooded over this idea; the nimble and lambent wit of his later days played around it until Wagner became a mere actor in his work and in his life, a rhetorician, an incarnate falsehood, the personification of latter-day decadence, the Victor Hugo of music, the Bernini of music, the modern Cagliostro. At the same time he admits that Wagner represents the modern spirit, and that it is reasonable for a musician to say that though he hates Wagner he can tolerate no other music. The fact is that Nietzsche was not Teuton enough to abide for ever with Wagner. He compares him contemptuously with Hegel, cloud-compellers both, masters of German mists and German mysticism, worshippers of Wotan,

the god of bad weather, the god of the Germans. "How could they miss what we, we Halcyonians, miss in Wagner—*la gaya scienza*, the light feet, wit, fire, grace, strong logic, the dance of the stars, arrogant intellectuality, the quivering light of the south, the smooth sea—perfection?" It is evident that Nietzsche had not gained complete mastery of his own personality in his earlier work. It is brilliant, full of fine perceptions and critical insight, but as a personal utterance incomplete. It renders the best ideas of the time, not the best ideas that Nietzsche could contribute to the time. The shock of 1876 may have been a step towards the disintegration of his intellect, but it was also a rally, a step towards self-realization. Nietzsche had no genuine affinity with Schopenhauer or with Wagner, though they were helpful to his development; he was no pessimist, he was no democrat. As he himself said, "I understood the philosophic pessimism of the nineteenth century as the symptom of a finer strength of thought, a more victorious fullness of life. In the same way Wagner's music signified to me the expression of a Dionysiac mightiness of soul in which I seemed to hear, as in an earthquake, the upheaval of the primitive powers of life, after age-long repression." Now he only needed relief, "golden, tender, oily melodies" to soothe the leaden weight of life, and these he found in "Carmen."

Any discussion of the merits of the question as between Wagner and Bizet, the earlier and the later Nietzsche, seems to me out of place, though much has been made of it by those who delight to see a giant turn and rend himself. Nietzsche himself said he was writing for psychologists, and it is not unfair to add that it is less "Wagner's case" that he presents to us than "Nietzsche's case." For my own part—speaking as one who finds Wagner the greatest among modern musicians, and "Carmen" the most delightful modern opera outside Wagner—I can address both the early and the late Nietzsche in the words habitually used by the landlord of the "Rainbow": "You're both wrong and you're both right, as I allus says." Most of the mighty quarrels that have sent men to battle and the stake might have been appeased had both sides recognized that both were right in their affirmations, both wrong in their denials.

Nietzsche occupied his chair at Basel for some years longer; in 1880 his health forced him to resign and he was liberally pensioned. As a professor he treated the most difficult questions of Greek study, and devoted his chief attention to his best pupils, who in their turn adored him. Basel is an admirable residence for a cosmopolitan thinker; it was easy for Nietzsche to keep in touch with all that went on from Paris to St. Petersburg. He was also on

terms of more or less intimate friendship with the finest spirits in Switzerland, with Keller the novelist, Böcklin the painter, Burckhardt the historian. We are told that he was a man of great personal charm in social intercourse. But his associates at Basel never suspected that in this courteous and amiable professor was stored up an explosive energy which would one day be felt in every civilized land. With pen in hand his criticism of life was unflinching, his sincerity arrogant; when the pen was dropped he became modest, reserved, almost timorous.

The work he produced between 1877 and 1882 seems to me to represent the maturity of his genius. It includes "Menschliches, Allzumenschliches," "Morgenröthe," and "Die Frohliche Wissenschaft (*la gaya scienza*). In form all these volumes belong to *pensée* literature. They deal with art, with religion, with morals and philosophy, with the relation of all these to life. Nietzsche shows himself in these *pensées* above all a freethinker, emancipated from every law save that of sincerity, wide-ranging, serious, penetrative, often impassioned, as yet always able to follow his own ideal of self-restraint.

After leaving Basel he spent the following nine years chiefly at health resorts and in travelling. We find him at Sorrento, Venice, Genoa, Turin, Sils Maria, as well as at Leipzig. Doubtless his fresh and poignant *pensées* are largely the outcome of strenuous solitary walks in the Engadine or among the Italian lakes. We may assume that during most of these years he was fighting, on the whole successfully fighting, for mental health. Yet passages that occur throughout his books seem to suggest that his thoughts may have sometimes turned to the goal towards which he was tending. It is a mistake, he points out, to suppose that insanity is always the symptom of a degenerating culture, although to nod towards the asylum is a convenient modern way of slaying spiritual tyrants; it is in primitive and developing stages of culture that insanity has played its chief part; it was only by virtue of what seemed to be the "Divine" turbulence of insanity and epilepsy that any new moral law could make progress among early cultures. Just as for us there seems a little madness in all genius, so for them there seemed a little genius in all madness, so that sorcerers and saints agonized in solitude and abstinence for some gleam of madness which would bring them faith in themselves and openly justify their mission.

What may, perhaps, be called Nietzsche's third period began in 1883 with "Also sprach Zarathustra," the most extraordinary of all his works, mystical in form, and recalling the oracular aphoristic manner of the Hebrews, but not mystical in substance. It was followed by "Jenseits von Gut und Böse,"

"Zur Genealogie der Moral," "Der Fall Wagner," and "Götzendämmerung." It is during this period that we trace the growth of the magnification of his own personal mission, which finally became a sort of megalomania. In form the books of this period are somewhat less fragmentary than those of the second period; in substance they are marked by their emphatic, often extravagant, almost reckless insistence on certain views of morality. If in the first period he was an apostle of culture, in the second a freethinker, pronouncing judgment on all things in heaven and earth, he was now exclusively a moralist, or, as he would prefer to say, an immoralist. It was during this period that he worked out his "master morality"—the duty to be strong—in opposition to the "slave morality" of Christianity, with its glorification of weakness and pity, and that he consistently sought to analyze and destroy the traditional conceptions of good and evil on which our current morality rests. The last work which he planned, but never completed, was a re-valuation of all values, "Umwerthung aller Werthe," which would have been his final indictment of the modern world, and the full statement of his own immoralism and Dionysiac philosophy.

It is sometimes said that Nietzsche's mastery of his thought and style was increasing up to the last. This I can scarcely admit, even as regards style. No doubt there is a light and swift vigour of movement in these last writings which before he had never attained. He pours out a shimmering stream of golden phrases with which he has intoxicated himself, and tries to intoxicate us. We may lend ourselves to the charm, but it has no enduring hold. This master of gay or bitter invective no longer possesses the keenly reasoned and piercing insight of the earlier Nietzsche. We feel that he has become the victim of obsessions which drive him like a leaf before the wind, and all his exuberant wit is unsubstantial and pathetic as that of Falstaff. The devouring flame has at length eaten the core out of the man and his style, leaving only this coruscating shell. And at a touch even this thin shell collapsed into smouldering embers.

From a child Nietzsche was subject to strangely prophetic dreams. In a dream which, when a boy, he put into literary form, he tells how he seemed to be travelling forward amid a glorious landscape, while carolling larks ascended to the clouds, and his whole life seemed to stretch before him in a vista of happy years; "and suddenly a shrill cry reached our ears; it came from the neighbouring lunatic asylum." Even in 1876 it became visible to his friends that Nietzsche attached extraordinary importance to his own work. After he wrote "Zarathustra," this self-exaltation increased, and began to find expres-

sion in his work. Latterly, it is said, he came to regard himself as the incarnation of the genius of humanity. It has always been found a terrible matter to war with the moral system of one's age ; it will have its revenge, one way or another, from within or from without, whatever happens after. Nietzsche strove for nothing less than to remodel the moral world after his own heart's desire, and his brain was perishing of exhaustion in the immense effort. In 1889—at the moment when his work at last began to attract attention—he became hopelessly insane. A period of severe hallucinatory delirium led on to complete dementia, and he passes beyond our sight.

HAVELOCK ELLIS.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

II



NIETZSCHE was by temperament a philosopher after the manner of the Greeks. In other words, philosophy was not to him, as to the average modern philosopher, a matter of books and the study, but a life to be lived. It seemed to him to have much less concern with "truth" than with the essentials of fine living. He loved travel and movement, he loved scenery, he loved cities and the spectacle of men, above all, he loved solitude. The solitude of cities drew him strongly; he envied Heraclitus his desert study amid the porticoes and peristyles of the immense temple of Diana. He had, however, his own favourite place of work, to which he often alludes, the Piazza di San Marco at Venice, amid the doves, in front of the strange and beautiful structure which he "loved, feared, and envied"; and here in the spring, between ten o'clock and mid-day, he found his best philosophic laboratory.

It was in Italy that Nietzsche seems to have found himself most at home, although there are no signs that he felt any special sympathy with the Italians, that is to say in later than Renaissance days. For the most part he possessed very decided sympathies and antipathies. His antipathy to his own Germans lay in the nature of things. Every prophet's message is primarily directed to his own people. And Nietzsche was unsparing in his keen criticism of the Germans. He tells somewhere with a certain humour how people abroad would ask him if Germany had produced no great thinker or artist, no really good book of late, and how with the courage of despair he would at last reply, "Yes, Bismarck!" Nietzsche was willing enough to recognize the kind of virtue personified in Bismarck. But with that recognition nearly all was said in favour of Germany that Nietzsche had to say. There is little in the German spirit that answered to his demands. He admired clearness, analytic precision, and highly organized intelligence, light, and alert. He saw no sufficient reason why profundity should lack a fine superficiality, nor why strength should be ungainly. His instinctive comparison

for a good thinker was always a good dancer. As a child he had been struck by seeing a rope-dancer, and throughout life dancing seemed to him the image of the finest culture, supple to bend, strong to retain its own equilibrium, an exercise demanding the highest training and energy of all the muscles of a well-knit organism. But the indubitable intellectual virtues of the bulky and plodding German are scarcely those which can well be symbolized by an Otero or a Caicedo. "There is too much beer in the German intellect," Nietzsche said. For the last ten centuries Germany has wilfully stultified herself; "nowhere else has there been so vicious a misuse of the two great European narcotics, alcohol and Christianity," to which he was inclined to add music. ("The theatre and music," he remarked in "Die Frohliche Wissenschaft," "are the haschisch and betel of Europeans, and the history of the so-called higher culture is largely the history of narcotics.") "Germans regard bad writing," he said, "as a national privilege; they do not write prose as one works at a statue, they only improvise." Even "German virtue"—and this was the unkindest cut of all—had its origin in eighteenth century France, as its early preachers, such as Kant and Schiller, fully recognized. Thus it happens that the German has no perceptions—coupling his Goethe with a Schiller, and his Schopenhauer with a Hartmann—and no tact, "no finger for *nuances*," his fingers are all claws. Nietzsche regarded it as merely an accident that he was himself born in Germany, just as it was merely an accident that Heine the Jew, and Schopenhauer the Dutchman, were born there. Yet, as I have already hinted, we may take these utterances too seriously. There are passages in his works—though we meet them rarely—which show that Nietzsche realized and admired the elemental energy, the depth and the contradictions in the German character; he attributed them largely to mixture of races.

Nietzsche was not much attracted to the English. It is true that he names Landor as one of the four masters of prose this century has produced, while another of these is Emerson, with whom he had genuine affinity, although his own genius was keener and more passionate, with less sunny serenity. For Shakespeare, also, his admiration was deep. And when he had outgrown his early enthusiasm for Schopenhauer, the fine qualities which he still recognized in that thinker—his concreteness, lucidity, reasonableness—seemed to him English. He was less flattering towards English thought. Darwinism, for instance, he thought, savoured too much of the population question, and was invented by English men of science who were oppressed by the problems of poverty. The struggle for existence, he said,

is only an exception in nature ; it is exuberance, an even reckless superfluity, which rules. For English philosophic thought generally he had little but contempt. J. S. Mill was one of his "impossibilities ;" the English and French sociologists of to-day, he said, have only known degenerating types of society, devoid of organizing force, and they take their own debased instincts as the standard of social codes in general. Modern democracy, modern utilitarianism, are largely of English manufacture, and he came at last to hate them both. During the past century, he asserted, they have reduced the whole spiritual currency of Europe to a dull plebeian level, and they are the chief causes of European vulgarity. It is the English, he also asserted—George Eliot, for instance—who, while abolishing Christian belief, have sought to bolster up the moral system which was created by Christianity, and which must necessarily fall with it. It is, moreover, the English, who with this democratic and utilitarian plebeianism have seduced and perverted the fine genius of France.

Just as we owe to England the vulgarity which threatens to overspread Europe, so to France we owe the conception of a habit of nobility, in every best sense of the word. On that point Nietzsche's opinion never wavered. The present subjection of the French spirit to this damnable Anglo-mania, he declared, must never lead us to forget the ardent and passionate energy, the intellectual distinction, which belonged to the France of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The French, as Nietzsche always held, are the one modern European nation which may be compared with the Greeks. In "*Menschliches, Allzumenschliches*" he names six French writers—Montaigne, La Rochefoucauld, La Bruyère, Fontenelle (in the "*Dialogues des Morts*"), Vauvenargues, Chamfort—who bring us nearer to Greek antiquity than any other group of modern authors, and contain more real thought than all the books of the German philosophers put together. The only French writer of the present century for whom he cared much (putting aside Mérimée, whom he valued as a master of style, and perhaps as the author of "*Carmen*") was Stendhal, who possesses some of the characters of the earlier group. The French, he points out, are the most Christian of all nations, and have produced the greatest saints. He enumerates Pascal ("the first among Christians, who was able to unite fervour, intellect, and candour ;—think of what that means!"), Fénelon, Mme. de Guyon, Bruno, the founder of the Trappists, who have flourished nowhere but in France, the Huguenots, Port-Royal—truly, he exclaims, the great French freethinkers encountered foemen worthy of their steel! The land which produced the most perfect types of

Anti-Christianity produced also the most perfect types of Christianity. He defends, also, that seeming superficiality which in a great Frenchman, he says, is but the natural epidermis of a rich and deep nature, while a great German's profundity is too often strangely bottled up from the light in a dark and contorted phial.

I have briefly stated Nietzsche's feeling as regards each of the three chief European peoples, because we are thus led up to the central points of his philosophy—his attitude towards modern religion and his attitude towards modern morals. We are often apt to regard these matters as of little practical importance; we think it the reasonable duty of practical social politics to attend to the immediate questions in hand, and leave these wider questions to settle themselves. Rightly or wrongly, that was not how Nietzsche looked at the matter. He was too much of a philosopher, he had too wide a sense of the vital relation of things, to be content with the policy of tinkering society, wherever it seems to need mending most badly, avoiding any reference to the whole. That is our English method, and no doubt it is a very sane and safe method, but, as we have seen, Nietzsche was not in sympathy with English methods. His whole significance lies in the thorough and passionate analysis with which he sought to dissect and to dissolve, first, "German culture," then Christianity, and lastly, modern morals, with all that these involve.

It is scarcely necessary to point out, that though Nietzsche rejoiced in the title of freethinker, he can by no means be confounded with the ordinary secularist. He is not bent on destroying religion from any anæsthesia of the religious sense, or even in order to set up some religion of science which is practically no religion at all. He is thus on different ground from the great freethinkers of France, and to some extent of England. Nietzsche was himself of the stuff of which great religious teachers are made, of the race of apostles. So when he writes of the founder of Christianity and the great Christian types, it is often with a poignant sympathy which the secularist can never know; and if his knife seems keen and cruel, it is not the easy indifferent cruelty of the pachydermatous scoffer. When he analyzes the souls of these men and the impulses which have moved them, he knows with what he is dealing: he is analyzing his own soul.

A mystic Nietzsche certainly was not; he had no moods of joyous resignation. It is chiefly the religious ecstasy of active moral energy that he was at one with. The sword of the spirit is his weapon rather than the merely defensive breastplate of faith. St. Paul is the consummate type of such religious forces, and whatever Nietzsche wrote of that apostle—the inventor

of Christianity, as he calls him—is peculiarly interesting. He hates him indeed, but even his hatred thrills with a tone of intimate sympathy. It is thus in a remarkable passage in “Morgenröthe,” where he tells briefly the history and struggles of that importunate soul, so superstitious and yet so shrewd, without whom there would have been no Christianity. He describes the self-torture of the neurotic, sensual, refined “Jewish Pascal,” who flagellated himself with the law that he came to hate with the hatred of one who had a genius for hatred; who in one dazzling flash of illumination realized that Jesus by accomplishing the law had annihilated it, and so furnished him with the instrument he desired to wreak his passionate hatred on the law, and to revel in the freedom of his joy. Nietzsche possesses a natural insight in probing the wounds of self-torturing souls. He excels also in describing the effects of extreme pain in chasing away the mists from life, in showing to a man his own naked personality, in bringing us face to face with the cold and terrible fact. It is thus that, coupling the greatest figure in history with the greatest figure in fiction, he compares the pathetic utterance of Jesus on the cross—“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”—with the disillusionment of the dying Don Quixote. Of Jesus himself he speaks no harsh word, but he regarded the atmosphere of Roman decay and languor—though very favourable for the production of fine personalities—as ill-adapted to the development of a great religion. The Gospels lead us into the atmosphere of a Russian novel, he remarks in one of his last writings, “Der Antichrist,” an atmosphere in which the figure of Jesus had to be coarsened to be understood, and became moulded in men’s minds by memories of more familiar types—prophet, Messiah, wonder-worker, judge; the real man they could not even see. “It must ever be a matter for regret that no Dostoievsky lived in the neighbourhood of this most interesting *décadent*, I mean some one who could understand the enthralling charm of just this mixture of the sublime, the morbid, and the child-like.” Jesus, he continues, never denied the world, the state, culture, work; he simply never knew or realized their existence; his own inner experience—“life,” “light,” “truth”—was all in all to him. The only realities to him were inner realities, so living that they make one feel “in Heaven” and “eternal;” this it was to be “saved.” And Nietzsche notes, as so many have noted before him, that the fact that men should bow the knee in Christ’s name to the very opposite of all these things, and consecrate in the “Church” all that he threw behind him, is an insoluble example of historical irony. “Strictly speaking, there has only been one Christian, and he died on the cross. The Gospel *died* on the cross.”

There may seem a savour of contempt in the allusion to Jesus as an "interesting *décadent*," and undoubtedly there is in "Der Antichrist" a passionate bitterness which is not found in Nietzsche's earlier books. But he habitually used the word *décadent* in a somewhat extended and peculiar sense. The *décadent*, as Nietzsche understood him, was the product of an age in which virility was dead and weakness was sanctified; it was so with the Buddhist as well as with the Christian, they both owe their origin and their progress to "some monstrous disease of will." They sprang up among creatures who craved for some "Thou shalt," and who were apt only for that one form of energy which the weak possess, fanaticism. By an instinct which may be regarded as sound by those who do not accept his disparagement of either, Nietzsche always coupled the Christian and the anarchist; to him they were both products of decadence. Both wish to revenge their own discomfort on this present world, he asserted, the anarchist immediately, the Christian at the last day. Instead of feeling, "*I am worth nothing*," the *décadent* says, "*Life is worth nothing*,"—a terribly contagious state of mind which has covered the world with the vitality of a tropical jungle. It cannot be too often repeated, Nietzsche continues, that Christianity was born of the decay of antiquity, and on the degenerate people of that time it worked like a soothing balm; their eyes and ears were sealed by age and they could no longer understand Epicurus and Epictetus. At such a time purity and beneficence, large promises of future life, worked sweetly and wholesomely. But for fresh young barbarians Christianity is poison. It produces a fundamental enfeeblement of such heroic, childlike and animal natures as the ancient Germans, and to that enfeeblement, indeed, we owe the revival of classic culture; so that the conclusion of the whole matter is here, as ever, Nietzsche remarks, that "it is impossible to say whether, in the language of Christianity, God owes more thanks to the Devil, or the Devil to God, for the way in which things have come about." But in the interaction of the classic spirit and the Christian spirit, Nietzsche's own instincts were not on the side of Christianity, and as the years went on he expresses himself in ever more unmeasured language. He could not take up the "Imitation of Christ"—the very word "imitation" being, as indeed Michelet had said before, the whole of Christianity—without physical repugnance. And in the "Götzendämmerung" he compares the Bible with the Laws of Manu (though at the same time asserting that it is a sin to name the two books in the same breath): "The *sun* lies on the whole book. All those things on which Christianity vents its bottomless vulgarity—procreation, for example, woman, marriage—are here handled earnestly and

reverently, with love and trust. I know no book in which so many tender and gracious things are said about women as in the Laws of Manu ; these gray-beards and saints have a way of being civil towards women which is perhaps not overdone." Again in "Der Antichrist"—which represents, I repeat, the unbalanced judgments of his last period—he tells how he turns from Paul with delight to Petronius, a book of which it can be said *è tutto festo*, 'immortally sound, immortally serene.' In the whole New Testament, he adds, there is only one figure we can genuinely honour—that of Pilate.

On the whole, Nietzsche's attitude towards Christianity was one of repulsion and antagonism. At first he appears indifferent, then he becomes calmly judicial, finally he is bitterly hostile. He admits that Christianity possesses the virtues of a cunningly concocted narcotic to soothe the leaden griefs and depressions of men whose souls are physiologically weak. But from first to last there is no sign of any genuine personal sympathy with the religion of the poor in spirit. Epicureanism, the pagan doctrine of salvation, had in it an element of Greek energy, but the Christian doctrine of salvation, he declares, raises its sublime development of hedonism on a thoroughly morbid foundation. Christianity hates the body ; the first act of Christian triumph over the Moors, he recalls, was to close the public baths which they had everywhere erected. "With its contempt for the body Christianity was the greatest misfortune that ever befell humanity." And at the end of "Der Antichrist" he sums up his concentrated hatred : "I *condemn* Christianity ; I raise against the Christian Church the most terrible accusation that any accuser has ever uttered. It is to me the most profound of all thinkable corruptions."

It is scarcely necessary to add that Nietzsche's condemnation of Christianity extended to the Christian God. He even went so far as to assert that it was the development of Christian morality itself—"the father-confessor sensitiveness of the Christian conscience translated and sublimed into a scientific conscience"—which had finally conquered the Christian God. He held, however, that polytheism had played an important part in the evolution of culture. Gods, heroes, supernatural beings generally, were inestimable schoolmasters to bring us to the sovereignty of the individual. Polytheism opened up divine horizons of freedom to humanity. "Ye shall be as Gods." But it has not been so with monotheism. The doctrine of a single God, in whose presence all others were false gods, favours stagnation and unity of type ; monotheism has thus perhaps constituted "the greatest danger which humanity has had to meet in past ages." Nor are we yet freed from its

influence. "For centuries after Buddha died men showed his shadow in a cave—a vast terrible shadow. God is dead: but thousands of years hence there will probably be caves in which his shadow may yet be seen. And we—we must go on fighting that shadow!" How deeply rooted Nietzsche believed faith in a god to be is shown by the fantastic conclusion to "Zarathustra." A strange collection of *Uebersmenschen*—the men of the future—are gathered together in Zarathustra's cave: two kings, the last of the popes—thrown out of work by the death of God—and many miscellaneous creatures, including a donkey. As Zarathustra returns to his cave he hears the sound of prayer and smells the odour of incense; on entering he finds the *Uebersmenschen* all on their knees intoning an extraordinary litany to the donkey, who has "created us all in his own image."

In his opposition to the Christian faith and the Christian God, Nietzsche by no means stands alone, however independent he may have been in the method and standpoint of his attack. But in his opposition to Christian morality he was more radically original. There is a very general tendency among those who reject Christian theology to shore up the superstructure of Christian morality which rests on that theology. George Eliot, in her writings at all events, has been an eloquent and distinguished advocate of this process; Mr. Myers, in an oft-quoted passage, has described with considerable melodramatic vigour the "sibyl in the gloom" of the Trinity Fellows' Garden at Cambridge, who withdrew God and Immortality from his grasp, but, to his consternation, told him to go on obeying Duty. Nietzsche would have sympathized with Mr. Myers. What George Eliot proposed was one of those compromises so dear to our British minds. Nietzsche would none of it. Hence his contemptuous treatment of George Eliot, of J. S. Mill, of Herbert Spencer, and so many more of our favourite intellectual heroes who have striven to preserve Christian morality while denying Christian theology. Nietzsche regarded our current moral ideals, whether formulated by bishops or by anarchists, as alike founded on a Christian basis, and when that foundation is sapped they cannot stand.

The motive of modern morality is pity, its principle is altruistic, its motto is "Love your neighbours as yourself," its ideal self-abnegation, its end the greatest good of the greatest number. All these things were abhorrent to Nietzsche, or, so far as he accepted them, it was in forms which gave them new values. Modern morality, he said, is founded on an extravagant dread of pain, in ourselves primarily, secondarily in others. Sympathy is fellow-suffering; to love one's neighbour as oneself is to dread his pain as we dread

our own pain. The religion of love is built upon the fear of pain. "On n'est bon que par la pitié;" the acceptance of that doctrine Nietzsche considers the chief outcome of Christianity, although, he thinks, not essential to Christianity, which rested on the egoistic basis of personal salvation: "One thing is needful." But it remains the most important by-product of Christianity, and has ever been gaining strength. Kant stood firmly outside the stream, but the French freethinkers, from Voltaire onwards, were not to be outdone in this direction by Christians, while Comte with his "Vivre pour autrui" even out-Christianized Christianity, and Schopenhauer in Germany, J. S. Mill in England, carried on the same doctrine.

Both the sympathetic man and the unsympathetic man, Nietzsche argues, are egoists. But the unsympathetic man he held to be a more admirable kind of egoist. It is best to win the strength that comes of experience and suffering, and to allow others also to play their own cards and win the same strength, shedding our tears in private, and abhorring soft-heartedness as the foe of all manhood and courage. To call the unsympathetic man "wicked," and the sympathetic man "good," seemed to Nietzsche a fashion in morals, a fashion which will have its day. He believed he was the first to point out the danger of the prevailing fashion as a sort of moral impressionism, the outcome of the hyperæsthesia peculiar to periods of decadence. Not indeed that Christianity is, or could be, carried out among us to its fullest extent: "That would be a serious matter. If we were ever to become the object to others of the same stupidities and importunities which they expend on themselves, we should flee wildly as soon as we saw our 'neighbour' approach, and curse sympathy as heartily as we now curse egoism." Our deepest and most personal griefs, Nietzsche remarks elsewhere, remain unrevealed and incomprehensible to nearly all other persons, even to the "neighbour" who eats out of the same dish with us. And even though my grief should become visible, the dear sympathetic neighbour can know nothing of its complexity and results, of the organic economy of my soul. That my grief may be bound up with my happiness troubles him little. The devotee of the "religion of pity" will heal my sorrows without a moment's delay; he knows not that the path to my Heaven must lie through my own Hell, that happiness and unhappiness are twin sisters who grow up together, or remain stunted together.

"Morality is the mob-instinct working in the individual." It rests, Nietzsche asserts, on two thoughts: "the community is worth more than the individual," and "a permanent advantage is better than a temporary advantage;" whence it follows that all the advantages of the community are

preferable to those of the individual. Morality thus becomes a string of negative injunctions, a series of "Thou shalt nots," with scarcely a positive command amongst them; witness the well-known table of Jewish commandments. Now Nietzsche could not endure mere negative virtues. He resented the subtle change which has taken place in the very meaning of the word "virtue," and which has perverted it from an expression of positive masculine qualities into one of merely negative feminine qualities. In his earliest essay he referred to "active sin" as the Promethean virtue which distinguishes the Aryans. The only moral codes that commended themselves to him were those that contained positive commands alone: "Do this! Do it with all your heart, and all your strength, and all your dreams!—and all other things shall be taken away from you!" For if we are truly devoted to the things that are good to do we need trouble ourselves little about the things that are good to leave undone.

Nietzsche compared himself to a mole boring down into the ground and undermining what philosophers have for a couple of thousand years considered the very surest ground to build on—the trust in morals. One of his favourite methods of attack is by the analysis of the "conscience." He points out that whatever we were regularly required to do in youth by those we honoured and feared created our "good conscience." The dictates of conscience, however urgent, thus have no true validity as regards the person who experiences them. "But," some one protests, "must we not trust our feelings?" "Yes," replies Nietzsche, "trust your feelings, but still remember that the inspiration which springs from feelings is the grandchild of an opinion, often a false one, and in any case not your own. To trust one's feelings—that means to yield more obedience to one's grandfather and grandmother and their grandparents than to the gods within *our own* breasts: our own reason and our own experience." Faith in authority is thus the source of conscience; it is not the voice of God in the human heart but the voice of man in man. The sphere of the moral is the sphere of tradition, and a man is moral because he is dependent on a tradition and not on himself. Originally everything was within the sphere of morals, and it was only possible to escape from that sphere by becoming a law-giver, medicine-man, demigod—that is to say by making morals. To be customary is to be moral,—I still closely follow Nietzsche's thought and expression,—to be individual is to be wicked. Every kind of originality involves a bad conscience. Nietzsche insists with fine eloquence, again and again, that every good gift that has been given to man put a bad conscience into the heart of the giver. Every good thing was once

new, unaccustomed, *immoral*, and gnawed at the vitals of the finder like a worm. Every new doctrine is wicked. Science has always come into the world with a bad conscience, with the emotions of a criminal, at least of a smuggler. No man can be disobedient to custom and not be immoral, and feel that he is immoral. The artist, the actor, the merchant, the freethinker, the discoverer, were once all criminals, and were persecuted, crushed, rendered morbid, as all persons must be when their virtues are not the virtues idealized by the community. Primitive men lived in hordes, and must obey the horde-voice within them. The whole phenomena of morals are animal-like, and have their origin in the search for prey and the avoidance of pursuit.

Progress is thus a gradual emancipation from morals. We have to recognize the services of the men who fight in this struggle against morals, and who are crushed into the ranks of criminals. Not that we need pity them. "It is a new *justice* that is called for, a new *mot d'ordre*. We need new philosophers. The moral world also is round. The moral world also has its antipodes, and the antipodes also have their right to exist. A new world remains to be discovered—and more than one! Hoist sail, O philosophers!"

"Men must become both better *and wicked*." So spake Zarathustra; or, as he elsewhere has it, "It is with man as with a tree, the higher he would climb into the brightness above, the more vigorously his roots must strive earthwards, downwards, into the darkness and the depths—into the wicked." Wickedness is just as indispensable as goodness. It is the ploughshare of wickedness which turns up and fertilizes the exhausted fields of goodness. We must no longer be afraid to be wicked; we must no longer be afraid to be hard. "Only the noblest things are very hard. This new command, O my brothers, I lay upon you—become hard."

In renewing our moral ideals we need also to renew our whole conception of the function and value of morals. Nietzsche advises moralists to change their tactics: "Deny moral values, deprive them of the applause of the crowd, create obstacles to their free circulation; let them be the shame-faced secrets of a few solitary souls; *forbid morality!* In so doing you may perhaps accredit these things among the only men whom one need have on one's side, I mean heroic men. Let it be said of morality to-day as Meister Eckard said: 'I pray God that he may rid me of God!'" We have altogether over-estimated the importance of morality. Christianity knew better when it placed "grace" above morals, and so also did Buddhism. And if we turn to literature, Nietzsche maintains, it is a vast mistake to suppose that, for instance, great tragedies have, or were intended to have, any moral effect. Look at "Macbeth,"

at "Tristan und Isolde," at "Ædipus." In all these cases it would have been easy to make guilt the pivot of the drama. But the great poet is in love with passion. "He calls to us: 'It is the charm of charms, this exciting, changing, dangerous, gloomy, yet often sun-filled existence! It is an *adventure* to live—take this side or that, it will always be the same!'" So he speaks to us out of a restless and vigorous time, half drunken and dazed with excess of blood and energy, out of a wickeder time than ours is; and we are obliged to set to rights the aim of a Shakespeare and make it righteous, that is to say, to misunderstand it."

We have to recognize a diversity of moral ideals. Nothing is more profoundly dangerous than, with Kant, to create impersonal categorical imperatives after the Chinese fashion, to generalize "virtue," "duty," and "goodness," and sacrifice them to the Moloch of abstraction. "Every man must find his own virtue, his own categorical imperative;" it must be founded on inner necessity, on deep personal choice. Only the simpleton says: "Men ought to be like this or like that." The real world presents to us a dazzling wealth of types, a prodigious play of forms and metamorphoses. Yet up comes a poor devil of a moralist, and says to us: "No! men ought to be something quite different!" and straightway he paints a picture of himself on the wall, and exclaims: "Ecce homo!" But one thing is needful, that a man should attain the fullest self-satisfaction. Every man must be his own moralist.

These views might be regarded as "lax," as predisposing to easy self-indulgence. Nietzsche would have smiled at such a notion. Not yielding, but mastering, was the key to his personal morality. "Every day is badly spent," he said, "in which a man has not once denied himself; this gymnastic is inevitable if a man will retain the joy of being his own master." The four cardinal virtues, as Nietzsche understood morals, are sincerity, courage, generosity, and courtesy. "Do what you will," said Zarathustra, "but first be one of those who *are able to will*. Love your neighbour as yourself—but first be one of those who *are able to love themselves*." And again Zarathustra spoke: "He who belongs to me must be strong of bone and light of foot, eager for fight and for feast, no sulker, no John o' Dreams, as ready for the hardest task as for a feast, sound and hale. The best things belong to me and mine, and if men give us nothing, then we take them: the best food, the purest sky, the strongest thoughts, the fairest women!" There was no desire here to suppress effort and pain. That Nietzsche regarded as a mark of modern Christian morals. It is pain, more pain and deeper, that we need. The discipline of suffering alone creates man's pre-eminence. "Man unites

in himself the creature and the creator : there is in him the stuff of things, the fragmentary and the superfluous, clay, mud, madness, chaos ; but there is also in him the creator, the sculptor, the hardness of the hammer, the divine blessedness of the spectator on the seventh day." Do you pity, he asks, what must be fashioned, broken, forged, refined as by fire? But our pity is spent on one thing alone, the most effeminate of all weaknesses—pity. This was the source of Nietzsche's admiration for war, and indifference to its horror ; he regarded it as the symbol of that spiritual warfare and bloodshed in which to him all human progress consisted. He might, had he pleased, have said with the Jew and the Christian, that without shedding of blood there shall be no remission of sins. But with a difference, for as he looked at the matter, every man must be his own saviour, and it is his own blood that must be shed ; there is no salvation by proxy. That was expressed in his favourite motto : *Virescit vulnere virtus*.

Nietzsche's ideal man is the man of Epictetus, as he describes him in "Morgenröthe," the laconic, brave, self-contained man, not lusting after expression like the modern idealist. The man whom Epictetus loved hated fanaticism, he hated notoriety, he knew how to smile. And the best was, added Nietzsche, that he had no fear of God before his eyes ; he believed firmly in reason, and relied, not on divine grace, but on himself. Of all Shakespeare's plays, "Julius Cæsar" seemed to Nietzsche the greatest, because it glorifies Brutus ; the finest thing that can be said in Shakespeare's honour, Nietzsche thought, was that—aided perhaps by some secret and intimate experience—he believed in Brutus and the virtues that Brutus personified. In course of time, however, while not losing his sympathy with stoicism, it was Epicureanism, the heroic aspects of Epicureanism, which chiefly appealed to Nietzsche. He regarded Epicurus as one of the world's greatest men, the discoverer of the heroically idyllic method of living a philosophy ; for one to whom happiness could never be more than an unending self-discipline, and whose ideal of life had ever been that of a spiritual nomad, the methods of Epicurus seemed to yield the finest secrets of good living. Socrates, with his joy in life and in himself, was also an object of Nietzsche's admiration. Among later thinkers, Helvetius appealed to him strongly. Goethe and Napoleon were naturally among his favourite heroes, as were Alcibiades and Cæsar. The latest great age of heroes was to him the Italian Renaissance. Then came Luther, opposing the rights of the peasants, yet himself initiating a peasants' revolt of the intellect, and preparing the way for that shallow plebeianism of the spirit which has marked the last two centuries.

Latterly, in tracing the genealogy of modern morals, Nietzsche's opinions hardened into a formula. He recognized three stages of moral evolution : first, the *pre-moral* period of primitive times, when the beast of prey was the model of conduct, and the worth of an action was judged by its results. Then came the *moral* period, when the worth of an action was judged not by its results, but by its origin ; this period has been the triumph of what Nietzsche calls slave-morality, the morality of the mob ; the goodness and badness of actions is determined by atavism, at best by survivals ; every man is occupied in laying down laws for his neighbour instead of for himself, and all are tamed and chastised into weakness in order that they may be able to obey these prescriptions. Nietzsche ingeniously connected his slave-morality with the undoubted fact that for many centuries the large, fair-haired aristocratic race has been dying out in Europe, and the older down-trodden race—short, dark, and broad-headed—has been slowly gaining predominance. But now we stand at the threshold of the *extra-moral* period. Slave-morality, Nietzsche asserted, is about to give way to master-morality ; the lion will take the place of the camel. The instincts of life, refusing to allow that anything is forbidden, will again assert themselves, sweeping away the feeble negative democratic morality of our time. The day has now come for the man who is able to rule himself, and who will be tolerant to others not out of his weakness, but out of his strength ; to him nothing is forbidden, for he has passed beyond goodness and beyond wickedness.

HAVELOCK ELLIS.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

III



SO far I have attempted to follow with little or no comment what seems to me the main current of Nietzsche's thought. It may be admitted that there is some question as to which is the main current. For my own part I have no hesitation in asserting that it is the current which expands to its fullest extent between 1876 and 1883 in what I term Nietzsche's second or middle period; up to then he had not gained complete individuality; afterwards came the period of uncontrolled aberrations. Thus I am inclined to pass lightly over the third period, during which the conception of "master-morality" attained its chief and most rigid emphasis, although I gather that to Nietzsche's disciples as to his foes this conception seems of primary importance. This idea of "master-morality" is in fact a solid fossilized chunk, easy to handle for friendly or unfriendly hands. The earlier and more living work—the work of the man who truly said that it is with thinkers as with snakes: those that cannot shed their skins die—is less obviously tangible. So the "master-morality" it is that your true Nietzschean is most likely to close his fist over. It would be unkind to say more, for Nietzsche himself has been careful to scatter through his works, on the subject of disciples and followers generally, very scathing remarks which must be sufficiently painful to the ordinary Nietzschean.

We are helped in understanding Nietzsche's philosophic significance if we understand his precise ideal. The psychological analysis of every great thinker's work seems to reveal some underlying fundamental image or thought—often enough simple and homely in character—which he has carried with him into the most abstract regions. Thus Fraser has found good reason to suppose that Hegel's main ideas were suggested by the then recent discovery of galvanism. In Nietzsche's case this key is to be found in the persistent image of an attitude. As a child, his sister tells us, he had been greatly impressed by a rope-dancer who had performed his feats over the market-place at Naumburg, and throughout his work, as soon as he had

attained to real self-expression, we may trace the image of the dancer. "I do not know," he somewhere says, "what the mind of a philosopher need desire more than to be a good dancer. For dancing is his ideal, his art also, indeed his only piety, his 'divine worship.'" In all Nietzsche's best work we are conscious of this ideal of the dancer, strong, supple, vigorous, yet harmonious and well-balanced. It is the dance of the athlete and the acrobat rather than the make-believe of the ball-room, and behind the easy equipoise of such dancing lie patient training and effort. The chief character of good dancing is its union of the maximum of energetic movement with the maximum of well-balanced grace. The whole muscular system is alive to restrain any excess, so that however wild and free the movement may seem it is always measured; excess would mean ignominious collapse. When in his later years Nietzsche began, as he said, to "philosophize with the hammer," and to lay about him savagely at every hollow "idol" within reach, he departed from his better ideal of dancing, and his thinking became intemperate, reckless, desperate.

Nietzsche had no system, probably because the idea that dominated his thought was an image, and not a formula, the usual obsession of philosophers, such as may be clapped on the universe at any desired point. He remarks in one place that a philosopher believes the worth of his philosophy to lie in the structure, but that what we ultimately value are the finely carved and separate stones with which he builded, and he was clearly anxious to supply the elaborated stones direct. In time he came to call himself a realist, using the term, in no philosophic sense, to indicate his reverence for the real and essential facts of life, the things that conduce to fine living. He desired to detach the "bad conscience" from the things that are merely wicked traditionally, and to attach it to the things that are anti-natural, anti-instinctive, anti-sensuous. He sought to inculcate veneration for the deep-lying sources of life, to take us down to the bed-rock of life, the rock whence we are hewn. He held that man, as a reality, with all his courage and cunning, is himself worthy of honour, but that man's ideals are absurd and morbid, the mere dregs in the drained cup of life; or, as he eventually said—and it is a saying which will doubtless seal his fate in the minds of many estimable persons—man's ideals are his only *partie honteuse*, of which we may avoid any close examination. Nietzsche's "realism" was thus simply a vigorous hatred of all dreaming that tends to depreciate the value of life, and a vivid sense that man himself is the *ens realissimum*.

To recognize the free and direct but disconnected nature of Nietzsche's many-sided vision of the world is to lessen the force of his own antagonisms as well as of the antagonisms he has excited. The master-morality of his later

days, on which friends and foes have alike insisted, is a case in point. This appears to have been hailed, or resented, as a death-blow struck at the modern democratic *régime*. To take a broad view of Nietzsche's philosophic development is to realize that both attitudes are alike out of place. On this matter, as on many others, Nietzsche moved in a line which led him to face an opposite direction in his decay from that which he faced in his immaturity. He began by regarding democracy as the standard of righteousness, and ended by asserting that the world only exists for the production of a few great men. It would be foolish to regard either of the termini as the last outpost of wisdom. But in the passage between these two points many excellent things are said by the way. Nietzsche was never enamoured of socialism or democracy for its own sake; he will not even admit, reasonably enough, that we have yet attained democracy; though the horses, indeed, are new, as yet "the roads are the same old roads, the wheels the same old wheels." But he points out that the value of democracy lies in its guarantee of individual freedom: Cyclopean walls are being built, with much toil and dust, but the walls will be a rampart against any invasion of barbarians or any new slavery, against the despotism of capital and the despotism of party. The workers may regard the walls as an end in themselves; we are free to value them for the fine flowers of culture which will grow in the gardens they inclose. To me, at least, this attitude of Nietzsche's maturity seems the ample defence of democracy.

Nietzsche was not, however, greatly interested in questions of government; he was far more deeply interested in questions of morals. In his treatment of morals—no doubt chiefly during the last period—there is a certain element of paradox. He grows altogether impatient of morals, calls himself an immoralist, fervently exhorts us to become wicked. But if any young disciple came to the teacher asking, "What must I do to become wicked?" it does not appear that Nietzsche bade him to steal, bear false witness, commit adultery, or do any other of the familiar and commonly-accepted wickednesses. Nietzsche preached wickedness with the same solemn exaltation as Carducci lauded Satan. What he desired was far indeed from any rehabilitation of easy vice; it was the justification of neglected and unsanctified virtues.

At the same time, and while Nietzsche's immoralist is just as austere a person as the mere moralists who have haunted the world for many thousand years, it is clear that Nietzsche wished strictly to limit the sphere of morals. He never fails to point out how large a region of life and art lies legitimately

outside the moral jurisdiction. In an age in which many moralists desire to force morals into every part of life and art—and even assume a certain air of virtue in so doing—the “immoralist” who lawfully vindicates any region for free cultivation is engaged in a proper and wholesome task.

No doubt, however, there will be some to question the value of such a task. Nietzsche the immoralist can scarcely be welcome in every camp, although he remains always a force to be reckoned with. The same may be said of Nietzsche the freethinker. He was, perhaps, the typical freethinker of the age that comes after Renan. Nietzsche had nothing of Renan’s genial scepticism and smiling disillusionment; he was less tender to human weakness, for all his long Christian ancestry less Christian than the Breton seminarist remained to the last. He seems to have shaken himself altogether free of Christianity—so free, that except in his last period he even speaks of it without bitterness—and he remained untouched by any mediæval dreams, any nostalgia of the cloister such as now and then pursues even those of us who are farthest from any faith in Christian dogma. Heathen as he was, I do not think even Heine’s visions of the gods in exile could have touched him; he never felt the charm of fading and faded things. It is remarkable. It is scarcely less remarkable that, far as he was from Christianity, he was equally far from what we usually call “paganism,” the pasteboard paganism of easy self-indulgence and cheerful irresponsibility. It was not so that he understood Hellenism. In a famous essay, Matthew Arnold once remarked that the ideal Greek world was never sick or sorry. Nietzsche knew better. The greater part of Greek literature bears witness that the Hellenes were for ever wrestling with the problems of pain. And none who came after have more poignantly uttered the pangs of human affairs, or more sweetly the consolations of those pangs, than the great disciples of the Greeks who created the Roman world. The classic world of nymphs and fauns is an invention of the moderns. The real classic world, like the modern world, was a world of suffering. The difference lies in the method of facing that suffering. Nietzsche chose the classic method from no desire to sport with Amaryllis in the shade, but because he had known forms of torture for which the mild complacencies of modern faith seemed to offer no relief. If we must regard Nietzsche as a pagan, it is as the Pascal of paganism. The freethinker, it is true, was more cheerful and hopeful than the believer, but there is the same tragic sincerity, the same restless self-torment, the same sense of the abyss.

There still remains Nietzsche, the apostle of culture, the philosopher engaged in the criticism of life. From first to last, wherever you open his

books, you light on sayings that cut to the core of the questions that every modern thinking man must face. I take, almost at random, a few passages from a single book: of convictions he writes that "a man possesses opinions as he possesses fish, in so far as he owns a fishing-net; a man must go fishing and be lucky, then he has his own fish, his own opinions; I speak of living opinions, living fish. Some men are content to possess fossils in their cabinets—and convictions in their heads." Of the problem of the relation of science to culture he says well: "The best and wholesomest thing in science, as in mountains, is the air that blows there. It is because of that air that we spiritual weaklings avoid and defame science;" and he points out that the work of science—with its need for sincerity, infinite patience, complete self-abnegation—calls for men of nobler make than poetry needs. When we have learnt to trust science and to learn from it, then it will be possible so to tell natural history that "everyone who hears it is inspired to health and gladness as the heir and continuer of humanity." This is how he rebukes those foolish persons who grow impatient with critics: "Remember that critics are insects who only sting to live and not to hurt: they want our blood and not our pain." And he utters this wise saying, himself forgetting it in later years: "Growth in wisdom may be exactly measured by decrease in bitterness." Nietzsche desires to prove nothing, and is reckless of consistency. He looks at every question that comes before him with the same simple, intent, penetrative gaze, and whether the aspects that he reveals are new or old he seldom fails to bring us a fresh stimulus. Culture, as he understood it, consists for the modern man in the task of choosing the simple and indispensable things from the chaos of crude material which to-day overwhelms us. The man who will live at the level of the culture of his time is like the juggler who must keep a number of plates spinning in the air; his life must be a constant training in suppleness and skill so that he may be a good athlete. But he is also called on to exercise his skill in the selection and limitation of his task. Nietzsche is greatly occupied with the simplification of culture. Our suppleness and skill must be exercised alone on the things that are vital, essential, primitive; the rest may be thrown aside. He is for ever challenging the multifarious materials for culture, testing them with eye and hand; we cannot prove them too severely, he seems to say, nor cast aside too contemptuously the things that a real man has no need of for fine living. What must I do to be saved? what do I need for the best and fullest life?—that is the everlasting question that the teacher of life is called upon to answer. And we cannot be too grateful to Nietzsche for the stern penetration—the more acute for his ever

present sense of the limits of energy—with which he points us from amid the mass to the things which most surely belong to our eternal peace.

Nietzsche's style has often been praised. The style was certainly the man. There can be little doubt, moreover, that there is scarcely any other German style to compare with it, though such eminence means far less in a country where style has rarely been cultivated than it would mean in France or even England. Sallust awoke his sense for style, and may account for some characteristics of his style. He also enthusiastically admired Horace as the writer who had produced the maximum of energy with the minimum of material. A concentrated Roman style, significant and weighty at every point, *ære perennius*, was always his ideal. Certainly the philologist's aptitudes helped here to teach him the value and force of words, as jewels for the goldsmith to work with, and not as mere worn-out counters to slip through the fingers. One may call it a muscular style, a style wrought with the skilful strength of hand and arm. It scarcely appeals to the ear. It lacks the restful simplicity of the greatest masters, the plangent melody, the seemingly unconscious magic quivering along our finest-fibred nerves. Such effects we seem to hear now and again in Schopenhauer, but rarely or never from any other German. This style is titanic rather than divine, but the titanic virtues it certainly possesses in fullest measure: robust and well-tempered vigour, concentration, wonderful plastic force in moulding expression. It becomes over-emphatic at last. When Nietzsche threw aside the dancer's ideal in order to "philosophize with the hammer," the result on his style was as disastrous as on his thought; both alike took on the violent and graceless character of the same implement. He speaks indeed of the virtue of hitting a nail on the head, but it is a less skilled form of virtue than good dancing.

Whether he was dancing or hammering, however, Nietzsche certainly converted the whole of himself into his work, as in his view every philosopher is bound to do, "for just that art of transformation *is* philosophy." That he was entirely successful in being a "real man" one may doubt. His excessive sensitiveness to the commonplace in life, and his deficiency in the sexual instinct—however highly he may have rated the importance of sex in life—largely cut him off from real fellowship with the men who are most "real" to us. He was less tolerant and less humane than his master Goethe; his incisive insight, and, in many respects, better intellectual equipment, are more than compensated by this lack of breadth. But every man works with the limitations of his qualities, just as we all struggle beneath the weight of the super-incumbent atmosphere; our defects are even a part of our qualities, and it

would be foolish to quarrel with them. Nietzsche succeeded in being himself, and it was a finely rare success. Whether he was a "real man" matters less. With passionate sincerity he expressed his real self and his best self, abhorring, on the one hand, what with Verlaine he called "literature," and, on the other, all mere indigested material, the result of that mental dyspepsia of which he regarded Carlyle as the supreme warning. A man's real self, as he repeated so often, consists of the things which he has truly digested and assimilated; he must always "conquer" his opinions; it is only such conquests which he has the right to report to men as his own. His thoughts are born of his pain; he has imparted to them of his own blood, his own pleasure and torment. Nietzsche himself held that suffering and even disease are almost indispensable to the philosopher; great pain is the final emancipator of the spirit, those great slow pains that take their time, and burn us up like green wood. "I doubt whether such pain betters us," he remarks, "but I know that it deepens us." That is the stuff of Nietzsche's Hellenism, as expressed in the most light-hearted of his books. *Virescit volnere virtus*. It is that which makes him, when all is said, a great critic of life.

It is a consolation to many—I have seen it so stated in a respectable review—that Nietzsche went mad. No doubt also it was once a consolation to many that Socrates was poisoned, that Jesus was crucified, that Bruno was burnt. But hemlock and the cross and the stake proved sorry weapons against the might of ideas even in those days, and there is no reason to suppose that a doctor's certificate will be more effectual in our own. Of old time we killed our great men as soon as their visionary claims became inconvenient; now, in our mercy, we leave the tragedy of genius to unroll itself to the bitter close. The devils to whom the modern Faustus is committed have waxed cunning with the ages. Nietzsche has met, in its most relentless form, the fate of Pascal and Swift and Rousseau. That fact may carry what weight it will in any final estimate of his place as a moral teacher: it cannot touch his position as an immensely significant personality. It must still be affirmed that the nineteenth century has produced no more revolutionary and aboriginal force.

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