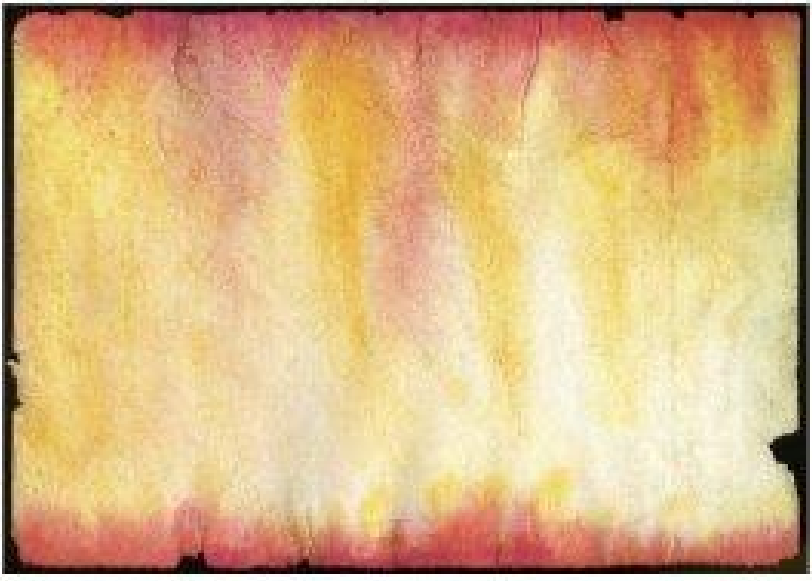
Friedrich Nietzsche



Georg Morris Cohen Brandes

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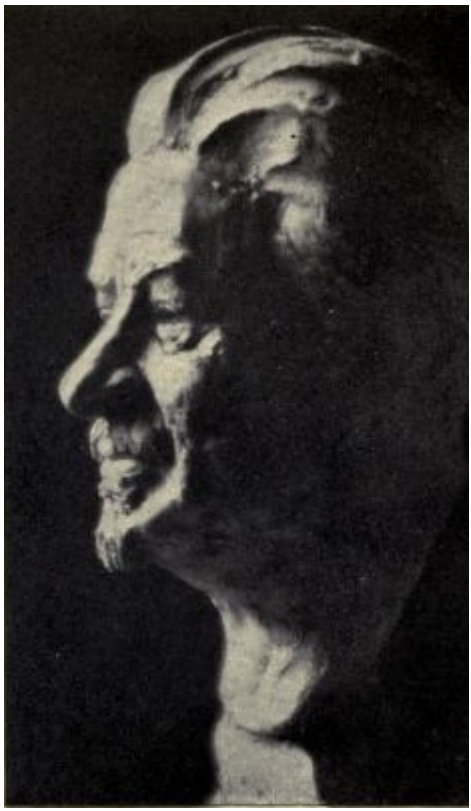
GEORGE BRANDES

AUTHOR OF "WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE," ETC.

LONDON

WILLIAM HEINEMANN

1914



Sculptor: J. Davidson. — Photo: A. Langdon C

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I

AN ESSAY ON ARISTOCRATIC RADICALISM[1]

(1889)

Friedrich Nietzsche appears to me the most interesting writer in German literature at the present time. Though little known even in his own country, he is a thinker of a high order, who fully deserves to be studied, discussed, contested and mastered. Among many good qualities he has that of imparting his mood to others and setting their thoughts in motion.

During a period of eighteen years Nietzsche has written a long series of books and pamphlets. Most of these volumes consist of aphorisms, and of these the greater part, as well as the more original, are concerned with moral prejudices. In this province will be found his lasting importance. But besides this he has dealt with the most varied problems; he has written on culture and history, on art and women, on companionship and solitude, on the State and society, on life's struggle and death.

He was born on October 15, 1844; studied philology; became in 1869 professor of philology at Basle; made the acquaintance of Richard Wagner and became warmly attached to him, and associated also with the distinguished historian of the Renaissance, Jakob Burkhardt. Nietzsche's admiration and affection for Burkhardt were lasting. His feeling for Wagner, on the other hand, underwent a complete revulsion in the course of years. From having been Wagner's prophet he developed into his most passionate opponent.

Nietzsche was always heart and soul a musician; he even tried his hand as a composer in his *Hymn to Life* (for chorus and orchestra, 1888), and his intercourse with Wagner left deep traces in his earliest writings. But the opera of Parsifal, with its tendency to Catholicism and its advancement of the ascetic ideals which had previously been entirely foreign to Wagner, caused Nietzsche to see in the great composer a danger, an enemy, a morbid phenomenon, since this last work showed him all the earlier operas in a new light.

During his residence in Switzerland Nietzsche came to know a large circle of interesting people. He suffered, however, from extremely severe headaches, so frequent that they incapacitated him for about two hundred days in the year and brought him to the verge of the grave. In 1879 he resigned his professorship. From 1882 to 1888 his state of health improved, though extremely slowly. His eyes were still so weak that he was threatened with blindness. He was compelled to be extremely careful in his mode of life and to choose his place of residence in obedience to climatic and meteorological conditions. He usually spent the winter at Nice and the summer at Sils-Maria in the Upper Engadine. The years 1887 and 1888 were astonishingly rich in production; they saw the publication of the most remarkable works of widely different nature and the preparation of a whole series of new books. Then, at the close of the latter year, perhaps as the result of overstrain, a violent attack of mental disorder occurred, from which Nietzsche never recovered.

As a thinker his starting-point is Schopenhauer; in his first books he is actually his disciple. But, after several years of silence, during which he passes

through his first intellectual crisis, he reappears emancipated from all ties of discipleship. He then undergoes so powerful and rapid a development—less in his thought itself than in the courage to express his thoughts—that each succeeding book marks a fresh stage, until by degrees he concentrates himself upon a single fundamental question, the question of moral values. On his earliest appearance as a thinker he had already entered a protest, in opposition to David Strauss, against any moral interpretation of the nature of the Cosmos and assigned to our morality its place in the world of phenomena, now as semblance or error, now as artificial arrangement. And his literary activity reached its highest point in an investigation of the origin of the moral concepts, while it was his hope and intention to give to the world an exhaustive criticism of moral values, an examination of the value of these values (regarded as fixed once for all). The first book of his work, *The Transvaluation of all Values*, was completed when his malady declared itself.

[1] "The expression 'aristocratic radicalism,' which you employ, is very good. It is, permit me to say, the cleverest thing I have yet read about myself,"—Nietzsche, Dec. 2, 1887.

1.

Nietzsche first received a good deal of notice, though not much commendation, for a caustic and juvenile polemical pamphlet against David Strauss, occasioned by the latter's book, *The Old Faith and the New*. His attack, irreverent in tone, is directed not against the first, warlike section of the book, but against the constructive and complementary section.

The attack, however, is less concerned with the once great critic's last effort than with the mediocracy in Germany, to which Strauss's last word represented the last word of culture in general.

A year and a half had elapsed since the close of the Franco-German War. Never had the waves of German self esteem run so high. The exultation of victory had passed into a tumultuous self-glorification. The universal view was that German culture had vanquished French. Then this voice made itself heard, saying—

Admitting that this was really a conflict between two civilisations, there would still be no reason for crowning the victorious one; we should first have to know what the vanquished one was worth; if its value was very slight—and this is what is said of French culture—then there was no great honour in the victory. But in the next place there can be no question at all in this case of a victory of German culture; partly because French culture still persists, and partly because the Germans, now as heretofore, are dependent on it. It was military discipline, natural bravery, endurance, superiority on the part of the leaders and obedience on the part of the led, in short, *factors that have nothing to do with culture*, which gave Germany the victory. But finally and above all, German culture was not victorious for the good reason that Germany as yet has nothing that can be called culture.

It was then only a year since Nietzsche himself had formed the greatest expectations of Germany's future, had looked forward to her speedy liberation from the leading-strings of Latin civilisation, and heard the most favourable omens in German music.[2] The intellectual decline, which seemed to him—rightly,

no doubt—to date indisputably from the foundation of the Empire, now made him oppose a ruthless defiance to the prevailing popular sentiment.

He maintains that culture shows itself above all else in a unity of artistic style running through every expression of a nation's life. On the other hand, the fact of having learnt much and knowing much is, as he points out, neither a necessary means to culture nor a sign of culture; it accords remarkably well with barbarism, that is to say, with want of style or a motley hotchpotch of styles. And his contention is simply this, that with a culture consisting of hotchpotch it is impossible to subdue any enemy, above all an enemy like the French, who have long possessed a genuine and productive culture, whether we attribute a greater or a lesser value to it.

He appeals to a saying of Goethe to Eckermann: "We Germans are of yesterday. No doubt in the last hundred years we have been cultivating ourselves quite diligently, but it may take a few centuries yet before our countrymen have absorbed sufficient intellect and higher culture for it to be said of them that it is a long time since they were barbarians."

To Nietzsche, as we see, the concepts of culture and homogeneous culture are equivalent. In order to be homogeneous a culture must have reached a certain age and have become strong enough in its peculiar character to have penetrated all forms of life. Homogeneous culture, however, is of course not the same thing as native culture. Ancient Iceland had a homogeneous culture, though its flourishing was brought about precisely by active intercourse with Europe; a homogeneous culture existed in Italy at the time of the Renaissance, in England in the sixteenth, in France in the seventeenth and eighteenth

centuries, although Italy built up her culture of Greek, Roman and Spanish impressions, France hers of classical, Celtic, Spanish and Italian elements, and although the English are the mixed race beyond all others. True, it is only a century and a half since the Germans began to liberate themselves from French culture, and hardly more than a hundred years since they entirely escaped from the Frenchmen's school, whose influence may nevertheless be traced even to-day: but still no one can justly deny the existence of a German culture, even if it is yet comparatively young and in a state of growth. Nor will any one who has a sense for the agreement between German music and German philosophy, an ear for the harmony between German music and German lyrical poetry, an eye for the merits and defects of German painting and sculpture, which are the outcome of the same fundamental tendency that is revealed in the whole intellectual and emotional life of Germany, be disposed in advance to deny Germany a homogeneous culture. More precarious will be the state of such smaller countries whose dependence on foreign nations has not unfrequently been a dependence raised to the second power.

To Nietzsche, however, this point is of relatively small importance. He is convinced that the last hour of national cultures is at hand, since the time cannot be far off when it will only be a question of a European or European-American culture. He argues from the fact that the most highly developed people in every country already feel as Europeans, as fellow-countrymen, nay, as confederates, and from the belief that the twentieth century must bring with it the war for the dominion of the world.

When, therefore, from the result of this war a

tempestuous wind sweeps over all national vanities, bending and breaking them, what will then be the question?

The question will then be, thinks Nietzsche, in exact agreement with the most eminent Frenchmen of our day, whether by that time it has been possible to train or rear a sort of caste of pre-eminent spirits who will be able to grasp the central power.

The real misfortune is, therefore, not that a country is still without a genuine, homogeneous and perfected culture, but that it thinks itself cultured. And with his eye upon Germany Nietzsche asks how it has come about that so prodigious a contradiction can exist as that between the lack of true culture and the self-satisfied belief in actually possessing the only true one—and he finds the answer in the circumstance that a class of men has come to the front which no former century has known, and to which (in 1873) he gave the name of "Culture-Philistines."

The Culture-Philistine regards his own impersonal education as the real culture; if he has been told that culture presupposes a homogeneous stamp of mind, he is confirmed in his good opinion of himself, since everywhere he meets with educated people of his own sort, and since schools, universities and academies are adapted to his requirements and fashioned on the model corresponding to his cultivation. Since he finds almost everywhere the same tacit conventions with respect to religion, morality and literature, with respect to marriage, the family, the community and the State, he considers it demonstrated that this imposing homogeneity is culture. It never enters his head that this systematic and well-organised philistinism, which is set up in all

high places and installed at every editorial desk, is not by any means made culture just because its organs are in concert. It is not even bad culture, says Nietzsche; it is barbarism fortified to the best of its ability, but entirely lacking the freshness and savage force of original barbarism; and he has many graphic expressions to describe Culture-Philistinism as the morass in which all weariness is stuck fast, and in the poisonous mists of which all endeavour languishes.

All of us are now born into the society of cultured philistinism, in it we all grow up. It confronts us with prevailing opinions, which we unconsciously adopt; and even when opinions are divided, the division is only into party opinions—public opinions.

An aphorism of Nietzsche's reads: "What is public opinion? It is private indolence." The dictum requires qualification. There are cases where public opinion is worth something: John Morley has written a good book on the subject. In the face of certain gross breaches of faith and law, certain monstrous violations of human rights, public opinion may now and then assert itself as a power worthy to be followed. Otherwise it is as a rule a factory working for the benefit of Culture-Philistinism.

On entering life, then, young people meet with various collective opinions, more or less narrow-minded. The more the individual has it in him to become a real personality, the more he will resist following a herd. But even if an inner voice says to him: "Become thyself! Be thyself!" he hears its appeal with despondency. Has he a self? He does not know; he is not yet aware of it.

He therefore looks about for a teacher, an educator, one who will teach him, not something foreign, but

how to become his own individual self.

We had in Denmark a great man who with impressive force exhorted his contemporaries to become individuals. But Sören Kierkegaard's appeal was not intended to be taken so unconditionally as it sounded. For the goal was fixed. They were to become individuals, not in order to develop into free personalities, but in order by this means to become true Christians. Their freedom was only apparent; above them was suspended a "Thou shalt believe!" and a "Thou shalt obey!" Even as individuals they had a halter round their necks, and on the farther side of the narrow passage of individualism, through which the herd was driven, the herd awaited them again—one flock, one shepherd.

It is not with this idea of immediately resigning his personality again that the young man in our day desires to become himself and seeks an educator. He will not have a dogma set up before him, at which he is expected to arrive. But he has an uneasy feeling that he is packed with dogmas. How is he to find himself in himself, how is he to dig himself out of himself? This is where the educator should help him. An educator can only be a liberator.

It was a liberating educator of this kind that Nietzsche as a young man looked for and found in Schopenhauer. Such a one will be found by every seeker in the personality that has the most liberating effect on him during his period of development. Nietzsche says that as soon as he had read a single page of Schopenhauer, he knew he would read every page of him and pay heed to every word, even to the errors he might find. Every intellectual aspirant will be able to name men whom he has read in this way.

It is true that for Nietzsche, as for any other aspirant,

there remained one more step to be taken, that of liberating himself from the liberator. We find in his earliest writings certain favourite expressions of Schopenhauer's which no longer appear in his later works. But the liberation is here a tranquil development to independence, throughout which he retains his deep gratitude; not, as in his relations with Wagner, a violent revulsion which leads him to deny any value to the works he had once regarded as the most valuable of all.

He praises Schopenhauer's lofty honesty, beside which he can only place Montaigne's, his lucidity, his constancy, and the purity of his relations with society, State and State-religion, which are in such sharp contrast with those of Kant. With Schopenhauer there is never a concession, never a dallying.

And Nietzsche is astounded by the fact that Schopenhauer could endure life in Germany at all. A modern Englishman has said: "Shelley could never have lived in England: a race of Shelleys would have been impossible." Spirits of this kind are early broken, then become melancholy, morbid or insane. The society of the Culture-Philistines makes life a burden to exceptional men. Examples of this occur in plenty in the literature of every country, and the trial is constantly being made. We need only think of the number of talented men who sooner or later make their apologies and concessions to philistinism, so as to be permitted to exist. But even in the strongest the vain and weary struggle with Culture-Philistinism shows itself in lines and wrinkles. Nietzsche quotes the saying of the old diplomatist, who had only casually seen and spoken to Goethe: "*Voilà un homme qui a eu de grands chagrins*," and Goethe's comment,

when repeating it to his friends: "If the traces of our sufferings and activities are indelible even in our features, it is no wonder that all that survives of us and our struggles should bear the same marks." And this is Goethe, who is looked upon as the favourite of fortune!

Schopenhauer, as is well known, was until his latest years a solitary man. No one understood him, no one read him. The greater part of the first edition of his work, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, had to be sold as waste paper.

In our day Taine's view has widely gained ground, that the great man is entirely determined by the age whose child he is, that he unconsciously sums it up and ought consciously to give it expression.[3] But although, of course, the great man does not stand outside the course of history and must always depend upon predecessors, an idea nevertheless always germinates in a single individual or in a few individuals; and these individuals are not scattered points in the low-lying mass, but highly gifted ones who draw the mass to them instead of being drawn by it. What is called the spirit of the age originates in quite a small number of brains.

Nietzsche who, mainly no doubt through Schopenhauer's influence, had originally been strongly impressed by the dictum that the great man is not the child of his age but its step-child, demands that the educator shall help the young to educate themselves *in opposition to the age*.

It appears to him that the modern age has produced for imitation three particular types of man, one after the other. First Rousseau's man; the Titan who raises himself, oppressed and bound by the higher castes, and in his need calls upon holy Nature. Then

Goethe's man; not Werther or the revolutionary figures related to him, who are still derived from Rousseau, nor the original Faust figure, but Faust as he gradually develops. He is no liberator, but a spectator, of the world. He is not the man of action. Nietzsche reminds us of Jarno's words to Wilhelm Meister: "You are vexed and bitter, that is a very good thing. If you could be thoroughly angry for once, it would be better still."

To become thoroughly angry in order to make things better, this, in the view of the Nietzsche of thirty, will be the exhortation of Schopenhauer's man. This man voluntarily takes upon himself the pain of telling the truth. His fundamental idea is this: A life of happiness is impossible; the highest a man can attain to is a heroic life, one in which he fights against the greatest difficulties for something which, in one way or another, will be for the good of all. To what is truly human, only true human beings can raise us; those who seem to have come into being by a leap in Nature; thinkers and educators, artists and creators, and those who influence us more by their nature than by their activity: the noble, the good in a grand style, those in whom the genius of good is at work.

These men are the aim of history.

Nietzsche formulates this proposition: "Humanity must work unceasingly for the production of solitary great men—this and nothing else is its task." This is the same formula at which several aristocratic spirits among his contemporaries have arrived. Thus Renan says, almost in the same words: "In fine, the object of humanity is the production of great men ... nothing but great men; salvation will come from great men." And we see from Flaubert's letters to George Sand

how convinced he was of the same thing. He says, for instance: "The only rational thing is and always will be a government of mandarins, provided that the mandarins can do something, or rather, can do much.... It matters little whether a greater or smaller number of peasants are able to read instead of listening to their priest, but it is infinitely important that many men like Renan and Littré may live and be heard. Our salvation now lies in a real aristocracy."[4] Both Renan and Flaubert would have subscribed to Nietzsche's fundamental idea that a nation is the roundabout way Nature goes in order to produce a dozen great men.

Yet, although the idea does not lack advocates, this does not make it a dominant thought in European philosophy. In Germany, for instance, Eduard von Hartmann thinks very differently of the aim—of history. His published utterances on the subject are well known. In conversation he once hinted how his idea had originated in his mind: "It was clear to me long ago," he said, "that history, or, to use a wider expression, the world process, must have an aim, and that this aim could only be negative. For a golden age is too foolish a figment." Hence his visions of a destruction of the world voluntarily brought about by the most gifted men. And connected with this is his doctrine that humanity has now reached man's estate, that is, has passed the stage of development in which geniuses were necessary.

In the face of all this talk of the world process, the aim of which is annihilation or deliverance—deliverance even of the suffering godhead from existence—Nietzsche takes a very sober and sensible stand with his simple belief that the goal of humanity is not to be infinitely deferred, but must be

found in the highest examples of humanity itself.

And herewith he has arrived at his final answer to the question, What is culture? For upon this relation depend the fundamental idea of culture and the duties culture imposes. It imposes on me the duty of associating myself by my own activity with the great human ideals. Its fundamental idea is this: it assigns to every individual who wishes to work for it and participate in it, the task of striving to produce, within and without himself, the thinker and artist, the lover of truth and beauty, the pure and good personality, and thereby striving for the perfection of Nature, towards the goal of a perfected Nature.

When does a state of culture prevail? When the men of a community are steadily working for the production of single great men. From this highest aim all the others follow. And what state is farthest removed from a state of culture? That in which men energetically and with united forces resist the appearance of great men, partly by preventing the cultivation of the soil required for the growth of genius, partly by obstinately opposing everything in the shape of genius that appears amongst them. Such a state is more remote from culture than that of sheer barbarism.

But does such a state exist? perhaps some one will ask. Most of the smaller nations will be able to read the answer in the history of their native land. It will there be seen, in proportion as "refinement" grows, that the refined atmosphere is diffused, which is unfavourable to genius. And this is all the more serious, since many people think that in modern times and in the races which now share the dominion of the world among them, a political community of only a few millions is seldom

sufficiently numerous to produce minds of the very first order. It looks as if geniuses could only be distilled from some thirty or forty millions of people. Norway with Ibsen, Belgium with Maeterlinck and Verhaeren are exceptions. All the more reason is there for the smaller communities to work at culture to their utmost capacity.

In recent times we have become familiar with the thought that the goal to be aimed at is happiness, the happiness of all, or at any rate of the greatest number. Wherein happiness consists is less frequently discussed, and yet it is impossible to avoid the question, whether a year, a day, an hour in Paradise does not bring more happiness than a lifetime in the chimney-corner. But be that as it may: owing to our familiarity with the notion of making sacrifices for a whole country, a multitude of people, it appears unreasonable that a man should exist for the sake of a few other men, that it should be his duty to devote his life to them in order thereby to promote culture. But nevertheless the answer to the question of culture—how the individual human life may acquire its highest value and its greatest significance—must be: By being lived for the benefit of the rarest and most valuable examples of the human race. This will also be the way in which the individual can best impart a value to the life of the greatest number.

In our day a so-called cultural institution means an organisation in virtue of which the "cultured" advance in serried ranks and thrust aside all solitary and obstinate men whose efforts are directed to higher ends; therefore even the learned are as a rule lacking in any sense for budding genius and any feeling for the value of struggling contemporary

genius. Therefore, in spite of the indisputable and restless progress in all technical and specialised departments, the conditions necessary to the appearance of great men are so far from having improved, that dislike of genius has rather increased than diminished.

From the State the exceptional individual cannot expect much. He is seldom benefited by being taken into its service; the only certain advantage it can give him is complete independence. Only real culture will prevent his being too early tired out or used up, and will spare him the exhausting struggle against Culture-Philistinism.

Nietzsche's value lies in his being one of these vehicles of culture: a mind which, itself independent, diffuses independence and may become to others a liberating force, such as Schopenhauer was to Nietzsche himself in his younger days.

[2] *The Birth of Tragedy*, p. 150 ff. (English edition).

[3] The author of these lines has not made himself the advocate of this view, as has sometimes been publicly stated, but on the contrary has opposed it. After some uncertainty I pronounced against it as early as 1870, in *Den franske Æsthetik i vore Dage*, pp. 105, 106, and afterwards in many other places.

[4] Nietzsche; *Thoughts out of Season*, II., p. 155 f. (English edition). Renan: *Dialogues et Fragments Philosophiques*, p. 103. Flaubert: *Lettres à George Sand*, p. 139 ff.

2.

Four of Nietzsche's early works bear the collective

title, *Thoughts out of Season* (*Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen*), a title which is significant of his early-formed determination to go against the stream.

One of the fields in which he opposed the spirit of the age in Germany is that of education, since he condemns in the most uncompromising fashion the entire historical system of education of which Germany is proud, and which as a rule is everywhere regarded as desirable.

His view is that what keeps the race from breathing freely and willing boldly is that it drags far too much of its past about with it, like a round-shot chained to a convict's leg. He thinks it is historical education that fetters the race both in enjoyment and in action, since he who cannot concentrate himself on the moment and live entirely in it, can neither feel happiness himself nor do anything to make others happy. Without the power of feeling unhistorically, there is no happiness. And in the same way, forgetfulness, or rather, non-knowledge of the past is essential to all action. Forgetfulness, the unhistorical, is as it were the enveloping air, the atmosphere, in which alone life can come into being. In order to understand it, let us imagine a youth who is seized with a passion for a woman, or a man who is swayed by a passion for his work. In both cases what lies behind them has ceased to exist—and yet this state (the most unhistorical that can be imagined) is that in which every action, every great deed is conceived and accomplished. Now answering to this, says Nietzsche, there exists a certain degree of historical knowledge which is destructive of a man's energy and fatal to the productive powers of a nation.

In this reasoning we can hear the voice of the learned German philologist, whose observations have

mostly been drawn from German scholars and artists. For it would be unreasonable to suppose that the commercial or peasant class, the soldiers or manufacturers of Germany suffered from an excess of historical culture. But even in the case of German savants, authors and artists the evil here pointed out may be of such a nature as not to admit of remedy by simply abolishing historical education. Those men whose productive impulse has been checked or killed by historical studies were already so impotent and ineffective that the world would not have been enriched by their productions. And moreover, what paralyses is not so much the heterogeneous mass of dead historical learning (about the actions of governments, political chess-moves, military achievements, artistic styles, etc.), as the knowledge of certain great minds of the past, by the side of whose production anything that can be shown by a man now living appears so insignificant as to make it a matter of indifference whether his work sees the light or not. Goethe alone is enough to reduce a young German poet to despair. But a hero-worshipper like Nietzsche cannot consistently desire to curtail our knowledge of the greatest.

The want of artistic courage and intellectual boldness has certainly deeper-lying causes; above all, the disintegration of the individuality which the modern order of society involves. Strong men can carry a heavy load of history without becoming incapacitated for living.

But what is interesting and significant of Nietzsche's whole intellectual standpoint is his inquiry as to how far life is able to make use of history. History, in his view, belongs to him who is fighting a great fight, and who needs examples, teachers and comforters,

but cannot find them among his contemporaries. Without history the mountain chain of great men's great moments, which runs through milleniums, could not stand clearly and vividly before me. When one sees, that it only took about a hundred men to bring in the culture of the Renaissance; it may easily be supposed, for example, that a hundred productive minds, trained in a new style, would be enough to make an end of Culture-Philistinism. On the other hand, history may have pernicious effects in the hands of unproductive men. Thus young artists are driven into galleries instead of out into nature, and are sent, with minds still unformed, to centres of art, where they lose courage. And in all its forms history may render men unfit for life; in its *monumental* form by evoking the illusion that there are such things as fixed, recurring historical conjunctions, so that what has once been possible is now, in entirely altered conditions, possible again; in its *antiquarian* form by awakening a feeling of piety for ancient, bygone things, which paralyses the man of action, who must always outrage some piety or other; finally in its *critical* form by giving rise to the depressing feeling that the very errors of the past, which we are striving to overcome, are inherited in our blood and impressed on our childhood, so that we live in a continual inner conflict between an old and a new nature.

On this point, as on others already alluded to, Nietzsche's quarrel is ultimately with the broken-winded education of the present day. That *education* and *historical education* have in our time almost become synonymous terms, is to him a mournful sign. It has been irretrievably forgotten that culture ought to be what it was with the Greeks: a motive, a prompting to resolution; nowadays culture is

commonly described as inwardness, because it is a dead internal lump, which does not stir its possessor. The most "educated" people are walking encyclopædias. When they act, they do so in virtue of a universally approved, miserable convention, or else from simple barbarism.

With this reflection, no doubt of general application, is connected a complaint which was bound to be evoked by modern literary Germany in particular; the complaint of the oppressive effect of the greatness of former times, as shown in the latter-day man's conviction that he is a latecomer, an after-birth of a greater age, who may indeed teach himself history, but can never produce it.

Even philosophy, Nietzsche complains, with a side-glance at the German universities, has been more and more transformed into the history of philosophy, a teaching of what everybody has thought about everything; "a sort of harmless gossip between academic grey-beards and academic sucklings." It is boasted as a point of honour that freedom of thought exists in various countries. In reality it is only a poor sort of freedom. One may think in a hundred ways, but one may only act in one way—and that is the way that is called "culture" and is in reality "only a form, and what is more a bad form, a uniform."

Nietzsche attacks the view which regards the historically cultured person as the justest of all. We honour the historian who aims at pure knowledge, from which nothing follows. But there are many trivial truths, and it is a misfortune that whole battalions of inquirers should fling themselves upon them, even if these narrow minds belong to honest men. The historian is looked upon as objective when he measures the past by the popular opinions of his

own time, as subjective when he does not take these opinions for models. That man is thought best fitted to depict a period of the past, who is not in the least affected by that period. But only he who has a share in building up the future can grasp what the past has been, and only when transformed into a work of art can history arouse or even sustain instincts.

As historical education is now conducted, the mass of impressions communicated is so great as to produce numbness, a feeling of being born old of an old stock —although less than thirty human lives, reckoned at seventy years each, divide us from the beginning of our era. And with this is connected the immense superstition of the value and significance of universal history. Schiller's phrase is everlastingly repeated: "The history of the world is the tribunal of the world," as though there could be any other historical tribunal than thought; and the Hegelian view of history as the ever-clearer self-revelation of the godhead has obstinately held its own, only that it has gradually passed into sheer admiration of success, an approval of any and every fact, be it never so brutal. But greatness has nothing to do with results or with success. Demosthenes, who spoke in vain, is greater than Philip, who was always victorious. Everything in our day is thought to be in order, if only it be an accomplished fact; even when a man of genius dies in the fulness of his powers, proofs are forthcoming that he died at the right time. And the fragment of history we possess is entitled "the world process"; men cudgel their brains, like Eduard von Hartmann, in trying to find out its origin and final goal—which seems to be a waste of time. Why you exist, says Nietzsche with Sören Kierkegaard, nobody in the world can tell you in advance; but since you do exist, try to give your existence a meaning by setting up for

yourself as lofty and noble a goal as you can.

Significant of Nietzsche's aristocratic tendency, so marked later, is his anger with the deference paid by modern historians to the masses. Formerly, he argues, history was written from the standpoint of the rulers; it was occupied exclusively with them, however mediocre or bad they might be. Now it has crossed over to the standpoint of the masses. But the masses—they are only to be regarded as one of three things: either as copies of great personalities, bad copies, clumsily produced in a poor material, or as foils to the great, or finally as their tools. Otherwise they are matter for statisticians to deal with, who find so-called historical laws in the instincts of the masses—aping, laziness, hunger and sexual impulse. What has set the mass in motion for any length of time is then called great. It is given the name of a historical power. When, for example, the vulgar mob has appropriated or adapted to its needs some religious idea, has defended it stubbornly and dragged it along for centuries, then the originator of that idea is called great. There is the testimony of thousands of years for it, we are told. But—this is Nietzsche's and Kierkegaard's idea—the noblest and highest does not affect the masses at all, either at the moment or later. Therefore the historical success of a religion, its toughness and persistence, witness against its founder's greatness rather than for it.

When an instance is required of one of the few enterprises in history that have been completely successful, the Reformation is commonly chosen. Against the significance of this success Nietzsche does not urge the facts usually quoted: its early secularisation by Luther; his compromises with those in power; the interest of princes in emancipating

themselves from the mastery of the Church and laying hands on its estates, while at the same time securing a submissive and dependent clergy instead of one independent of the State. He sees the chief cause of the success of the Reformation in the uncultured state of the nations of northern Europe. Many attempts at founding new Greek religions came to naught in antiquity. Although men like Pythagoras, Plato, perhaps Empedocles, had qualifications as founders of religions, the individuals they had to deal with were far too diversified in their nature to be helped by a common doctrine of faith and hope. In contrast with this, the success of Luther's Reformation in the North was an indication that northern culture was behind that of southern Europe. The people either blindly obeyed a watchword from above, like a flock of sheep; or, where conversion was a matter of conscience, it revealed how little individuality there was among a population which was found to be so homogeneous in its spiritual needs. In the same way, too, the original conversion of pagan antiquity was only successful on account of the abundant intermixture of barbarian with Roman blood which had taken place. The new doctrine was forced upon the masters of the world by barbarians and slaves.

The reader now has examples of the arguments Nietzsche employs in support of his proposition that history is not so sound and strengthening an educational factor as is thought: only he who has learnt to know life and is equipped for action has use for history and is capable of applying it; others are oppressed by it and rendered unproductive by being made to feel themselves late-comers, or are induced to worship success in every field.

Nietzsche's contribution to this question is a plea against every sort of historical optimism; but he energetically repudiates the ordinary pessimism, which is the result of degenerate or enfeebled instincts—of decadence. He preaches with youthful enthusiasm the triumph of a *tragic* culture, introduced by an intrepid rising generation, in which the spirit of ancient Greece might be born again. He rejects the pessimism of Schopenhauer, for he already abhors all renunciation; but he seeks a pessimism of healthiness, one derived from strength, from exuberant power, and he believes he has found it in the Greeks. He has developed this view in the learned and profound work of his youth, *The Birth of Tragedy, or Hellenism and Pessimism*, in which he introduced two new terms, *Apollonian* and *Dionysian*. The two Greek deities of art, Apollo and Dionysus, denote the antithesis between plastic art and music. The former corresponds to dreaming, the latter to drunkenness. In dreams the forms of the gods first appeared to men; dreams are the world of beauteous appearance. If, on the other hand, we look down into man's lowest depths, below the spheres of thought and imagination, we come upon a world of terror and rapture, the realm of Dionysus. Above reign beauty, measure and proportion; but underneath the profusion of Nature surges freely in pleasure and pain. Regarded from Nietzsche's later standpoint, the deeper motive of this searching absorption in Hellenic antiquity becomes apparent. Even at this early stage he suspects, in what passes for morality, a disparaging principle directed against Nature; he looks for its essential antithesis, and finds it in the purely artistic principle, farthest removed from Christianity, which he calls Dionysian.

Our author's main psychological features are now

clearly apparent. What kind of a nature is it that carries this savage hatred of philistinism even as far as to David Strauss? An artist's nature, obviously. What kind of a writer is it who warns us with such firm conviction against the dangers of historical culture? A philologist obviously, who has experienced them in himself, has felt himself threatened with becoming a mere aftermath and tempted to worship historical success. What kind of a nature is it that so passionately defines culture as the worship of genius? Certainly no Eckermann-nature, but an enthusiast, willing at the outset to obey where he cannot command, but quick to recognise his own masterful bias, and to see that humanity is far from having outgrown the ancient antithetical relation of commanding and obeying. The appearance of Napoleon is to him, as to many others, a proof of this; in the joy that thrilled thousands, when at last they saw one who knew how to command.

But in the sphere of ethics he is not disposed to preach obedience. On the contrary, constituted as he is, he sees the apathy and meanness of our modern morality in the fact that it still upholds obedience as the highest moral commandment, instead of the power of dictating to one's self one's own morality.

His military schooling and participation in the war of 1870-71 probably led to his discovery of a hard and manly quality in himself, and imbued him with an extreme abhorrence of all softness and effeminacy. He turned aside with disgust from the morality of pity in Schopenhauer's philosophy and from the romantic-catholic element in Wagner's music, to both of which he had previously paid homage. He saw that he had transformed both masters according to his own needs, and he understood quite well the

instinct of self preservation that was here at work. The aspiring mind creates the helpers it requires. Thus he afterwards dedicated his book, Human, all-too-Human, which was published on Voltaire's centenary, to the "free spirits" among his contemporaries; his dreams created the associates that he had not yet found in the flesh.

The severe and painful illness, which began in his thirty-second year and long made him a recluse, detached him from all romanticism and freed his heart from all bonds of piety. It carried him far away from pessimism, in virtue of his proud thought that "a sufferer has no right to pessimism." This illness made a philosopher of him in a strict sense. His thoughts stole inquisitively along forbidden paths: This thing passes for a value. Can we not turn it upside-down? This is regarded as good. Is it not rather evil?—Is not God refuted? But can we say as much of the devil?—Are we not deceived? and deceived deceivers, all of us?...

And then out of this long sickliness arises a passionate desire for health, the joy of the convalescent in life, in light, in warmth, in freedom and ease of mind, in the range and horizon of thought, in "visions of new dawns," in creative capacity, in poetical strength. And he enters upon the lofty self-confidence and ecstasy of a long uninterrupted production.

3.

It is neither possible nor necessary to review here the long series of his writings. In calling attention to an author who is still unread, one need only throw his most characteristic thoughts and expressions into

relief, so that the reader with little trouble may form an idea of his way of thinking and quality of mind. The task is here rendered difficult by Nietzsche's thinking in aphorisms, and facilitated by his habit of emphasising every thought in such a way as to give it a startling appearance.

English utilitarianism has met with little acceptance in Germany; among more eminent contemporary thinkers Eugen Dühring is its chief advocate; Friedrich Paulsen also sides with the Englishmen. Eduard von Hartmann has attempted to demonstrate the impossibility of simultaneously promoting culture and happiness. Nietzsche finds new difficulties in an analysis of the concept of happiness. The object of utilitarianism is to procure humanity as much pleasure and as little of the reverse as possible. But what if pleasure and pain are so intertwined that he who wants all the pleasure he can get must take a corresponding amount of suffering into the bargain? Clärchen's song contains the words: "*Himmelhoch jauchzend, zum Tode betrübt*" Who knows whether the latter is not the condition of the former? The Stoics believed this, and, wishing to avoid pain, asked of life the minimum of pleasure. Probably it is equally unwise in our day to promise men intense joys, if they are to be insured against great sufferings.

We see that Nietzsche transfers the question to the highest spiritual plane, without regard to the fact that the lowest and commonest misfortunes, such as hunger, physical exhaustion, excessive and unhealthy labour, yield no compensation in violent joys. Even if all pleasure be dearly bought, it does not follow that all pain is interrupted and counterbalanced by intense enjoyment.

In accordance with his aristocratic bias he then

attacks Bentham's proposition: the greatest possible happiness of the greatest possible number. The ideal was, of course, to procure happiness for everybody; as this could not be done, the formula took the above shape. But why happiness for the greatest number? We might imagine it for the best, the noblest, the most gifted; and we may be permitted to ask whether moderate prosperity and moderate well-being are preferable to the inequality of lot which acts as a goad, forcing culture ever upward.

Then there is the doctrine of unselfishness. To be moral is to be unselfish. It is good to be so, we are told. But what does that mean—good? Good for whom? Not for the self-sacrificer, but for his neighbour. He who praises the virtue of unselfishness, praises something that is good for the community but harmful to the individual. And the neighbour who wants to be loved unselfishly is not himself unselfish. The fundamental contradiction in this morality is that it demands and commends a renunciation of the ego, for the benefit of another ego.

At the outset the essential and invaluable element of all morality is, in Nietzsche's view, simply this, that it is a prolonged constraint. As language gains in strength and freedom by the constraint of verse, and as all the freedom and delicacy to be found in plastic art, music and dancing is the result of arbitrary laws, so also does human nature only attain its development under constraint. No violence is thereby done to Nature; this is the very nature of things.

The essential point is that there should be obedience, for a long time and in the same direction. Thou shalt obey, some one or something, and for a long time—

otherwise thou wilt come to grief; this seems to be the moral imperative of Nature, which is certainly neither categorical (as Kant thought), nor addressed to the individual (Nature does not trouble about the individual), but seems to be addressed to nations, classes, periods, races—in fact, to mankind. On the other hand, all the morality that is addressed to the individual for his own good, for the sake of his own welfare, is reduced in this view to mere household remedies and counsels of prudence, recipes for curbing passions that might want to break out; and all this morality is preposterous in form, because it addresses itself to all and generalises what does not admit of generalisation. Kant gave us a guiding rule with his categorical imperative. But this rule has failed us. It is of no use saying to us: Act as others ought to act in this case. For we know that there are not and cannot be such things as identical actions, but that every action is unique in its nature, so that any precept can only apply to the rough outside of actions.

But what of the voice and judgment of conscience? The difficulty is that we have a conscience behind our conscience, an intellectual one behind the moral. We can tell that the judgment of So-and-So's conscience has a past history in his instincts, his original sympathies or antipathies, his experience or want of experience. We can see quite well that our opinions of what is noble and good, our moral valuations, are powerful levers where action is concerned; but we must begin by refining these opinions and independently creating for ourselves new tables of values.

And as regards the ethical teachers' preaching of morality for all, this is every bit as empty as the

gossip of individual society people about each other's morals. Nietzsche gives the moralists this good advice: that, instead of trying to educate the human race, they should imitate the pedagogues of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, who concentrated their efforts on the education of a single person. But as a rule the moral ranters are themselves quite uneducated persons, and their children seldom rise above moral mediocrity.

He who feels that in his inmost being he cannot be compared with others, will be his own lawgiver. For one thing is needful: to give style to one's character. This art is practised by him who, with an eye for the strong and weak sides of his nature, removes from it one quality and another, and then by daily practice and acquired habit replaces them by others which become second nature to him; in other words, he puts himself under restraint in order by degrees to bend his nature entirely to his own law. Only thus does a man arrive at satisfaction with himself, and only thus does he become endurable to others. For the dissatisfied and the unsuccessful as a rule avenge themselves on others. They absorb poison from everything, from their own incompetence as well as from their poor circumstances, and they live in a constant craving for revenge on those in whose nature they suspect harmony. Such people ever have virtuous precepts on their lips; the whole jingle of morality, seriousness, chastity, the claims of life; and their hearts ever bum with envy of those who have become well balanced and can therefore enjoy life.

For millenniums morality meant obedience to custom, respect for inherited usage. The free, exceptional man was immoral, because he broke with the tradition which the others regarded with

superstitious fear. Very commonly he took the same view and was himself seized by the terror he inspired. Thus a popular morality of custom was unconsciously elaborated by all who belonged to the tribe; since fresh examples and proofs could always be found of the alleged relation between guilt and punishment—if you behave in such and such a way, it will go badly with you. Now, as it generally does go badly, the allegation was constantly confirmed; and thus popular morality, a pseudoscience on a level with popular medicine, continually gained ground.

Manners and customs represented the experiences of bygone generations concerning what was supposed to be useful or harmful; the sense of morality, however, does not attach to these experiences as such, but only to their age, their venerability and consequent incontestability. In the state of war in which a tribe existed in old times, threatened on every side, there was no greater gratification, under the sway of the strictest morality of custom, than cruelty. Cruelty is one of the oldest festal and triumphal joys of mankind. It was thought that the gods, too, might be gratified and festively disposed by offering them the sight of cruelties—and thus the idea insinuated itself into the world that voluntary self-torture, mortification and abstinence are also of great value, not as discipline, but as a sweet savour unto the Lord.

Christianity as a religion of the past unceasingly practised and preached the torture of souls. Imagine the state of the mediæval Christian, when he supposed he could no longer escape eternal torment. Eros and Aphrodite were in his imagination powers of hell, and death was a terror.

To the morality of cruelty has succeeded that of pity. The morality of pity is lauded as unselfish, by Schopenhauer in particular.

Eduard von Hartmann, in his thoughtful work, *Phänomenologie des sittlichen Bewusstseins* (pp. 217-240), has already shown the impossibility of regarding pity as the most important of moral incentives, to say nothing of its being the only one, as Schopenhauer would have it. Nietzsche attacks the morality of pity from other points of view. He shows it to be by no means unselfish. Another's misfortune affects us painfully and offends us—perhaps brands us as cowards if we do not go to his aid. Or it contains a hint of a possible danger to ourselves; moreover, we feel joy in comparing our own state with that of the unfortunate, joy when we can step in as the stronger, the helper. The help we afford gives us a feeling of happiness, or perhaps it merely rescues us from boredom.

Pity in the form of actual fellow-suffering would be a weakness, nay, a misfortune, since it would add to the world's suffering. A man who seriously abandoned himself to sympathy with all the misery he found about him, would simply be destroyed by it.

Among savages the thought of arousing pity is regarded with horror. Those who do so are despised. According to savage notions, to feel pity for a person is to despise him; but they find no pleasure in seeing a contemptible person suffer. On the other hand, the sight of an enemy's suffering, when his pride does not forsake him in the midst of his torment—that is enjoyment, that excites admiration.

The morality of pity is often preached in the formula, love thy neighbour.

Nietzsche in the interests of his attack seizes upon the word *neighbour*. Not only does he demand, with Kierkegaard, a setting-aside of morality for the sake of the end in view, but he is exasperated that the true nature of morality should be held to consist in a consideration of the immediate results of our actions, to which we are to conform. To what is narrow and pettifogging in this morality he opposes another, which looks beyond these immediate results and aspires, even by means that cause our neighbour pain, to more distant objects; such as the advancement of knowledge, although this will lead to sorrow and doubt and evil passions in our neighbour. We need not on this account be without pity, but we may hold our pity captive for the sake of the object.

And as it is now unreasonable to term pity unselfish and seek to consecrate it, it is equally so to hand over a series of actions to the evil conscience, merely because they have been maligned as egotistical. What has happened in recent times in this connection is that the instinct of self-denial and self-sacrifice, everything altruistic, has been glorified as if it were the supreme value of morality.

The English moralists, who at present dominate Europe, explain the origin of ethics in the following way: Unselfish actions were originally called *good* by those who were their objects and who benefited by them; afterwards this original reason for praising them was forgotten, and unselfish actions came to be regarded as good in themselves.

According to a statement of Nietzsche himself it was a work by a German author with English leanings, Dr. Paul Rée's *Der Ursprung der moralischen Empfindungen* (Chemnitz, 1877), which provoked him

to such passionate and detailed opposition that he had to thank this book for the impulse to clear up and develop his own ideas on the subject.

The surprising part of it, however, is this: Dissatisfaction with his first book caused Rée to write a second and far more important work on the same subject—*Die Entstehung des Gewissens* (Berlin, 1885)—in which the point of view offensive to Nietzsche is abandoned and several of the leading ideas advanced by the latter against Rée are set forth, supported by a mass of evidence taken from various authors and races of men.

The two philosophers were personally acquainted. I knew them both, but had no opportunity of questioning either on this matter. It is therefore impossible for me to say which of the two influenced the other, or why Nietzsche in 1887 alludes to his detestation of the opinions put forward by Rée in 1877, without mentioning how near the latter had come to his own view in the work published two years previously.

Rée had already adduced a number of examples to show that the most diverse peoples of antiquity knew no other moral classification of men than that of nobles and common people, powerful and weak; so that the oldest meaning of good both in Greece and Iceland was noble, mighty, rich. Nietzsche builds his whole theory on this foundation. His train of thought is this—

The critical word *good* is not due to those to whom goodness has been shown. The oldest definition was this: the noble, the mightier, higher-placed and high-minded held themselves and their actions to be *good*—of the first rank—in contradistinction to everything low and low-minded. Noble, in the sense

of the class-consciousness of a higher caste, is the primary concept from which develops *good* in the sense of spiritually aristocratic. The lowly are designated as *bad* (not evil). Bad does not acquire its unqualified depreciatory meaning till much later. In the mouth of the people it is a laudatory word; the German word *schlecht* is identical with *schlicht* (cf. *schlechtweg* and *schlechterdings*).

The ruling caste call themselves sometimes simply the Mighty, sometimes the Truthful; like the Greek nobility, whose mouthpiece Theognis was. With him beautiful, good and noble always have the sense of aristocratic. The aristocratic moral valuation proceeds from a triumphant affirmation, a yea-saying, which we find in the Homeric heroes: We, the noble, beautiful and brave—we are the good, the beloved of the gods. These are strong men, charged with force, who delight in warlike deeds, to whom, in other words, happiness is activity.

It is of course unavoidable that these nobles should misjudge and despise the plebeian herd they dominate. Yet as a rule there may be traced in them a pity for the downtrodden caste, for the drudge and beast of burden, an indulgence towards those to whom happiness is rest, the Sabbath of inactivity.

Among the lower orders, on the other hand, an image of the ruling caste distorted by hatred and spite is necessarily current. In this distortion there lies a revenge.[5]

In opposition to the aristocratic valuation (good = noble, beautiful, happy, favoured by the gods) the slave morality then is this: The wretched alone are the *good*; those who suffer and are heavy laden, the sick and the ugly, they are the only pious ones. On the other hand, you, ye noble and rich, are to all

eternity the *evil*, the cruel, the insatiate, the ungodly, and after death the damned. Whereas noble morality was the manifestation of great self-esteem, a continual yea-saying, slave morality is a continual Nay, a *Thou shalt not*, a negation.

To the noble valuation *good—bad* (bad = worthless) corresponds the antithesis of slave morality, *good—evil*. And who are the evil in this morality of the oppressed? Precisely the same who in the other morality were the good.

Let any one read the Icelandic sagas and examine the morality of the ancient Northmen, and then compare with it the complaints of other nations about the vikings' misdeeds. It will be seen that these aristocrats, whose conduct in many ways stood high, were no better than beasts of prey in dealing with their enemies. They fell upon the inhabitants of Christian shores like eagles upon lambs. One may say they followed an eagle ideal. But then we cannot wonder that those who were exposed to such fearful attacks gathered round an entirely opposite moral ideal, that of the lamb.

In the third chapter of his *Utilitarianism*, Stuart Mill attempts to prove that the sense of justice has developed from the animal instinct of making reprisal for an injury or a loss. In an essay on "the transcendental satisfaction of the feeling of revenge" (supplement to the first edition of the *Werth des Lebens*) Eugen Dühring has followed him in trying to establish the whole doctrine of punishment upon the instinct of retaliation. In his *Phänomenologie* Eduard von Hartmann shows how this instinct strictly speaking never does more than involve a new suffering, a new offence, to gain external satisfaction for the old one, so that the principle of requital can

never be any distinct principle.

Nietzsche makes a violent, passionate attempt to refer the sum total of false modern morality, not to the instinct of requital or to the feeling of revenge in general, but to the narrower form of it which we call spite, envy and *rancune*. What he calls slave morality is to him purely spite-morality; and this spite-morality gave new names to all ideals. Thus impotence, which offers no reprisal, became goodness; craven baseness became humility; submission to him who was feared became obedience; inability to assert one's self became reluctance to assert one's self, became forgiveness, love of one's enemies. Misery became a distinction; God chastens whom he loves. Or it became a preparation, a trial and a training; even more—something that will one day be made good with interest, paid back in bliss. And the vilest underground creatures, swollen with hate and spite, were heard to say: We, the good, we are the righteous. They did not hate their enemies—they hated injustice, ungodliness. What they hoped for was not the sweets of revenge, but the victory of righteousness. Those they had left to love on earth were their brothers and sisters in hatred, whom they called their brothers and sisters in love. The future state they looked for was called the coming of their kingdom, of God's kingdom. Until it arrives they live on in faith, hope and love.

If Nietzsche's design in this picture was to strike at historical Christianity, he has given us—as any one may see—a caricature in the spirit and style of the eighteenth century. But that his description hits off a certain type of the apostles of spite-morality cannot be denied, and rarely has all the self-deception that

may lurk beneath moral preaching been more vigorously unmasked. (Compare *Beyond Good and Evil* and *The Genealogy of Morals*.)[6]

[5] Nietzsche supports his hypothesis by derivations, some doubtful, others incorrect; but their value is immaterial.

[6] Where Nietzsche's words are quoted, in the course of this essay, considerable use has been made of the complete English translation of his works, edited by Dr. Oscar Levy.—Tr.

4.

Nietzsche would define man as an animal that can make and keep promises.

He sees the real nobility of man in his capacity for promising something, answering for himself and undertaking a responsibility—since man, with the mastery of himself which this capacity implies, necessarily acquires in addition a mastery over external circumstances and over other creatures, whose will is not so lasting.

The consciousness of this responsibility is what the sovereign man calls his conscience.

What, then, is the past history of this responsibility, this conscience? It is a long and bloody one. Frightful means have been used in the course of history to train men to remember what they have once promised or willed, tacitly or explicitly. For milleniums man was confined in the strait-jacket of the morality of custom, and by such punishments as stoning, breaking on the wheel or burning, by burying the sinner alive, tearing him asunder with horses, throwing him into the water with a stone on his neck or in a sack, by scourging, flaying and

branding—by all these means a long memory for what he had promised was burnt into that forgetful animal, man; in return for which he was permitted to enjoy the advantages of being a member of society.

According to Nietzsche's hypothesis, the consciousness of guilt originates simply as consciousness of a debt. The relation of contract between creditor and debtor, which is as old as the earliest primitive forms of human intercourse in buying, selling, bartering, etc.—this is the relation that underlies it. The debtor (in order to inspire confidence in his promise of repayment) pledges something he possesses: his liberty, his woman, his life; or he gives his creditor the right of cutting a larger or smaller piece of flesh from his body, according to the amount of the debt. (The Roman Code of the Twelve Tables; again in *The Merchant of Venice*.)

The logic of this, which has become somewhat strange to us, is as follows: as compensation for his loss the creditor is granted a kind of voluptuous sensation, the delight of being able to exercise his power upon the powerless.

The reader may find evidence in Rée (*op. cit.*, p. 13 ff.) for Nietzsche's dictum, that for milleniums this was the view of mankind: The sight of suffering does one good.

The infliction of suffering on another is a feast at which the fortunate one swells with the joy of power. We may also find evidence in Rée that the instincts of pity, fairness and clemency, which were afterwards glorified as virtues, were originally regarded almost everywhere as morally worthless, nay, as indications of weakness.

Buying and selling, as well as everything psychologically connected therewith and older than any form of social organisation, contain the germs, in Nietzsche's view, of compensation, assessing, justice and duty. Man soon became proud of himself as a being who measures values. One of the earliest generalisations was this: Everything has its price. And the thought that everything can be paid for was the oldest and most naïve canon of justice.

Now the whole of society, as it gradually develops, stands in the same relation to its members as the creditor to the debtor. Society protects its members; they are assured against the state of outlawry—on condition that they do not break their pledges to the community. He who breaks his word—the criminal—is relegated to the outlawry involved in exclusion from society.

As Nietzsche, who is so exclusively taken up by the psychological aspect, discards all accessories of scholarship, it is impossible to examine directly the accuracy of his assertions. The historical data will be found collected in Rée's paragraphs on resentment and the sense of justice, and in his section on the buying-off of revenge, i. e. settlement by fines.

Other thinkers besides Nietzsche (such as E. von Hartmann and Rée) have combated the view that the idea of justice has its origin in a state of resentment, and Nietzsche has scarcely brought to light any fresh and convincing proof; but what is characteristic of him as a writer is the excess of personal passion with which he attacks this view, obviously because it is connected with the reasoning of modern democracy.

In many a modern cry for justice there rings a note of plebeian spite and envy. Involuntarily many a modern savant of middle-class or lower middle-class

origin has attributed an unwarrantable importance to the atavistic emotions prevalent among those who have been long oppressed: hatred and rancour, spite and thirst for revenge.

Nietzsche does not occupy himself for an instant with the state of things in which revenge does duty as the sole punitive justice; for the death feud is not a manifestation of the thrall's hatred of his master, but of ideas of honour among equals. He dwells exclusively on the contrast between a ruling caste and a caste of slaves, and shows a constantly recurring indignation with doctrines which have caused the progressive among his contemporaries to look with indulgence on the instincts of the populace and with suspicion or hostility on master spirits. His purely personal characteristic, however, the unphilosophical and temperamental in him, is revealed in the trait that, while he has nothing but scorn and contempt for the down-trodden class or race, for the *slave morality* resulting from its suppressed rancour, he positively revels in the ruling caste's delight in its power, in the atmosphere of healthiness, freedom, frankness and truthfulness in which it lives. Its acts of tyranny he defends or excuses. The image it creates for itself of the slave caste is to him far less falsified than that which the latter forms of the master caste.

Nor can there be serious question of any real injustice committed by this caste. For there is no such thing as right or wrong in itself. The infliction of an injury, forcible subjection, exploitation or annihilation is not in itself a wrong, cannot be such, since life in its essence, in its primary functions, is nothing but oppression, exploitation and annihilation. Conditions of justice can never be

anything but exceptional conditions, that is, as limitations of the real desire of life, the object of which is power.

Nietzsche replaces Schopenhauer's *Will to Life* and Darwin's *Struggle for Existence* by the *Will to Power*. In his view the fight is not for life—bare existence—but for power. And he has a great deal to say—somewhat beside the mark—of the mean and paltry conditions those Englishmen must have had in view who set up the modest conception of the struggle for life. It appears to him as if they had imagined a world in which everybody is glad if he can only keep body and soul together. But life is only an expression for the minimum. In itself life seeks, not self-preservation alone, but self-increase, and this is precisely the "will to power." It is therefore obvious that there is no difference of principle between the new catchword and the old; for the struggle for existence necessarily leads to the conflict of forces and the fight for power. Now a system of justice, seen from this standpoint, is a factor in the conflict of forces. Conceived as supreme, as a remedy for every kind of struggle, it would be a principle hostile to life and destructive of the future and progress of humanity.

Something similar was in the mind of Lassalle, when he declared that the standpoint of justice was a bad standpoint in the life of nations. What is significant of Nietzsche is his love of fighting for its own sake, in contrast to the modern humanitarian view. To Nietzsche the greatness of a movement is to be measured by the sacrifices it demands. The hygiene which keeps alive millions of weak and useless beings who ought rather to die, is to him no true progress. A dead level of mediocre happiness assured

to the largest possible majority of the miserable creatures we nowadays call men, would be to him no true progress. But to him, as to Renan, the rearing of a human species higher and stronger than that which now surrounds us (the "Superman"), even if this could only be achieved by the sacrifice of masses of such men as we know, would be a great, a real progress. Nietzsche's visions, put forth in all seriousness, of the training of the Superman and his assumption of the mastery of the world, bear so strong a resemblance to Renan's dreams, thrown out half in jest, of a new Asgard, a regular manufactory of Æsir (*Dialogues philosophiques*, 117), that we can scarcely doubt the latter's influence. But what Renan wrote under the overwhelming impression of the Paris Commune, and, moreover, in the form of dialogue, allowing both *pro* and *con.* to be heard, has crystallised in Nietzsche into dogmatic conviction. One is therefore surprised and hurt to find that Nietzsche never mentions Renan otherwise than grudgingly. He scarcely alludes to the aristocratic quality of his intellect, but he speaks with repugnance of that respect for the gospel of the humble which Renan everywhere discloses, and which is undeniably at variance with his hope of the foundation of a breeding establishment for supermen.

Renan, and after him Taine, turned against the almost religious feelings which were long entertained in the new Europe towards the first French Revolution. Renan regretted the Revolution betimes on national grounds; Taine, who began by speaking warmly of it, changed his mind on closer inquiry. Nietzsche follows in their footsteps. It is natural for modern authors, who feel themselves to be the children of the Revolution, to sympathise with the

men of the great revolt; and certainly the latter do not receive their due in the present anti-revolutionary state of feeling in Europe. But these authors, in their dread of what in political jargon is called Cæsarism, and in their superstitious belief in mass movements, have overlooked the fact that the greatest revolutionaries and liberators are not the united small, but the few great; not the small ungenerous, but the great and generous, who are willing to bestow justice and well-being and intellectual growth upon the rest.

There are two classes of revolutionary spirits: those who feel instinctively drawn to Brutus, and those who equally instinctively are attracted by Cæsar. Cæsar is the great type; neither Frederick the Great nor Napoleon could claim more than a part of his qualities. The modern poetry of the 'forties teems with songs in praise of Brutus, but no poet has sung Cæsar. Even a poet with so little love for democracy as Shakespeare totally failed to recognise his greatness; he gave us a pale caricature of his figure and followed Plutarch in glorifying Brutus at his expense. Even Shakespeare could not see that Cæsar placed a very different stake on the table of life from that of his paltry murderer. Cæsar was descended from Venus; in his form was grace. His mind had the grand simplicity which is the mark of the greatest; his nature was nobility. He, from whom even to-day all supreme power takes its name, had every attribute that belongs to a commander and ruler of the highest rank. Only a few men of the Italian Renaissance have reached such a height of genius. His life was a guarantee of all the progress that could be accomplished in those days. Brutus's nature was doctrine, his distinguishing mark the narrowness that seeks to bring back dead conditions and that sees

omens of a call in the accident of a name. His style was dry and laborious, his mind unfertile. His vice was avarice, usury his delight. To him the provinces were conquests beyond the pale. He had five senators of Salamis starved to death because the town could not pay. And on account of a dagger-thrust, which accomplished nothing and hindered nothing of what it was meant to hinder, this arid brain has been made a sort of genius of liberty, merely because men have failed to understand what it meant to have the strongest, richest and noblest nature invested with supreme power.

From what has been said above it will easily be understood that Nietzsche derives justice entirely from the active emotions, since in his view revengeful feelings are always low. He does not dwell on this point, however. Older writers had seen in the instinct of retaliation the origin of punishment. Stuart Mill, in his *Utilitarianism*, derived justice from already established punitive provisions (*justum* from *jussum*), which were precautionary measures, not reprisals. Rée, in his book on the *Origin of Conscience*, defended the kindred proposition that punishment is not a consequence of the sense of justice, but *vice versa*. The English philosophers in general derive the bad conscience from punishment. The value of the latter is supposed to consist in awakening a sense of guilt in the delinquent.

Against this Nietzsche enters a protest. He maintains that punishment only hardens and benumbs a man; in fact, that the judicial procedure itself prevents the criminal from regarding his conduct as reprehensible; since he is made to witness precisely the same kind of acts as those he has committed—spying, entrapping, outwitting and torturing—all of

which are sanctioned when exercised against him in the cause of justice. For long ages, too, no notice whatever was taken of the criminal's "sin"; he was regarded as harmful, not guilty, and looked upon as a piece of destiny; and the criminal on his side took his punishment as a piece of destiny which had overtaken him, and bore it with the same fatalism with which the Russians suffer to this day. In general we may say that punishment tames the man, but does not make him "better."

The bad conscience, then, is still unexplained. Nietzsche proposes the following brilliant hypothesis: The bad conscience is the deep-seated morbid condition that declared itself in man under the stress of the most radical change he has ever experienced—when he found himself imprisoned in perpetuity within a society which was inviolable. All the strong and savage instincts such as adventurousness, rashness, cunning, rapacity, lust of power, which till then had not only been honoured, but actually encouraged, were suddenly put down as dangerous, and by degrees branded as immoral and criminal. Creatures adapted to a roving life of war and adventure suddenly saw all their instincts classed as worthless, nay, as forbidden. An immense despondency, a dejection without parallel, then took possession of them. And all these instincts that were not allowed an outward vent, turned inwards on the man himself—feelings of enmity, cruelty, delight in change, in hazard, violence, persecution, destruction —and thus the bad conscience originated.

When the State came into existence—not by a social contract, as Rousseau and his contemporaries assumed—but by a frightful tyranny imposed by a conquering race upon a more numerous, but

unorganised population, then all the latter's instinct of freedom turned inwards; its active force and will to power were directed against man himself. And this was the soil which bore such ideals of beauty as self-denial, self-sacrifice, unselfishness. The delight in self-sacrifice is in its origin a phase of cruelty; the bad conscience is a will for self-abuse.

Then by degrees guilt came to be felt as a debt, to the past, to the ancestors; a debt that had to be paid back in sacrifices—at first of nourishment in its crudest sense—in marks of honour and in obedience; for all customs, as the work of ancestors, are at the same time their commands.[7] There is a constant dread of not giving them enough; the firstborn, human and animal, are sacrificed to them. Fear of the founder grows in proportion as the power of the race increases. Sometimes he becomes transformed into a god, in which the origin of the god from fear is clearly seen.

The feeling of owing a debt to the deity steadily grew through the centuries, until the recognition of the Christian deity as universal god brought about the greatest possible outburst of guilty feeling. Only in our day is any noticeable diminution of this sense of guilt to be traced; but where the consciousness of sin reaches its culminating point, there the bad conscience eats its way like a cancer, till the sense of the impossibility of paying the debt—atoning for the sin—is supreme and with it is combined the idea of eternal punishment. A curse is now imagined to have been laid upon the founder of the race (Adam), and all sin becomes original sin. Indeed, the evil principle is attributed to Nature herself, from whose womb man has sprung—until we arrive at the paradoxical expedient in which tormented Christendom has

found a temporary consolation for two thousand years: God offers himself for the guilt of mankind, pays himself in his own flesh and blood.

What has here happened is that the instinct of cruelty, which has turned inwards, has become self-torture, and all man's animal instincts have been reinterpreted as guilt towards God. Every Nay man utters to his nature, to his real being, he flings out as a Yea, an affirmation of reality applied to God's sanctity, his capacity of judge and executioner, and in the next place to eternity, the "Beyond," pain without end, eternal punishment in hell.

In order rightly to understand the origin of ascetic ideals, we must, moreover, consider that the earliest generations of spiritual and contemplative natures lived under a fearful pressure of contempt on the part of the hunters and warriors. The unwarlike element in them was despicable. They had no other means of holding their own than that of inspiring fear. This they could only do by cruelty to themselves, mortification and self-discipline in a hermit's life. As priests, soothsayers and sorcerers they then struck superstitious terror into the masses. The ascetic priest is the unsightly larva from which the healthy philosopher has emerged. Under the dominion of the priests our earth became the ascetic planet; a squalid den careering through space, peopled by discontented and arrogant creatures, who were disgusted with life, abhorred their globe as a vale of tears, and who in their envy and hatred of beauty and joy did themselves as much harm as possible.

Nevertheless the self-contradiction we find in asceticism—life turned *against* life—is of course only apparent. In reality the ascetic ideal corresponds to a

decadent life's profound need of healing and tending. It is an ideal that points to depression and exhaustion; by its help life struggles against death. It is life's device for self-preservation. Its necessary antecedent is a morbid condition in the tamed human being, a disgust with life, coupled with the desire to be something else, to be somewhere else, raised to the highest pitch of emotion and passion.

The ascetic priest is the embodiment of this very wish. By its power he keeps the whole herd of dejected, fainthearted, despairing and unsuccessful creatures, fast to life. The very fact that he himself is sick makes him their born herdsman. If he were healthy, he would turn away with loathing from all this eagerness to re-label weakness, envy, Pharisaism and false morality as virtue. But, being himself sick, he is called upon to be an attendant in the great hospital of sinners—the Church. He is constantly occupied with sufferers who seek the cause of their pain outside themselves; he teaches the patient that the guilty cause of his pain is himself. Thus he diverts the rancour of the abortive man and makes him less harmful, by letting a great part of his resentment recoil on himself. The ascetic priest cannot properly be called a physician; he mitigates suffering and invents consolations of every kind, both narcotics and stimulants.

The problem was to contend with fatigue and despair, which had seized like an epidemic upon great masses of men. Many remedies were tried. First, it was sought to depress vitality to the lowest degree: not to will, not to desire, not to work, and so on; to become apathetic (Pascal's *Il faut s'abêtir*). The object was sanctification, a hypnotising of all mental life, a relaxation of every purpose, and consequently

freedom from pain. In the next place, mechanical activity was employed as a narcotic against states of depression: the "blessing of labour." The ascetic priest, who has to deal chiefly with sufferers of the poorer classes, reinterprets the task of the unfortunate drudge for him, making him see in it a benefit. Then again, the prescription of a little, easily accessible joy, is a favourite remedy for depression; such as gladdening others, helping them in love of one's neighbour. Finally, the decisive cure is to organise all the sick into an immense hospital, to found a congregation of them. The disinclination that accompanies the sense of weakness is thereby combated, since the mass feels strong in its inner cohesion.

But the chief remedy of the ascetic priest was, after all, his reinterpretation of the feeling of guilt as "sin." The inner suffering was a punishment. The sick man was the sinner. Nietzsche compares the unfortunate who receives this explanation of his qualms with a hen round which a chalk circle has been drawn: he cannot get out. Wherever we look, for century after century, we see the hypnotic gaze of the sinner, staring—in spite of Job—at guilt as the only cause of suffering. Everywhere the evil conscience and the scourge and the hairy shirt and weeping and gnashing of teeth, and the cry of "More pain! More pain!" Everything served the ascetic ideal. And then arose epidemics like those of St. Vitus's dance and the flagellants, witches' hysteria and the wholesale delirium of extravagant sects (which still lingers in otherwise beneficially disciplined bodies such as the Salvation Army).

The ascetic ideal has as yet no real assailants; there is no decided prophet of a new ideal. Inasmuch as since

the time of Copernicus science has constantly tended to deprive man of his earlier belief in his own importance, its influence is rather favourable to asceticism than otherwise. At present the only real enemies and underminers of the ascetic ideal are to be found in the charlatans of that ideal, in its hypocritical champions, who excite and maintain distrust of it.

As the senselessness of suffering was felt to be a curse, the ascetic ideal gave it a meaning; a meaning which brought a new flood of suffering with it, but which was better than none. In our day a new ideal is in process of formation, which sees in suffering a condition of life, a condition of happiness, and which in the name of a new culture combats all that we have hitherto called culture.

[7] Compare Lassalle's theory of the original religion of Rome. G. Brandes; *Ferdinand Lassalle* (London and New York, 1911), pp. 76 ff.

5.

Among Nietzsche's works there is a strange book which bears the title, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*. It consists of four parts, written during the years 1883-85, each part in about ten days, and conceived chapter by chapter on long walks—"with a feeling of inspiration, as though each sentence had been shouted in my ear," as Nietzsche wrote in a private letter.

The central figure and something of the form are borrowed from the Persian *Avesta*. Zarathustra is the mystical founder of a religion whom we usually call Zoroaster. His religion is the religion of purity; his wisdom is cheerful and dauntless, as that of one who

laughed at his birth; his nature is light and flame. The eagle and the serpent, who share his mountain cave, the proudest and the wisest of beasts, are ancient Persian symbols.

This work contains Nietzsche's doctrine in the form, so to speak, of religion. It is the Koran, or rather the Avesta, which he was impelled to leave—obscure and profound, high-soaring and remote from reality, prophetic and intoxicated with the future, filled to the brim with the personality of its author, who again is entirely filled with himself.

Among modern books that have adopted this tone and employed this symbolic and allegorical style may be mentioned Mickiewicz's *Book of the Polish Pilgrims*, Slowacki's Anheli, and The Words of a Believer, by Lamennais, who was influenced by Mickiewicz. A newer work, known to Nietzsche, is Carl Spitteler's Prometheus and Epimetheus (1881). But all these books, with the exception of Spitteler's, are biblical in their language. Zarathustra, on the other hand, is a book of edification for free spirits.

Nietzsche himself gave this book the highest place among his writings. I do not share this view. The imaginative power which sustains it is not sufficiently inventive, and a certain monotony is inseparable from an archaistic presentment by means of types.

But it is a good book for those to have recourse to who are unable to master Nietzsche's purely speculative works; it contains all his fundamental ideas in the form of poetic recital. Its merit is a style that from the first word to the last is full-toned, sonorous and powerful; now and then rather unctuous in its combative judgments and condemnations; always expressive of self-joy, nay,

self-intoxication, but rich in subtleties as in audacities, sure, and at times great. Behind this style lies a mood as of calm mountain air, so light, so ethereally pure, that no infection, no bacteria can live in it—no noise, no stench, no dust assails it, nor does any path lead up.

Clear sky above, open sea at the mountain's foot, and over all a heaven of light, an abyss of light, an azure bell, a vaulted silence above roaring waters and mighty mountain-chains. On the heights Zarathustra is alone with himself, drawing in the pure air in full, deep breaths, alone with the rising sun, alone with the heat of noon, which does not impair the freshness, alone with the voices of the gleaming stars at night.

A good, deep book it is. A book that is bright in its joy of life, dark in its riddles, a book for spiritual mountain-climbers and dare-devils and for the few who are practised in the great contempt of man that loathes the crowd, and in the great love of man that only loathes so deeply because it has a vision of a higher, braver humanity, which it seeks to rear and train.

Zarathustra has sought the refuge of his cave out of disgust with petty happiness and petty virtues. He has seen that men's doctrine of virtue and contentment makes them ever smaller: their goodness is in the main a wish that no one may do them any harm; therefore they forestall the others by doing them a little good. This is cowardice and is called virtue. True, they are at the same time quite ready to attack and injure, but only those who are once for all at their mercy and with whom it is safe to take liberties. This is called bravery and is a still baser cowardice. But when Zarathustra tries to drive

out the cowardly devils in men, the cry is raised against him, "Zarathustra is godless."

He is lonely, for all his former companions have become apostates; their young hearts have grown old, and not old even, only weary and slothful, only commonplace—and this they call becoming pious again. "Around light and liberty they once fluttered like gnats and young poets, and already are they mystifiers, and mumblers and mollycoddles." They have understood their age. They chose their time well. "For now do all night-birds again fly abroad. Now is the hour of all that dread the light." Zarathustra loathes the great city as a hell for anchorites' thoughts. "All lusts and vices are here at home; but here are also the virtuous, much appointable and appointed virtue. Much appointable virtue with scribe-fingers and hardy sitting-flesh and waiting-flesh, blessed with little breast-stars and padded, haunchless daughters. Here is also much piety and much devout spittle-licking and honey-slavering before the God of hosts. For 'from on high' drippeth the star and the gracious spittle; and upward longeth every starless bosom."

And Zarathustra loathes the State, loathes it as Henrik Ibsen did and more profoundly than he.

To him the State is the coldest of all cold monsters. Its fundamental lie is that it is the people. No; creative spirits were they who created the people and gave it a faith and a love; thus they served life; every people is peculiar to itself, but the State is everywhere the same. The State is to Zarathustra that "where the slow suicide of all is called life." The State is for the many too many. Only where the State leaves off does the man who is not superfluous begin; the man who is a bridge to the Superman.

From states Zarathustra has fled up to his mountain, into his cave.

In forbearance and pity lay his greatest danger. Rich in, the little lies of pity he dwelt among men.

"Stung from head to foot by poisonous flies and hollowed out like a stone by many drops of malice, thus did I sit among them, saying to myself: Innocent is everything petty of its pettiness. Especially they who call themselves the good, they sting in all innocence, they lie in all innocence; how could they be just towards me?

"He who dwelleth among the good, him teacheth pity to lie. Pity breedeth bad air for all free souls. For the stupidity of the good is unfathomable.

"Their stiff wise men did I call wise, not stiff. Their grave-diggers did I call searchers and testers—thus did I learn to confound speech. The grave-diggers dig for themselves diseases. From old refuse arise evil exhalations. Upon the mountains one should live."

And with blessed nostrils he breathes again the freedom of the mountains. His nose is now released from the smell of all that is human. There sits Zarathustra with old broken tables of the law around him and new half-written tables, awaiting his hour; the hour when the lion shall come with the flock of doves, strength in company with gentleness, to do homage to him. And he holds out to men a new table, upon which such maxims as these are written —

Spare not thy neighbour! My great love for the remotest ones commands it. Thy neighbour is something that must be surpassed.

Say not: I will do unto others as I would they should

do unto me. What *thou* doest, that can no man do to thee again. There is no requital.

Do not believe that thou mayst not rob. A right which thou canst seize upon, shalt thou never allow to be given thee.

Beware of good men. They never speak the truth. For all that they call evil—the daring venture, the prolonged distrust, the cruel Nay, the deep disgust with men, the will and the power to cut into the quick—all this must be present where a truth is to be born.

All the past is at man's mercy. But, this being so, it might happen that the rabble became master and drowned all time in its shallow waters, or that a tyrant usurped it all. Therefore we need a new nobility, to be the adversary of all rabble and all tyranny, and to inscribe on new tables the word "noble." Certainly not a nobility that can be bought, nor a nobility whose virtue is love of country. No, teaches Zarathustra, exiles shall ye be from your fatherlands and forefatherlands. Not the land of your fathers shall ye love, but your children's land. This love is the new nobility—love of that new land, the undiscovered, far-off country in the remotest sea. To your children shall ye make amends for the misfortune of being your fathers' children. Thus shall ye redeem all the past.

Zarathustra is full of lenity. Others have said: Thou shalt not commit adultery. Zarathustra teaches: The honest should say to each other, "Let us see whether our love continue; let us fix a term, that we may find out whether we desire a longer term." What cannot be bent, will be broken. A woman said to Zarathustra, "Indeed, I broke the marriage, but first did the marriage break me."

Zarathustra is without mercy. It has been said: Push not a leaning waggon. But Zarathustra says: That which is ready to fall, shall ye also push. All that belongs to our day is falling and decaying. No one can preserve it, but Zarathustra will even help it to fall faster.

Zarathustra loves the brave. But not the bravery that takes up every challenge. There is often more bravery in holding back and passing by and reserving one's self for a worthier foe. Zarathustra does not teach: Ye shall love your enemies, but: Ye shall not engage in combat with enemies ye despise.

Why so hard? men cry to Zarathustra. He replies: Why so hard, once said the charcoal to the diamond; are we not near of kin? The creators are hard. Their blessedness it is to press their hand upon future centuries as upon wax.

No doctrine revolts Zarathustra more than that of the vanity and senselessness of life. This is in his eyes ancient babbling, old wives' babbling. And the pessimists who sum up life with a balance of aversion, and assert the badness of existence, are the objects of his positive loathing. He prefers pain to annihilation.

The same extravagant love of life is expressed in the *Hymn to Life*, written by his friend, Lou von Salomé, which Nietzsche set for chorus and orchestra. We read here—

> "So truly loves a friend his friend
> As I love thee, O Life in myst'ry hidden!
> If joy or grief to me thou send;
> If loud I laugh or else to weep am bidden,
> Yet love I thee with all thy changeful faces;
> And should'st thou doom me to depart,

So would I tear myself from thy embraces,
As comrade from a comrade's heart."

And the poem concludes—

"And if thou hast now left no bliss to crown me.
Lead on I thou hast thy sorrow still!"[8]

When Achilles chose to be a day-labourer on earth rather than a king in the realm of the shades, the expression was a weak one in comparison with this passionate outburst, which paradoxically thirsts even for the cup of pain.

Eduard von Hartmann believes in a beginning and end of the "world process." He concludes that no eternity can lie behind us; otherwise everything possible must already have happened, which—according to his contention—is not the case. In sharp contrast to him, on this point as on others, Zarathustra teaches, with, be it said, a somewhat shallow mysticism—which is derived from the ancient Pythagoreans' idea of the circular course of history and is influenced by Cohelet's Hebrew philosophy of life—the eternal recurrence; that is to say, that all things eternally return and we ourselves with them, that we have already existed an infinite number of times and all things with us. The great clock of the universe is to him an hour-glass, which is constantly turned and runs out again and again. This is the direct antithesis of Hartmann's doctrine of universal destruction, and curiously enough it was put forward at about the same time by two French thinkers: by Blanqui in *L'Éternité par les Astres* (1871), and by Gustave Le Bon in *L'Homme et les Sociétés* (1881).

At his death Zarathustra will say: Now I disappear

and die; in a moment I shall be nothing, for the soul is mortal as the body; but the complex of causes in which I am involved will return, and it will continually reproduce me.

At the close of the third part of *Zarathustra* there is a chapter headed "The Second Dance Song." Dance, in Nietzsche's language, is always an expression for the lofty lightness of mind, which is exalted above the gravity of earth and above all stupid seriousness. This song, extremely remarkable in its language, is a good specimen of the style of the work, when it soars into its highest flights of poetry. Life appears to Zarathustra as a woman; she strikes her castanets and he dances with her, flinging out all his wrath with life and all his love of life.

> "Lately looked I into thine eyes, O Life! Gold saw I gleaming in thy night-eye—my heart stood still with the joy of it.
>
> "A golden skiff saw I gleaming upon shadowy waters, a sinking, drinking, reblinking, golden swinging-skiff.
>
> "At my foot, dancing-mad, didst thou cast a glance, a laughing, questioning, melting, swinging-glance.
>
> "Twice only did thy little hands strike the castanets—then was my foot swinging in the madness of the dance.
>
> **********
>
> "I fear thee near, I love thee far;

> thy flight allureth me, thy seeking secureth me; I suffer, but for thee, what would I not gladly bear!
>
> "For thee, whose coldness inflameth, whose hatred misleadeth, whose flight enchaineth, whose mockery pleadeth!
>
> "Who would not hate thee, thou great bindress, inwindress, temptress, seekress, findress! Who would not love thee, thou innocent, impatient, wind-swift, child-eyed sinner!"

In this dialogue between the dancers, Life and her lover, these words occur: O Zarathustra, thou art far from loving me as dearly as thou sayest; thou art not faithful enough to me. There is an old, heavy booming-clock; it boometh by night up to thy cave. When thou hearest this clock at midnight, then dost thou think until noon that soon thou wilt forsake me.

And then follows, in conclusion, the song of the old midnight clock. But in the fourth part of the work, in the section called "The Sleepwalker's Song," this short strophe is interpreted line by line; in form half like a mediæval watchman's chant, half like the hymn of a mystic, it contains the mysterious spirit of Nietzsche's esoteric doctrine concentrated in the shortest formula—

> Midnight is drawing on, and as mysteriously, as terribly, and as cordially as the midnight bell speaketh to Zarathustra, so calleth he to the higher men: At midnight many a thing is heard which may not be heard by day; and the midnight speaketh: *O man, take heed*!

Whither hath time gone? Have I not sunk into deep wells? The world sleepeth. And shuddering it asketh: Who is to be master of the world? *What saith the deep midnight*?

The bell boometh, the wood-worm burroweth, the heart-worm gnaweth: *Ah! the world is deep*.

But the old bell is like a sonorous instrument; all pain hath bitten into its heart, the pain of fathers and forefathers; and all joy hath set it swinging, the joy of fathers and forefathers—there riseth from the bell an odour of eternity, a rosy-blessed, golden-wine perfume of old happiness, and this song: The world is deep, *and deeper than the day had thought*.

I am too pure for the rude hands of the day. The purest shall be masters of the world, the unacknowledged, the strongest, the midnight-souls, who are brighter and deeper than any day. *Deep is its woe*.

But joy goeth deeper than heart's grief. For grief saith: Break, my heart! Fly away, my pain! *Woe saith: Begone*!

But, ye higher men, said ye ever Yea to a single joy, then said ye also Yea unto all woe. For joy and woe are linked, enamoured, inseparable. And all beginneth again, all is eternal. *All joys desire eternity, deep, deep, eternity*.

This, then, is the midnight song—

"Oh Mensch! Gieb Acht!
Was spricht die tiefe Mitternacht?
'Ich schlief, ich schlief—

Aus tiefem Traum bin ich erwacht:—
Die Welt ist tief,
Und tiefer als der Tag gedacht.
Tief ist ihr Weh—
Lust—tiefer noch als Herzeleid:
Weh spricht: Vergeh!
Doch alle Lust will Ewigkeit—
—will tiefe, tiefe Ewigkeit!'"

[8] Translated by Herman Scheffauer. Text and pianoforte score are given in Vol. XVII (*Ecce Homo*) of the English edition of Nietzsche's works.

6.

Such is he, then, this warlike mystic, poet and thinker, this immoralist who is never tired of preaching. Coming to him fresh from the English philosophers, one feels transported to another world. The Englishmen are all patient spirits, whose natural bent is towards the accumulation and investigation of a mass of small facts in order thereby to discover a law. The best of them are Aristotelian minds. Few of them fascinate us personally or seem to be of very complex personality. Their influence lies more in what they do than in what they are. Nietzsche, on the other hand, like Schopenhauer, is a guesser, a seer, an artist, less interesting in what he does than in what he is.

Little as he feels himself a German, he nevertheless continues the metaphysical and intuitive tradition of German philosophy and has the German thinker's profound dislike of any utilitarian point of view. In his passionate aphoristical form he is unquestionably original; in the substance of his thought he reminds one here and there of many another writer, both of

contemporary Germany and of France; but he evidently regards, it as perfectly absurd that he should have to thank a contemporary for anything, and storms like a German at all those who resemble him in any point.

I have already mentioned how strongly he reminds one of Ernest Renan in his conception of culture and in his hope of an aristocracy of intellect that could seize the dominion of the world. Nevertheless he has not one appreciative word to say for Renan.

I have also alluded to the fact that Eduard von Hartmann was his predecessor in his fight against Schopenhauer's morality of pity. In this author, whose talent is indisputable, even though his importance may not correspond with his extraordinary reputation, Nietzsche, with the uncritical injustice of a German university professor, would only see a charlatan. Hartmann's nature is of heavier stuff than Nietzsche's. He is ponderous, self-complacent, fundamentally Teutonic, and, in contrast to Nietzsche, entirely unaffected by French spirit and southern sunshine. But there are points of resemblance between them, which are due to historical conditions in the Germany that reared them both.

In the first place, there was something analogous in their positions in life, since both as artillerymen had gone through a similar schooling; and in the second place, in their culture, inasmuch as the starting-point of both is Schopenhauer and both nevertheless retain a great respect for Hegel, thus uniting these two hostile brothers in their veneration. They are further in agreement in their equally estranged attitude to Christian piety and Christian morality, as well as in their contempt, so characteristic of modern Germany,

for every kind of democracy.

Nietzsche resembles Hartmann in his attacks on socialists and anarchists, with the difference that Hartmann's attitude is here more that of the savant, while Nietzsche has the bad taste to delight in talking about "anarchist dogs," expressing in the same breath his own loathing of the State. Nietzsche further resembles Hartmann in his repeated demonstration of the impossibility of the ideals of equality and of peace, since life is nothing but inequality and war: "What is good? To be brave is good. I do not say, the good cause sanctifies war, but the good war sanctifies every cause." Like his predecessor, he dwells on the necessity of the struggle for power and on the supposed value of war to culture.

In both these authors, comparatively independent as they are, the one a mystical natural philosopher, the other a mystical immoralist, is reflected the all-dominating militarism of the new German Empire. Hartmann approaches on many points the German snobbish national feeling. Nietzsche is opposed to it on principle, as he is to the statesman "who has piled up for the Germans a new tower of Babel, a monster in extent of territory and power and for that reason called great," but something of Bismarck's spirit broods nevertheless over the works of both. As regards the question of war, the only difference between them is that Nietzsche does not desire war for the sake of a fantastic redemption of the world, but in order that manliness may not become extinct.

In his contempt for woman and his abuse of her efforts for emancipation Nietzsche again agrees with Hartmann, though only in so far as both here recall Schopenhauer, whose echo Hartmann is in this

connection. But whereas Hartmann is here only a moralising doctrinaire with a somewhat offensive dash of pedantry, one can trace beneath Nietzsche's attacks on the female sex that subtle sense of woman's dangerousness which points to painful experience. He does not seem to have known many women, but those he did know, he evidently loved and hated, but above all despised. Again and again he returns to the unfitness of the free and great spirit for marriage. In many of these utterances there is a strongly personal note, especially in those which persistently assert the necessity of a solitary life for a thinker. But as regards the less personal arguments about woman, old-world Germany here speaks through the mouth of Nietzsche, as through that of Hartmann; the Germany whose women, in contrast to those of France and England, have for centuries been relegated to the domestic and strictly private life. We may recognise in these German writers generally that they have an eye for the profound antagonism and perpetual war between the sexes, which Stuart Mill neither saw nor understood. But the injustice to man and the rather tame fairness to woman, in which Mill's admirable emancipatory attempt occasionally results, is nevertheless greatly to be preferred to Nietzsche's brutal unfairness, which asserts that in our treatment of women we ought to return to "the vast common sense of old Asia."

Finally, in his conflict with pessimism Nietzsche had Eugen Dühring (especially in his *Werth des Lebens*) as a forerunner, and this circumstance seems to have inspired him with so much ill-will, so much exasperation indeed, that in a polemic now open, now disguised, he calls Dühring his ape. Dühring is a horror to him as a plebeian, as an Antisemite, as the

apostle of revenge, and as the disciple of the Englishmen and of Comte; but Nietzsche has not a word to say about Dühring's very remarkable qualities, to which such epithets as these do not apply. But we can easily understand, taking Nietzsche's own destiny into consideration, that Dühring, the blind man, the neglected thinker who despises official scholars, the philosopher who teaches outside the universities, who, in spite of being so little pampered by life, loudly proclaims his love of life—should appear to Nietzsche as a caricature of himself. This was, however, no reason for his now and then adopting Dühring's abusive tone. And it must be confessed that, much as Nietzsche wished to be what, for that matter, he was —a Polish *szlachcic*, a European man of the world and a cosmopolitan thinker—in one respect he always remained the German professor: in the rude abuse in which his uncontrolled hatred of rivals found vent; and, after all, his only rivals as a modern German philosopher were Hartmann and Dühring.

It is strange that this man, who learned such an immense amount from French moralists and psychologists like La Rochefoucauld, Chamfort and Stendhal, was able to acquire so little of the self-control of their form. He was never subjected to the restraint which the literary tone of France imposes upon every writer as regards the mention and exhibition of his own person. For a long time he seems to have striven to discover himself and to become completely himself. In order to find himself he crept into his solitude, as Zarathustra into his cave. By the time he had succeeded in arriving at full independent development and felt the rich flow of individual thought within him, he had lost all external standards for measuring his own value; all

bridges to the world around him were broken down. The fact that no recognition came from without only aggravated his self-esteem. The first glimmer of recognition further exalted this self-esteem. At last it closed above his head and darkened this rare and commanding intellect.

As he stands disclosed in his incompleted life-work, he is a writer well worth studying.

My principal reason for calling attention to him is that Scandinavian literature appears to me to have been living quite long enough on the ideas that were put forward and discussed in the last decade. It looks as though the power of conceiving great ideas were on the wane, and even as though receptivity for them were fast vanishing; people are still busy with the same doctrines, certain theories of heredity, a little Darwinism, a little emancipation of woman, a little morality of happiness, a little freethought, a little worship of democracy, etc. And as to the culture of our "cultured" people, the level represented approximately by the Revue des Deux Mondes threatens to become the high-water mark of taste. It does not seem yet to have dawned on the best among us that the finer, the only true culture begins on the far side of the *Revue des Deux Mondes* in the great personality, rich in ideas.

The intellectual development of Scandinavia has advanced comparatively rapidly in its literature. We have seen great authors rise above all orthodoxy, though they began by being perfectly simple-hearted believers. This is very honourable, but in the case of those who cannot rise higher still, it is nevertheless rather meagre. In the course of the 'seventies it became clear to almost all Scandinavian authors that it would no longer do to go on writing on the basis of

the Augsburg Confession. Some quietly dropped it, others opposed it more or less noisily; while most of those who abandoned it entrenched themselves against the public, and to some extent against the bad conscience of their own childhood, behind the established Protestant morality; now and then, indeed, behind a good, everyday soup-stock morality —I call it thus because so many a soup has been served from it.

But be that as it may, attacks on existing prejudices and defence of existing institutions threaten at present to sink into one and the same commonplace familiarity.

Soon, I believe, we shall once more receive a lively impression that art cannot rest content with ideas and ideals for the average mediocrity, any more than with remnants of the old' catechisms; but that great art demands intellects that stand on a level with the most individual personalities of contemporary thought, in exceptionality, in independence, in defiance and in aristocratic self-supremacy.

II

DECEMBER 1899

More than ten years have gone by since I first called attention to Friedrich Nietzsche. My essay on "Aristocratic Radicalism" was the first study of any length to be devoted, in the whole of Europe, to this man, whose name has since flown round the world and is at this moment one of the most famous among our contemporaries. This thinker, then almost

unknown and seldom mentioned, became, a few years later, the fashionable philosopher in every country of Europe, and this while the great man, to whose lot had suddenly fallen the universal fame he had so passionately desired, lived on without a suspicion of it all, a living corpse cut off from the world by incurable insanity.

Beginning with his native land, which so long as he retained his powers never gave him a sign of recognition, his writings have now made their way in every country. Even in France, usually so loth to admit foreign, and especially German, influence, his character and his doctrine have been studied and expounded again and again. In Germany, as well as outside it, a sort of school has been formed, which appeals to his authority and not unfrequently compromises him, or rather itself, a good deal. The opposition to him is conducted sometimes (as by Ludwig Stein) on serious and scientific lines, although from narrow pedagogic premises; sometimes (as by Herr Max Nordau) with sorry weapons and with the assumed superiority of presumptuous mediocrity.

Interesting articles and books on Nietzsche have been written by Peter Gast and Lou von Salomé in German and by Henri Lichtenberger in French; and in addition Nietzsche's sister, Frau Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche, has not only published an excellent edition of his collected works (including his youthful sketches), but has written his Life (and published his Correspondence).

My old essay on Nietzsche has thus long ago been outstripped by later works, the writers of which were able to take a knowledge of Nietzsche's work for granted and therefore to examine his writings

without at the same time having to acquaint the reader with their contents. That essay, it may be remembered, occasioned an exchange of words between Prof. Höffding and myself, in the course of which I had the opportunity of expressing my own views more clearly and of showing what points they had in common with Nietzsche's, and where they diverged from his.[1] As, of course, these polemical utterances of mine were not translated into foreign languages, no notice was taken of them anywhere abroad.

The first essay itself, on the other hand, which was soon translated, brought me in a number of attacks, which gradually acquired a perfectly stereotyped formula. In an article by a Germanised Swede, who wanted to be specially spiteful, I was praised for having in that essay broken with my past and resolutely renounced the set of liberal opinions and ideas I had hitherto championed. Whatever else I might be blamed for, it had to be acknowledged that twice in my life I had been the spokesman of German ideas, in my youth of Hegel's and in my maturer years of Nietzsche's. In a book by a noisy German charlatan living in Paris, Herr Nordau, it was shortly afterwards asserted that if Danish parents could guess what I was really teaching their children at the University of Copenhagen, they would kill me in the street—a downright incitement to murder, which was all the more comic in its pretext, as admission to my lectures has always been open to everybody, the greater part of these lectures has appeared in print, and, finally, twenty years ago the parents used very frequently to come and hear me. It was repeated in the same quarter that after being a follower of Stuart Mill, I had in that essay turned my back on my past, since I had now appeared as an adherent of

Nietzsche. This last statement was afterwards copied in a very childish book by a Viennese lady who, without a notion of the actual facts, writes away, year in, year out, on Scandinavian literature for the benefit of the German public. This nonsense was finally disgorged once more in 1899 by Mr. Alfred Ipsen, who contributed to the London *Athenæum* surveys of Danish literature, among the virtues of which impartiality did not find a place.

In the face of these constantly repeated assertions from abroad, I may be permitted to make it clear once more—as I have already shown in *Tilskueren* in 1890 (p. 259)—that my principles have not been in the slightest way modified through contact with Nietzsche. When I became acquainted with him I was long past the age at which it is possible to change one's fundamental view of life. Moreover, I maintained many years ago, in reply to my Danish opponents, that my first thought with regard to a philosophical book was by no means to ask whether what it contains is right or wrong: "I go straight through the book to the man behind it. And my first question is this: What is the value of this man, is he interesting, or not? If he is, then his books are undoubtedly worth knowing. Questions of right or wrong are seldom applicable in the highest intellectual spheres, and their answering is not unfrequently of relatively small importance. The first lines I wrote about Nietzsche were therefore to the effect that he deserved to be studied and *contested*. I rejoiced in him, as I rejoice in every powerful and uncommon individuality." And three years later I replied to the attack of a worthy and able Swiss professor, who had branded Nietzsche as a reactionary and a cynic, in these words, amongst others: "No mature reader studies Nietzsche with the

latent design of adopting his opinions, still less with that of propagating them. We are not children in search of instruction, but sceptics in search of men, and we rejoice when we have found a man—the rarest thing there is."

It seems to me that this is not exactly the language of an adherent, and that my critics might spare some of their powder and shot as regards my renunciation of ideas. It is a nuisance to be forced now and then to reply in person to all the allegations that are accumulated against one year by year in the European press; but when others never write a sensible word about one, it becomes an obligation at times to stand up for one's self.

My personal connection with Nietzsche began with his sending me his book, *Beyond Good and Evil*. I read it, received a strong impression, though not a clear or decided one, and did nothing further about it—for one reason, because I receive every day far too many books to be able to acknowledge them. But as in the following year *The Genealogy of Morals* was sent me by the author, and as this book was not only much clearer in itself, but also threw new light on the earlier one, I wrote Nietzsche a few lines of thanks, and this led to a correspondence which was interrupted by Nietzsche's attack of insanity thirteen months later.

The letters he sent me in that last year of his conscious life appear to me to be of no little psychological and biographical interest.

[1] See *Tilskueren* (Copenhagen) for August and November-December 1889, January, February-March, April and May 1890.

CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE AND GEORGE BRANDES

1. BRANDES TO NIETZSCHE.

Copenhagen, Nov. 26, 1887.

DEAR SIR,

A year ago I received through your publisher your work *Beyond Good and Evil*; the other day your latest book reached me in the same way. Of your other books I have *Human, all-too-Human*. I had just sent the two volumes I possess to the binder, when *The Genealogy of Morals* arrived, so that I have not been able to compare it with the earlier works, as I mean to do. By degrees I shall read everything of yours attentively.

This time, however, I am anxious to express at once my sincere thanks for the book sent. It is an honour to me to be known to you, and known in such a way that you should wish to gain me as a reader.

A new and original spirit breathes to me from your books. I do not yet fully understand what I have read; I cannot always see your intention. But I find much that harmonises with my own ideas and sympathies, the depreciation of the ascetic ideals and the profound disgust with democratic mediocrity, your aristocratic radicalism. Your contempt for the morality of pity is not yet clear to me. There were also in the other work some reflections on women in general which did not agree with my own line of thought. Your nature is so absolutely different from mine that it is not easy for me to feel at home. In spite of your universality you are very German in your mode of thinking and writing. You are one of the few people with whom I should enjoy a talk.

I know nothing about you. I see with astonishment that you are a professor and doctor. I congratulate you in any case on being intellectually so little of a professor.

I do not know what you have read of mine. My writings only attempt the solution of modest problems. For the most part they are only to be had in Danish. For many years I have not written German. I have my best public in the Slavonic countries, I believe. I have lectured in Warsaw for two years in succession, and this year in Petersburg and Moscow, in French. Thus I endeavour to break through the narrow limits of my native land.

Although no longer young, I am still one of the most inquisitive of men and one of the most eager to learn. You will therefore not find me closed against your ideas, even when I differ from you in thought and feeling. I am often stupid, but never in the least narrow.

Let me have the pleasure of a few lines if you think it worth the trouble.

Yours gratefully,
GEORGE BRANDES.

2. NIETZSCHE TO BRANDES.

Nice, Dec. 2, 1887.

MY DEAR SIR,

A few readers whom one honours and beyond them no readers at all—that is really what I desire. As regards the latter part of this wish, I am bound to say my hope of its realisation is growing less and less. All the more happy am I *in satis sunt pauci*, that the *pauci* do not fail and have never failed me. Of the living amongst them I will mention (to name only those

whom you are certain to know) my distinguished friend Jakob Burkhardt, Hans von Bülow, H. Taine, and the Swiss poet Keller; of the dead, the old Hegelian Bruno Bauer and Richard Wagner. It gives me sincere pleasure that so good a European and missionary of culture as yourself will in future be numbered amongst them; I thank you with all my heart for this proof of your goodwill.

I am afraid you will find it a difficult position. I myself have no doubt that my writings in one way or another are still "very German." You will, I am sure, feel this all the more markedly, being so spoilt by yourself; I mean, by the free and graceful French way in which you handle the language (a more familiar way than mine). With me a great many words have acquired an incrustation of foreign salts and taste differently on my tongue and on those of my readers. On the scale of my experiences and circumstances the predominance is given to the rarer, remoter, more attenuated tones as against the normal, medial ones. Besides (as an old musician, which is what I really am), I have an ear for quarter-tones. Finally—and this probably does most to make my books obscure—there is in me a distrust of dialectics, even of reasons. What a person already holds "true" or has not yet acknowledged as true; seems to me to depend mainly on his courage, on the relative strength of his courage (I seldom have the courage for what I really know).

The expression *Aristocratic Radicalism*, which you employ, is very good. It is, permit me to say, the cleverest thing I have yet read about myself.

How far this mode of thought has carried me already, how far it will carry me yet—I am almost afraid to imagine. But there are certain paths which

do not allow one to go backward and so I go forward, because I *must*.

That I may not neglect anything on my part that might facilitate your access to my cave—that is, my philosophy—my Leipzig publisher shall send you all my older books *en bloc*. I recommend you especially to read the new prefaces to them (they have nearly all been republished); these prefaces, if read in order, will perhaps throw some light upon me, assuming that I am not obscurity in itself (obscure in myself) as *obscurissimus obscurorum virorum*. For that is quite possible.

Are you a musician? A work of mine for chorus and orchestra is just being published, a "Hymn to Life." This is intended to represent my music to posterity and one day to be sung "in my memory"; assuming that there is enough left of me for that. You see what posthumous thoughts I have. But a philosophy like mine is like a grave—it takes one from among the living. *Bene vixit qui bene latuit*—was inscribed on Descartes' tombstone. What an epitaph, to be sure!

I too hope we may meet some day,

Yours,
NIETZSCHE.

N.B.—I am staying this winter at Nice. My summer address is Sils-Maria, Upper-Engadine, Switzerland—I have resigned my professorship at the University. I am three parts blind.

3. BRANDES TO NIETZSCHE.

Copenhagen, Dec. 15, 1887.

MY DEAR SIR,

The last words of your letter are those that have made most impression on me; those in which you tell me that your eyes are seriously affected. Have you consulted good oculists, the best? It alters one's whole psychological life if one cannot see well. You owe it to all who honour you to do everything possible for the preservation and improvement of your sight.

I have put off answering your letter because you announced the sending of a parcel of books, and I wished to thank you for them at the same time. But as the parcel has not yet arrived I will send you a few words to-day. I have your books back from the binder and have gone into them as deeply as I was able amid the stress of preparing lectures and all kinds of literary and political work.

December 17.

I am quite willing to be called a "good European," less so to be called a "missionary of culture." I have a horror of all missionary effort—because I have come across none but moralising missionaries—and I am afraid I do not altogether believe in what is called culture. Our culture as a whole cannot inspire enthusiasm, can it? and what would a missionary be without *enthusiasm*! In other words, I am more isolated than you think. All I meant by being German was that you write more for yourself, think more of yourself in writing, than for the general public; whereas most non—German writers have been obliged to force themselves into a certain discipline of style, which no doubt makes the latter clearer and more plastic, but necessarily deprives it of all profundity and compels the writer to keep to himself his most intimate and best individuality, the anonymous in him. I have thus been horrified at

times to see how little of my inmost self is more than hinted at in my writings.

I am no connoisseur in music. The arts of which I have some notion are sculpture and painting; I have to thank them for my deepest artistic impressions. My ear is undeveloped. In my young days this was a great grief to me. I used to play a good deal and worked at thorough-bass for a few years, but nothing came of it. I can enjoy good music keenly, but still am one of the uninitiated.

I think I can trace in your works certain points of agreement with my own taste: your predilection for Beyle, for instance, and for Taine; but the latter I have not seen for seventeen years. I am not so enthusiastic about his work on the Revolution as you seem to be. He deplores and harangues an earthquake.

I used the expression "aristocratic radicalism" because it so exactly defines my own political convictions. I am a little hurt, however, at the offhand and impetuous pronouncements against such —phenomena as socialism and anarchism in your works. The anarchism of Prince Kropotkin, for instance, is no stupidity. The name, of course, is nothing. Your intellect, which is usually so dazzling, seems to me to fall a trifle short where truth is to be found in a nuance. Your views on the origin of the moral ideas interest me in the highest degree.

You share—to my delighted astonishment—a certain repugnance which I feel for Herbert Spencer. With us he passes for the god of philosophy. However, it is as a rule a distinct merit with these Englishmen that their not very high-soaring intellect shuns hypotheses, whereas hypothesis has destroyed the supremacy of German philosophy. Is not there a

great deal that is hypothetical in your ideas of caste distinctions as the source of various moral concepts?

I know Rée whom you attack, have met him in Berlin; he was a quiet man, rather distinguished in his bearing, but a somewhat dry and limited intellect. He was living—according to his own account, as brother and sister—with a quite young and intelligent Russian lady, who published a year or two ago a book called *Der Kampf um Gott*, but this gives no idea of her genuine gifts.

I am looking forward to receiving the books you promise me. I hope in future you will not lose sight of me.

Yours,
GEORGE BRANDES.

4. NIETZSCHE TO BRANDES.

Nice, Jan. 8, 1888.

You should not object to the expression "missionary of culture." What better way is there of being one in our day than that of "missionising" one's disbelief in culture? To have understood that our European culture is a vast problem and by no means a solution —is not such a degree of introspection and self-conquest nowadays culture itself?

I am surprised my books have not yet reached you. I shall not omit to send a reminder to Leipzig. At Christmas time Messieurs the publishers are apt to lose their heads. Meanwhile may I be allowed to bring to your notice a daring curiosity over which no publisher has authority, an *ineditum* of mine that is among the most personal things I can show. It is the fourth part of my *Zarathustra*; its proper title, with regard to what precedes and follows it, should be—

Zarathustra's Temptation

An Interlude.

Perhaps this is my best answer to your question about my problem of pity. Besides which, there are excellent reasons for gaining admission to "me" by this particular secret door; provided that one crosses the threshold with your eyes and ears. Your essay on Zola reminded me once more, like everything I have met with of yours (the last was an essay in the Goethe Year-book), in the most agreeable way of your natural tendency towards every kind of psychological optics. When working out the most difficult mathematical problems of the *âme moderne* you are as much in your element as a German scholar in such case is apt to be out of his. Or do you perhaps think more favourably of present-day Germans? It seems to me that they become year by year more clumsy and rectangular *in rebus psychologicis* (in direct contrast to the Parisians, with whom everything is becoming *nuance* and mosaic), so that all events below the surface escape their notice. For example, my *Beyond Good and Evil*—what an awkward position it has put them in! Not one intelligent word has reached me about this book, let alone an intelligent sentiment. I do not believe even the most well-disposed of my readers has discovered that he has here to deal with the logical results of a perfectly definite philosophical *sensibility*, and not with a medley of a hundred promiscuous paradoxes and heterodoxies. Nothing of the kind has been "experienced"; my readers do not bring to it a thousandth part of the passion and suffering that is needed. An "immoralist!" This does not suggest anything to them.

By the way, the Goncourts in one of their prefaces

claim to have invented the phrase *document humain*. But for all that M. Taine may well be its real originator.

You are right in what you say about "haranguing an earthquake "; but such Quixotism is among the most honourable things on this earth.

With the greatest respect,

Yours,
NIETZSCHE.

5. BRANDES TO NIETZSCHE.

Copenhagen, Jan. 11, 1888.

MY DEAR SIR,

Your publisher has apparently forgotten to send me your books, but I have to-day received your letter with thanks. I take the liberty of sending you herewith one of my books in proof (because unfortunately I have no other copy at hand), a collection of essays intended for *export*, therefore not my best wares. They date from various times and are all too polite, too laudatory, too idealistic in tone. I never really say all I think in them. The paper on Ibsen is no doubt the best, but the translation of the verses, which I had done for me, is unfortunately wretched.

There is one Scandinavian writer whose works would interest you, if only they were translated: *Sören Kierkegaard*; he lived from 1813 to 1855, and is in my opinion one of the profoundest psychologists that have ever existed. A little book I wrote about him (translated, Leipzig, 1879) gives no adequate idea of his genius, as it is a sort of polemical pamphlet written to counteract his influence. But in a

psychological respect it is, I think, the most subtle thing I have published.

The essay in the Goethe Year-book was unfortunately shortened by more than a third, as the space had been reserved for me. It is a good deal better in Danish.

If you happen to read Polish, I will send you a little book that I have published only in that language.

I see the new *Rivista Contemporanea* of Florence has printed a paper of mine on Danish literature. You must not read it. It is full of the most ridiculous mistakes. It is translated from the Russian, I must tell you. I had allowed it to be translated into Russian from my French text, but could not check this translation; now it appears in Italian from the Russian with fresh absurdities; amongst others in the names (on account of the Russian pronunciation), G for H throughout.

I am glad you find in me something serviceable to yourself. For the last four years I have been the most detested man in Scandinavia. Every day the papers rage against me, especially since my last long quarrel with Björnson, in which the moral German papers all took part against me. I dare say you know his absurd play, *A Gauntlet*, his propaganda for male virginity and his covenant with the spokeswomen of "the demand for equality in morals." Anything like it was certainly unheard of till now. In Sweden these insane women have formed great leagues in which they vow "only to marry virgin men." I suppose they get a guarantee with them, like watches, only the guarantee for the future is not likely to be forthcoming.

I have read the three books of yours that I know

again and again. There are two or three bridges leading from my inner world to yours: Cæsarism, hatred of pedantry, a sense for Beyle, etc., but still most of it is strange to me. Our experiences appear to be so infinitely dissimilar. You are without doubt the most suggestive of all German writers.

Your German literature! I don't know what is the matter with it. I fancy all the brains must go into the General Staff or the administration. The whole life of Germany and all your institutions are spreading the *most hideous uniformity*, and even authorship is stifled by publishing.

Your obliged and respectful,
GEORGE BRANDES.

6. NIETZSCHE TO BRANDES.

Nice, Feb. 19, 1888.

You have laid me under a most agreeable obligation with your contribution to the idea of "Modernity," for it happens that this winter I am circling round this paramount problem of values, very much from above and in the manner of a bird, and with the best intention of looking down upon the modern world with as unmodern an eye as possible. I admire—let me confess it—the tolerance of your judgment, as much as the moderation of your sentences. How you suffer these "little children" to come unto you! Even Heyse!

On my next visit to Germany I propose to take up the psychological problem of Kierkegaard and at the same time to renew acquaintance with your older literature. It will be of use to me in the best sense of the word—and will serve to restore good humour to my own severity and arrogance of judgment.

My publisher telegraphed to me yesterday that the books had gone to you. I will spare you and myself the story of why they were delayed. Now, my dear Sir, may you put a good face on a bad bargain, I mean on this Nietzsche literature.

I myself cherish the notion of having given the "new Germans" the richest, most actual and most independent books of any they possess; also of being in my own person a capital event in the crisis of the determination of values. But this may be an error; and, what is more, a piece of foolishness—I do not want to have to believe anything [of the sort] about myself.

One or two further remarks: they concern my firstlings (the *Juvenilia* and *Juvenalia*).

The pamphlet against Strauss, the wicked merrymaking of a "very free spirit" at the expense of one who thought himself such, led to a terrific scandal; I was already a *Professor Ordinarius* at the time, therefore in spite of my twenty-seven years a kind of authority and something acknowledged. The most unbiassed view of this affair, in which almost every "notability" took part for or against me, and in which an insane quantity of paper was covered with printer's ink, is to be found in Karl Hillebrand's *Zeiten, Völker und Menschen*, second volume. The trouble was not that I had jeered at the senile bungling of an eminent critic, but that I had caught German taste *in flagranti* in compromising tastelessness; for in spite of all party differences of religion and theology it had unanimously admired Strauss's *Alten und Neuen Glauben* as a masterpiece of freedom and subtlety of thought (even the style!). My pamphlet was the first onslaught on German culture (that "culture" which they imagined to have

gained the victory over France). The word "Culture-Philistine," which I then invented, has remained in the language as a survival of the raging turmoil of that polemic.

The two papers on Schopenhauer and Richard Wagner appear to me to-day to contain self-confessions, above all promises to myself, rather than any real psychology of those two masters, who are at the same time profoundly related and profoundly antagonistic to me—(I was the first to distill a sort of unity out of them both; at present this superstition is much to the fore in German culture—that all Wagnerites are followers of Schopenhauer. It was otherwise when I was young. Then it was the last of the Hegelians who adhered to Wagner, and "Wagner and Hegel" was still the watchword of the 'fifties).

Between *Thoughts out of Season* and *Human, all-too-Human* there lies a crisis and a skin-casting. Physically too: I lived for years in extreme proximity to death. This was my great good fortune: I forgot myself, I outlived myself ... I have performed the same trick once again.

So now we have each presented gifts to the other: two travellers, it seems to me, who are glad to have met.

I remain,
Yours most sincerely,
NIETZSCHE.

7. BRANDES TO NIETZSCHE.

Copenhagen, March 7, 1888.

MY DEAR SIR,

I imagine you to be living in fine spring weather; up

here we are buried in abominable snowdrifts and have been cut off from Europe for several days. To make things worse, I have this evening been talking to some hundred imbeciles, and everything looks grey and dreary around me, so to revive my spirits a little I will thank you for your letter of February 19 and your generous present of books.

As I was too busy to write to you at once, I sent you a volume on German Romanticism which I found on my shelves. I should be very sorry, however, that you should interpret my sending it otherwise than as a silent expression of thanks.

The book was written in 1873 and revised in 1886; but my German publisher has permitted himself a number of linguistic and other alterations, so that the first two pages, for instance, are hardly mine at all. Wherever he does not understand my meaning, he puts something else, and declares that what I have written is not German.

Moreover, the man promised to buy the rights of the old translation of my book, but from very foolish economy has not done so; the consequence is that the German courts have suppressed my book in two instances as pirated(!)—because I had included in it fragments of the old translation—while the real pirate is allowed to sell my works freely.

The probable result of this will be that I shall withdraw entirely from German literature.

I sent that volume because I had no other. But the first one on the *émigrés*, the fourth on the English and the fifth on the French romanticists are all far, far better; written *con amore*.

The title of the book, *Moderne Geister*, is fortuitous. I have written some twenty volumes. I wanted to put

together for abroad a volume on personalities whose names would be familiar. That is how it came about. Some things in it have cost a good deal of study, such as the paper on Tegnér, which tells the truth about him for the first time. Ibsen will certainly interest you as a personality. Unfortunately as a man he does not stand on the same level that he reaches as a poet. Intellectually he owes much to Kierkegaard, and he is still strongly permeated by theology. Björnson in his latest phase has become just an ordinary lay-preacher.

For more than three years I have not published a book; I felt too unhappy. These three years have been among the hardest of my life, and I see no sign of the approach of better times. However, I am now going to set about the publication of the sixth volume of my work and another book besides. It will take a deal of time.

I was delighted with all the fresh books, turning them over and reading them.

The youthful books are of great value to me; they make it far easier to understand you; I am now leisurely ascending the steps that lead up to your intellect. With *Zarathustra* I began too precipitately. I prefer to advance upwards rather than to dive head first as though into a sea.

I knew Hillebrand's essay and read years ago some bitter attacks on the book about Strauss. I am grateful to you for the word culture-philistine; I had no idea it was yours. I take no offence at the criticism of Strauss, although I have feelings of piety for the old gentleman. Yet he was always the Tübingen collegian.

Of the other works I have at present only studied *The*

Dawn of Day at all closely. I believe I understand the book thoroughly, many of its ideas have also been mine, others are new to me or put into a new shape, but not on that account *strange* to me.

One solitary remark, so as not to make this letter too long. I am delighted with the aphorism on the hazard of marriage (Aphorism 150). But why do you not *dig* deeper here? You speak somewhere with a certain reverence of marriage, which by implying an emotional ideal has idealised emotion—here, however, you are more blunt and forcible. Why not for once say the *full* truth about it? I am of opinion that the institution of marriage, which may have been very useful in taming brutes, causes more misery to mankind than even the Church has done. Church, monarchy, marriage, property, these are to my mind four old venerable institutions which mankind will have to reform *from the foundations* in order to be able to breathe freely. And of these marriage alone kills the individuality, paralyses liberty and is the embodiment of a paradox. But the shocking thing about it is that humanity is still too coarse to be able to shake it off. The most emancipated writers, so called, still speak of marriage with a devout and virtuous air which maddens me. And they gain their point, since it is impossible to say what one could put in its place for the mob. There is nothing else to be done but slowly to transform opinion. What do you think about it?

I should like very much to hear how it is with your eyes. I was glad to see how plain and clear your writing is.

Externally, I suppose, you lead a calm and peaceful life down there? Mine is a life of conflict which wears one out. In these realms I am even more hated

now than I was seventeen years ago; this is not pleasant in itself, though it is gratifying in so far as it proves to me that I have not yet lost my vigour nor come to terms on any point with sovereign mediocrity.

Your attentive and grateful reader,
GEORGE BRANDES.

8. NIETZSCHE TO BRANDES.

Nice, March 27, 1888.

MY DEAR SIR,

I should much have liked to thank you before this for so rich and thoughtful a letter: but my health has been troubling me, so that I have fallen badly into arrears with all good things. In my eyes, I may say in passing, I have a dynamometer for my general state; since my health in the main has once more improved, they have become stronger than I had ever believed possible—they have put to shame the prophecies of the very best German oculists. If Messieurs Gräfe *et hoc genus omne* had turned out right, I should long ago have been blind. As it is, I have come to No. 3 spectacles—bad enough!—*but I still see*. I speak of this worry because you were sympathetic enough to inquire about it, and because during the last few weeks my eyes have been particularly weak and irritable.

I feel for you in the North, now so wintry and gloomy; how does one manage to keep one's soul erect there? I admire almost every man who does not lose faith in himself under a cloudy sky, to say nothing of his faith in "humanity," in "marriage," in "property," in the "State." ... In Petersburg I should be a nihilist: here I believe as a plant believes, in the

sun. The sun of Nice—you cannot call that a prejudice. We have had it at the expense of all the rest of Europe. God, with the cynicism peculiar to him, lets it shine upon us idlers, "philosophers" and sharpers more brightly than upon the far worthier military heroes of the "Fatherland."

But then, with the instinct of the Northerner, you have chosen the strongest of all stimulants to help you to endure life in the North: war, the excitement of aggression, the Viking raid. I divine in your writings the practised soldier; and not only "mediocrity," but perhaps especially the more independent or individual characters of the Northern mind may be constantly challenging you to fight. How much of the "parson," how much theology is still left behind in all this idealism!... To me it would be still worse than a cloudy sky, to have to make oneself angry over things *which do not concern one*.

So much for this time; it is little enough. Your *German Romanticism* has set me thinking, how this whole movement actually only reached its goal as music (Schumann, Mendelssohn, Weber, Wagner, Brahms); as literature it remained a great promise. The French were more fortunate. I am afraid I am too much of a musician not to be a romanticist. Without music life to me would be a mistake.

With cordial and grateful regards I remain, dear Sir,
Yours,
NIETZSCHE.

9. BRANDES TO NIETZSCHE.

Copenhagen, April 3, 1888.

MY DEAR SIR,

You have called the postman the medium of ill-

mannered invasions. That is very true as a rule, and should be *sat. sapienti* not to trouble you. I am not an intruder by nature, so little in fact that I lead an almost isolated life, am indeed loth to write letters and, like all authors, loth to write at all.

Yesterday, however, when I had received your letter and taken up one of your books, I suddenly felt a sort of vexation at the idea that nobody here in Scandinavia knew anything about you, and I soon determined to make you known at a stroke. The newspaper cutting will tell you that (having just finished a series of lectures on Russia) I am announcing fresh lectures on your writings. For many years I have been obliged to repeat all my lectures, as the University cannot hold the audiences; that is not likely to be the case this time, as your name is so absolutely new, but the people who will come and get an impression of your works will not be of the dullest.

As I should very much like to have an idea of your appearance, *I beg you to give me a portrait of yourself*. I enclose my last photograph. I would also ask you to tell me quite briefly when and where you were born and in what years you published (or better, wrote) your works, as they are not dated. If you have any newspaper that contains these details, there will be no need to write. I am an unmethodical person and possess neither dictionaries of authors nor other books of reference in which your name might be found.

The youthful works—the *Thoughts out of Season*—have been very useful to me. How young you were and enthusiastic, how frank and naïve I There is much in the maturer books that I do not yet understand; you appear to me often to hint at or

generalise about entirely intimate, personal data, giving the reader a beautiful casket without the key. But most of it I understand. I was enchanted by the youthful work on Schopenhauer; although personally I owe little to Schopenhauer, it seemed to speak to me from the soul.

One or two pedantic corrections: *Joyful Wisdom*, p. 116. The words quoted are not Chamfort's last, they are to be found in his *Caractères et Anecdotes*: dialogue between M. D. and M. L. in explanation of the sentence: *Peu de personnes et pen de choses m'intéressent, mais rien ne m'intéresse moins que moi.* The concluding words are: en vivant et *en voyant les hommes, il faut que le cour se brise ou se bronze*.

On p. 118 you speak of the elevation "in which Shakespeare places Cæsar." I find Shakespeare's Cæsar pitiable. An act of high treason. And this glorification of the miserable fellow whose only achievement was to plunge a knife into a great man!

Human, all-too-Human, II, p. 59. A holy lie. "It is the only holy lie that has become famous." No, Desdemona's last words are perhaps still more beautiful and just as famous, often quoted in Germany at the time when Jacobi was writing on Lessing. Am I not right?

These trifles are only to show you that I read you attentively. Of course, there are very different matters that I might discuss with you, but a letter is not the place for them.

If you read Danish, I should like to send you a handsomely got-up little book on Holberg, which will appear in a week. Let me know whether you understand our language. If you read Swedish, I call your attention to Sweden's only genius, August

Strindberg. When you write about women you are very like him.

I hope you will have nothing but good to tell me of your eyes.

Yours sincerely,
GEORGE BRANDES.

10. NIETZSCHE TO BRANDES.

Torino (Italia) ferma in posta,
April 10, 1888.

But, my dear Sir, what a surprise is this!—Where have you found the courage to propose to speak in public of a *vir obscurissimus*?... Do you imagine that I am known in the beloved Fatherland? They treat me there as if I were something singular and absurd, something that for the present need not be *taken seriously*.... Evidently they have an inkling that I do not take them seriously either: and how could I, nowadays, when "German intellect" has become a *contradictio in adjecto*!—My best thanks for the photograph. Unfortunately I have none to send in return: my sister, who is married and lives in South America, took with her the last portraits I possessed.

Enclosed is a little *vita*, the first I have ever written.

As regards the dates of composition of the different books, they are to be found on the back of the cover of *Beyond Good and Evil*. Perhaps you no longer have this cover.

The Birth of Tragedy was written between the summer of 1870 and the winter of 1871 (finished at Lugano, where I was living with the family of Field-Marshal Moltke).

The *Thoughts out of Season* between 1872 and the

summer of 1875 (there were to have been thirteen; luckily my health said No!).

What you say about Schopenhauer as Educator gives me great pleasure. This little work serves me as a touchstone; he to whom it says nothing personal has probably nothing to do with me either. In reality it contains the whole plan according to which I have hitherto lived; it is a rigorous promise.

Human, all-too-Human, with its two continuations, summer of 1876-1879. *The Dawn of Day*, 1880. *The Joyful Wisdom*, January 1882. *Zarathustra*, 1883-1885 (each part in about ten days. Perfect state of "inspiration." All conceived in the course of rapid walks: absolute certainty, as though each sentence were shouted to one. While writing the book, the greatest physical elasticity and sense of power).

Beyond Good and Evil, summer of 1885 in the Upper Engadine and the following winter at Nice.

The Genealogy decided on, carried out and sent ready for press to the printer at Leipzig, all between July 10 and 30, 1887. (Of course there are also *philologica* of mine, but they do not concern you and me.)

I am now making an experiment with Turin; I shall stay here till June 5 and then go to the Engadine. The weather so far is wintry, harsh and unpleasant. But the town superbly calm and favourable to my instincts. The finest pavement in the world.

Sincere greetings from
Yours gratefully,
NIETZSCHE.

A pity I understand neither Danish nor Swedish.

Vita.—I was born on October 15, 1844, on the battlefield of Lützen. The first name I heard was that

of Gustavus Adolphus. My ancestors were Polish noblemen (Niëzky); it seems the type has been well maintained, in spite of three generations of German mothers. Abroad I am usually taken for a Pole; this very winter the visitors' list at Nice entered me *comme Polonais*. I am told my head occurs in Matejko's pictures. My grandmother belonged to the Schiller-Goethe circles of Weimar; her brother was Herder's successor in the position of General Superintendent at Weimar. I had the good fortune to be a pupil of the venerable Pforta School, from which so many who have made a name in German literature have proceeded (Klopstock, Fichte, Schlegel, Ranke, etc., etc.). We had masters who would have (or have) done honour to any university. I studied at Bonn, afterwards at Leipzig; old Ritschl, then the first philologist in Germany, singled me out almost from the first. At twenty-two I was a contributor to the *Litterarisches Centralblatt* (Zarncke). The foundation of the Philological Society of Leipzig, which still exists, is due to me. In the winter of 1868-1869 the University of Basle offered me a professorship; I was as yet not even a Doctor. The University of Leipzig afterwards conferred the doctor's degree on me, in a very honourable way, without any examination, and even without a dissertation. From Easter 1869 to 1879 I was at Basle; I was obliged to give up my rights as a German subject, since as an officer (Horse Artillery) I should have been called up too frequently and my academic duties would have been interfered with. I am none the less master of two weapons, the sabre and the cannon—and perhaps of a third as well.... At Basle everything went very well, in spite of my youth; it sometimes happened, especially with candidates for the doctor's degree, that the examinee

was older than the examiner.

I had the great good fortune to form a cordial friendship with Jakob Burkhardt, an unusual thing with that very hermit-like and secluded thinker. A still greater piece of good fortune was that from the earliest days of my Basle existence an indescribably close intimacy sprang up between me and Richard and Cosima Wagner, who were then living on their estate of Triebschen, near Lucerne, as though on an island, and were cut off from all former ties. For some years we had everything, great and small, in common, a confidence without bounds. (You will find printed in Volume VII of Wagner's complete works a "message" to me, referring to *The Birth of Tragedy*.) As a result of these relations I came to know a large circle of persons (and "personesses"), in fact pretty nearly everything that grows between Paris and Petersburg. By about 1876 my health became worse. I then spent a winter at Sorrento, with my old friend, Baroness Meysenbug (*Memoirs of an Idealist*) and the sympathetic Dr. Rée. There was no improvement. I suffered from an extremely painful and persistent headache, which exhausted all my strength. This went on for a number of years, till it reached such a climax of habitual suffering, that at that time I had 200 days of torment in the year. The trouble must have been due entirely to local causes, there is no neuropathic basis for it of any sort. I have never had a symptom of mental disturbance; not even of fever, nor of fainting. My pulse was at that time as slow as that of the first Napoleon (= 60). My speciality was to endure extreme pain, *cru, vert*, with perfect clarity, for two or three consecutive days, accompanied by constant vomiting of bile. The report has been put about that I was in a madhouse (and indeed that I died there). Nothing is further

from the truth. As a matter of fact my intellect only came to maturity during that terrible time: witness the *Dawn of Day*, which I wrote in 1881 during a winter of incredible suffering at Genoa, away from doctors, friends or relations. This book serves me as a sort of "dynamometer": I composed it with a minimum of strength and health. From 1882 on I went forward again, very slowly, it is true: the crisis was past (my father died very young, just at the age at which I was myself so near to death). I have to use extreme care even to-day; certain conditions of a climatic and meteorological order are indispensable to me. It is not from choice but from necessity that I spend the summer in the Upper Engadine and the winter at Nice.... After all, my illness has been of the greatest use to me: it has released me, it has restored to me the courage to be myself.... And, indeed, in virtue of my instincts, I am a brave animal, a military one even. The long resistance has somewhat exasperated my pride. Am I a philosopher, do you ask?—But what does that matter!...

11. BRANDES TO NIETZSCHE.

Copenhagen, April 29, 1888.

MY DEAR SIR,

The first time I lectured on your works, the hall was not quite full, an audience of perhaps a hundred and fifty, since no one knew who and what you are. But as an important newspaper reported my first lecture, and as I have myself written an article on you, interest was roused, and next time the hall was full to bursting. Some three hundred people listened with the greatest attention to my exposition of your works. Nevertheless, I have not ventured to repeat

the lectures, as has been my practice for many years, since the subject is hardly of a popular nature. I hope the result will be to get you some good readers in the North.

Your books now stand on one of my shelves, very handsomely bound. I should be very glad to possess everything you have published.

When, in your first letter, you offered me a musical work of yours, a *Hymn to Life*, I declined the gift from modesty, being no great judge of music. Now I think I have deserved the work through my interest in it and should be much obliged if you would have it sent to me.

I believe I may sum up the impression of my audience in the feeling of a young painter, who said to me: "What makes this so interesting is that it has not to do with books, *but with life*." If any objection is taken to your ideas, it is that they are "too out-and-out."

It was unkind of you not to send me a photograph; I really only sent mine to put you under an obligation. It is so little trouble to sit to a photographer for a minute or two, and one knows a man far better when one has an idea of his appearance.

Yours very sincerely,
GEORGE BRANDES.

12. NIETZSCHE TO BRANDES.

Turin, May 4, 1888.

MY DEAR SIR,

What you tell me gives me great pleasure and—let me confess it—still more surprise. Be sure I shall owe you for it: you know, hermits are not given to

forgetting.

Meanwhile I hope my photograph will have reached you. It goes without saying that I took steps, not exactly to be photographed (for I am extremely distrustful of haphazard photographs), but to abstract a photograph from somebody who had one of me. Perhaps I have succeeded; I have not yet heard. If not, I shall avail myself of my next visit to Munich (this autumn probably) to be taken again.

The Hymn to Life will start on its journey to Copenhagen one of these days. We philosophers are never more grateful than when we are mistaken for artists. I am assured, moreover, by the best judges that the Hymn is thoroughly fit for performance, singable, and sure in its effect (—clear in form; this praise gave me the greatest pleasure). Mottl, the excellent court conductor at Carlsruhe (the conductor of the Bayreuth festival performances, you know), has given me hopes of a performance.

I have just heard from Italy that the point of view of my second *Thought out of Season* has been very honourably mentioned in a survey of German literature contributed by the Viennese scholar, Dr. von Zackauer, at the invitation of the *Archivio storico* of Florence. He concludes his paper with it.

These last weeks at Turin, where I shall stay till June 5, have turned out better than any I have known for years, above all more philosophic. Almost every day for one or two hours I have reached such a pitch of energy as to be able to view my whole conception from top to bottom; so that the immense multiplicity of problems lies spread out beneath me, as though in relief and clear in its outlines. This requires a maximum of strength, for which I had almost given up hope. It all hangs together; years ago it was

already on the right course; one builds one's philosophy like a beaver, one is forced to and does not know it: but one has to *see* all this, as I have now seen it, in order to believe it.

I am so relieved, so strengthened, in such good humour—I hang a little farcical tail on to the most serious things. What is the reason of all this? Have I not the good *north winds* to thank for it, the north winds which do not always come from the Alps?—they come now and then even from *Copenhagen*!

With greetings,
Your gratefully devoted,
NIETZSCHE.

13. NIETZSCHE TO BRANDES.

Turin, May 23, 1888.

MY DEAR SIR,

I should not like to leave Turin without telling you once more what a great share you have had in my first *successful* spring. The history of my springs, for the last fifteen years at least, has been, I must tell you, a tale of horror, a fatality of decadence and infirmity. Places made no difference; it was as though no prescription, no diet, no climate could change the essentially depressing character of this time of year. But behold, Turin! And the first good news, *your* news, my dear Sir, which proved to me that I am alive.... For I am sometimes apt to forget that I am alive. An accident, a question reminded me the other day that one of life's leading ideas is positively quenched in me, the idea of the *future*. No, wish, not the smallest cloudlet of a wish before me! A bare expanse! Why should not a day from my seventieth year be exactly like my day to-day? Have I

lived too long in proximity to death to be able any longer to open my eyes to fair possibilities. —But certain it is that I now limit myself to thinking from day to day—that I settle to-day what is to be done to-morrow—and not for a single day beyond it! This may be irrational, unpractical, perhaps also unchristian—that preacher on the Mount forbade this very "taking thought for the morrow"—but it seems to me in the highest degree philosophical. I gained more respect for myself than I had before:—I understood that I had unlearnt how to wish, without even wanting to do so.

These weeks I have employed in "transvaluing values."—You understand this trope?—After all, the alchemist is the most deserving kind of man there is! I mean the man who makes of what is base and despised something valuable, even gold. He alone confers wealth, the others merely give change. My problem this time is rather a curious one: I have asked myself what hitherto has been best hated, feared, despised by mankind—and of that and nothing else I have made my "gold"....

If only I am not accused of false-coining! Or rather; that is what will happen.

Has my photograph reached you? My mother has shown me the great kindness of relieving me from the appearance of ungratefulness in such a special case. It is to be hoped the Leipzig publisher, E. W. Fritzsch, has also done his duty and sent off the Hymn.

In conclusion I confess to a feeling of curiosity. As it was denied me to listen at the crack of the door to learn something about myself, I should like to hear something in another way. Three words to characterise the subjects of your different lectures—

how much should I learn from three words!

With cordial and devoted greetings
, Your
NIETZSCHE.

14. BRANDES TO NIETZSCHE.

Copenhagen May 23, 1888.

MY DEAR SIR,

For letter, portrait and music I send you my best thanks. The letter and the music were an unqualified pleasure, the portrait might have been better. It is a profile taken at *Naumburg*, characteristic in its attitude, but with too little expression. You *must* look different from this; the writer of *Zarathustra* must have many more secrets written in his own face.

I concluded my lectures on Fr. Nietzsche before Whitsuntide. They ended, as the papers say, in applause "which took the form of an ovation." The ovation is yours almost entirely. I take the liberty of communicating it to you herewith in writing. For I can only claim the credit of reproducing, clearly and connectedly, and intelligibly to a Northern audience, what you had originated.

I also tried to indicate your relation to various contemporaries, to introduce my hearers into the workshop of your thought, to put forward my own favourite ideas, where they coincided with yours, to define the points on which I differed from you, and to give a psychological portrait of Nietzsche the author. Thus much I may say without exaggeration: your name is now very popular in all intelligent circles in Copenhagen, and all over Scandinavia it is at least *known*. You have nothing to thank me for; it has been a *pleasure* to me to penetrate into the world

of your thoughts. My lectures are not worth printing, as I do not regard pure philosophy as my special province and am unwilling to print anything dealing with a subject in which I do not feel sufficiently competent.

I am very glad you feel so invigorated physically and so well disposed mentally. Here, after a long winter, we have mild spring weather. We are rejoicing in the first green leaves and in a very well-arranged Northern exhibition that has been opened at Copenhagen. All the French artists of eminence (painters and sculptors) are also exhibiting here. Nevertheless, I am longing to get away, but have to stay.

But this cannot interest you. I forgot to tell you: if you do not know the Icelandic sagas, you must study them. You will find there a great deal to confirm your hypotheses and theories about the morality of a master race.

In one trifling detail you seem to have missed the mark. *Gothic* has certainly nothing to do with *good* or *God*. It is connected with giessen, he who emits the seed, and means stallion, man.

On the other hand, our philologists here think your suggestion of *bonus—duonus* is much to the point.

I hope that in future we shall never become entirely strangers to one another.

I remain your faithful reader and admirer,
GEORGE BRANDES.

15. NIETZSCHE to BRANDES. (Post-card.)

Turin, May 27, 1888.

What eyes you have! You are right, the Nietzsche of

the photograph is not yet the author of *Zarathustra*—he is a few years too young for that.

I am very grateful for the etymology of *Goth*; it is simply godlike.

I presume you are reading another letter of mine to-day.

Your gratefully attached
N.

16. NIETZSCHE TO BRANDES.

Sils-Maria, Sept. 13, 1888.

MY DEAR SIR,

Herewith I do myself a pleasure—that of recalling myself to your memory, by sending you a wicked little book, but one that is none the less very seriously meant; the product of the *good* days of Turin. For I must tell you that since then there have been *evil* days in Superfluity; such a decline in health, courage and "will to life," to talk Schopenhauer, that the little spring idyll scarcely seemed credible any longer. Fortunately I still possessed a document belonging to it, the *Case of Wagner. A Musician's Problem*. Spiteful tongues will prefer to call it *The Fall of Wagner*.

Much as you may disclaim music (—the most importunate of all the Muses), and with however good reason, yet pray look at this piece of musician's psychology. You, my dear Mr. Cosmopolitan, are far too European in your ideas not to hear in it a hundred times more than my so-called countrymen, the "musical" Germans.

After all, in this case I am a connoisseur *in rebus et personis*—and, fortunately, enough of a musician by

instinct to see that in this ultimate question of values, the problem is accessible and *soluble* through music.

In reality this pamphlet is almost written in French—I dare say it would be easier to translate it into French than into German.

Could you give me one or two more Russian or French addresses to which there would be some *sense* in sending the pamphlet?

In a month or two something *philosophical* may be expected; under the very inoffensive title of *Leisure Hours of à Psychologist* I am saying agreeable and disagreeable things to the world at large—including that intelligent nation, the Germans.

But all this is in the main nothing but recreation beside the main thing: the name of the latter is *Transvaluation of all Values*. Europe will have to discover a new Siberia, to which to consign the author of these experiments with values.

I hope this high-spirited letter will find you in one of your usual *resolute* moods.

With kind remembrances,
Yours,
DR. NIETZSCHE.

Address till middle of November: Torino (Italia) ferma in posta.

17. BRANDES TO NIETZSCHE.

Copenhagen, Oct. 6, 1888.

MY DEAR SIR,

Your letter and valued gift found me in a raging fever of work. This accounts for my delay in

answering.

The mere sight of your handwriting gave me pleasurable excitement.

It is sad news that you have had a bad summer. I was foolish enough to think that you had already got over all your physical troubles.

I have read the pamphlet with the greatest attention and much enjoyment. I am not so unmusical that I cannot enter into the fun of it. I am merely not an expert. A few days before receiving the little book I heard a very fine performance of *Carmen*; what glorious music! However, at the risk of exciting your wrath I confess that Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* made an indelible impression on me. I once heard this opera in Berlin, in a despondent, altogether shattered state of mind, and I felt every note. I do not know whether the impression was so deep because I was so ill.

Do you know Bizet's widow? You ought to send her the pamphlet. She would like it. She is the sweetest, most charming of women, with a nervous *tic* that is curiously becoming, but perfectly genuine, perfectly sincere and full of fire. Only she has married again (an excellent man, a barrister named Straus, of Paris). I believe she knows some German. I could get you her address, if it does not put you against her that she has not remained true to her god—any more than the Virgin Mary, Mozart's widow or Marie Louise.

Bizet's child is ideally beautiful and charming.—But I am gossiping.

I have given a copy of the book to the greatest of Swedish writers, August Strindberg, whom I have entirely won over to you. He is a true genius, only a

trifle mad like most geniuses (and non-geniuses). The other copy I shall also place with care.

Paris I am not well acquainted with now. But send a copy to the following address: Madame la Princesse Anna Dmitrievna Ténicheff, Quai Anglais 20, Petersburg. This lady is a friend of mine; she is also acquainted with the musical world of Petersburg and will make you known there. I have asked her before now to buy your works, but they were all forbidden in Russia, even *Human, all-too-Human*.

It would also be as well to send a copy to Prince Urussov (who is mentioned in Turgeniev's letters). He is greatly interested in everything German, and is a man of rich gifts, an intellectual gourmet. I do not remember his address for the moment, but can find it out.

I am glad that in spite of all bodily ills you are working so vigorously and keenly. I am looking forward to all the things you promise me.

It would give me great pleasure to be read by you, but unfortunately you do not understand my language. I have produced an enormous amount this summer. I have written two long new books (of twenty-four and twenty-eight sheets), *Impressions of Poland and Impressions of Russia*, besides entirely rewriting one of my oldest books, *Æsthetic Studies*, for a new edition and correcting the proofs of all three books myself. In another week or so I shall have finished this work; then I give a series of lectures, writing at the same time another series in French, and leave for Russia in the depth of winter to revive there.

That is the plan I propose for my winter campaign. May it not be a Russian campaign in the bad sense.

I hope you will continue your friendly interest in me.

I remain,
Your faithfully devoted,
GEORGE BRANDES.

18. NIETZSCHE TO BRANDES.

Turin, Oct. 20, 1888.

MY DEAR SIR,

Once more your letter brought me a pleasant wind from the north; it is in fact so far the only letter that puts a "good face," or any face at all on my attack on Wagner. For people do not write to me. I have irreparably offended even my nearest and dearest. There is, for instance, my old friend, Baron Seydlitz of Munich, who unfortunately happens to be President of the Munich Wagner Society; my still older friend, *Justizrath* Krug of Cologne, president of the local Wagner Society; my brother-in-law, Dr. Bernhard Förster in South America, the not unknown Anti—Semite, one of the keenest contributors to the *Bayreuther Blätter*—and my respected friend, Malwida von Meysenbug, the authoress of *Memoirs of an Idealist*, who continues to confuse Wagner with Michel Angelo....

On the other side I have been given to understand that I must be on my guard against the female Wagnerite: in certain cases she is said to be without scruple. Perhaps Bayreuth will defend itself in the German Imperial manner, by the prohibition of my writings—as "dangerous to public morals"; for here the Emperor is a party to the case.

My dictum, "we all know the inæsthetic concept of the Christian *Junker*," might even be interpreted as *lèse-majesté*.

Your intervention on behalf of Bizet's widow gave me great pleasure. Please let me have her address; also that of prince Urussov. A copy has been sent to your friend, the Princess Dmitrievna Ténicheff. When my next book is published, which will be before very long (the title is now *The Twilight of the Idols. Or, How to Philosophise with the Hammer*), I should much like to send a copy to the Swede you introduce to me in such laudatory terms. But I do not know where he lives. This book is my philosophy *in nuce*—radical to the point of criminality....

As to the effect of *Tristan*, I, too, could tell strange tales. A regular dose of mental anguish seems to me a splendid tonic before a Wagnerian repast. The *Reichsgerichtsrath* Dr. Wiener of Leipzig gave me to understand that a Carlsbad cure was also a good thing....

Ah, how industrious you are! And idiot that I am, not to understand Danish! I am quite willing to take your word for it that one can "revive" in Russia better than elsewhere; I count any Russian book, above all Dostoievsky (translated into French, for Heaven's sake not German!!) among my greatest sources of relief.

Cordially and, with good reason, gratefully,
Yours,
NIETZSCHE.

19. BRANDES TO NIETZSCHE.

Copenhagen, Nov. 16, 1888.

MY DEAR SIR,

I have waited in vain for an answer from Paris to learn the address of Madame Bizet. On the other

hand, I now have the address of Prince Urussov. He lives in Petersburg, Sergievskaia 79.

My three books are now out. I have begun my lectures here.

Curious it is how something in your letter and in your book about Dostoievsky coincides with my own impressions of him. I have mentioned you, too, in my work on Russia, when dealing with Dostoievsky. He is a great poet, but an abominable creature, quite Christian in his emotions and at the same time quite *sadique*. His whole morality is what you have baptised slave-morality.

The mad Swede's name is August Strindberg; he lives here. His address is Holte, near Copenhagen. He is particularly fond of you, because he thinks he finds in you his own hatred of women. On this account he calls you "modern" (irony of fate). On reading the newspaper reports of my spring lectures, he said: "It is an astonishing thing about this Nietzsche; much of what he says is just what I might have written." His drama, *Père*, has appeared in French with a preface by Zola.

I feel mournful whenever I think of Germany. What a development is now going on there! How sad to think that to all appearance one will never in one's lifetime be a historical witness of the smallest good thing.

What a pity that so learned a philologist as you should not understand Danish. I am doing all I can to prevent my books on Poland and Russia being translated, so that I may not be expelled, or at least refused the right of speaking when I next go there.

Hoping that these lines will find you still at Turin or will be forwarded to you, I am,

Yours very sincerely,
GEORGE BRANDES.

20. NIETZSCHE TO BRANDES.

Torino, via Carlo Alberto, 6, III.

Nov. 20, 1888.

MY DEAR SIR,

Forgive me for answering at once. Curious things are now happening in my life, things that are without precedent. First the day before yesterday; now again. Ah, if you knew what I had just written when your letter paid me its visit.

With a cynicism that will become famous in the world's history, I have now related myself. The book is called *Ecce Homo*, and is an attack on the Crucified without the slightest reservation; it ends in thunders and lightnings against everything that is Christian or infected with Christianity, till one is blinded and deafened. I am in fact the first psychologist of Christianity and, as an old artilleryman, can bring heavy guns into action, the existence of which no opponent of Christianity has even suspected. The whole is the prelude to the *Transvaluation of all Values*, the work that lies ready before me: I swear to you that in two years we shall have the whole world in convulsions. I am a fate.

Guess who come off worst in *Ecce Homo*? Messieurs the Germans! I have told them terrible things.... The Germans, for instance, have it on their conscience that they deprived the last *great* epoch of history, the Renaissance, of its meaning—at a moment when the Christian values, the *décadence* values, were worsted, when they were conquered in the instincts even of

the highest ranks of the clergy by the opposite instincts, the instincts of life. To *attack* the Church—that meant to re-establish Christianity. (Cesare Borgia as pope—that would have been the meaning of the Renaissance, its proper symbol.)

You must not be angry either, to find yourself brought forward at a critical passage in the book—I wrote it just now—where I stigmatise the conduct of my German friends towards me, their absolute leaving me in the lurch as regards both fame and philosophy. Then you suddenly appear, surrounded by a halo....

I believe implicitly what you say about Dostoievsky; I esteem him, on the other hand, as the most valuable psychological material I know—I am grateful to him in an extraordinary way, however antagonistic he may be to my deepest instincts. Much the same as my relation to Pascal, whom I almost love, since he has taught me such an infinite amount; the only *logical* Christian.

The day before yesterday I read, with delight and with a feeling of being thoroughly at home, Les mariés, by Herr August Strindberg. My sincerest admiration, which is only prejudiced by the feeling that I am admiring myself a little at the same time.

Turin is still my residence.

Your
NIETZSCHE, now a monster.

Where may I send you the *Twilight of the Idols*? If you will be at Copenhagen another fortnight, no answer is necessary.

21. BRANDES TO NIETZSCHE.

Copenhagen, Nov. 23, 1888.

MY DEAR SIR,

Your letter found me to-day in full fever of work; I am lecturing here on Goethe, repeat each lecture twice and yet people wait in line for three quarters of an hour in the square before the University to get standing-room. It amuses me to study the greatest of the great before so many. I must stay here till the end of the year.

But on the other side there is the unfortunate circumstance that—as I am informed—one of my old books, lately translated into Russian, has been condemned in Russia to be publicly *burnt* as "irreligious."

I already had to fear expulsion on account of my two last works on Poland and Russia; now I must try to set in motion all the influence I can command, in order to obtain permission to lecture in Russia this winter. To make matters worse, nearly all letters to and from me are now confiscated. There is great anxiety since the disaster at Borki. It was just the same shortly after the famous attempts. Every letter was snapped up.

It gives me lively satisfaction to see that you have again got through so much. Believe me, I spread your propaganda wherever I can. So late as last week I earnestly recommended Henrik Ibsen to study your works. With him too you have some kinship, even if it is a very distant kinship. Great and strong and unamiable, but yet *worthy* of love, is this singular person. Strindberg will be glad to hear of your appreciation. I do not know the French translation you mention; but they say here that all the best

things in *Giftas* (*Mariés*) have been left out, especially the witty polemic against Ibsen. But read his drama *Père*; there is a great scene in it. I am sure he would gladly send it you. But I see him so seldom; he is so shy on account of an extremely unhappy marriage. Imagine it, he abhors his wife *intellectually* and cannot get away from her *physically*. He is a monogamous misogynist!

It seems curious to me that the polemical trait is still so strong in you. In my early days I was passionately polemical; now I can only expound; silence is my only weapon of offence. I should as soon think of attacking Christianity as of writing a pamphlet against werewolves, I mean against the belief in werewolves.

But I see we understand one another. I too *love* Pascal. But even as a young man I was *for* the Jesuits against Pascal (in the *Provinciales*). The worldly-wise, they were right, of course; he did not understand them; but they understood him and—what a master-stroke of impudence and sagacity!—they themselves published his *Provinciales* with notes. The best edition is that of the Jesuits.

Luther against the Pope, there we have the same collision. Victor Hugo in the preface to the *Feuilles d'Automne* has this fine saying: *On convoque la diète de Worms mais on peint la chapelle Sixtine. Il y a Luther, mais il y a Michel-Ange ... et remarquons en passant que Luther est dans les vieilleries qui croulent autour de nous et que Michel-Ange n'y est pas.*

Study the face of Dostoievsky: half a Russian peasant's face, half a criminal physiognomy, flat nose, little piercing eyes under lids quivering with nervousness, this lofty and well-formed forehead, this expressive mouth that speaks of torments

innumerable, of abysmal melancholy, of unhealthy appetites, of infinite pity, passionate envy! An epileptic genius, whose exterior alone speaks of the stream of gentleness that filled his spirit, of the wave of acuteness almost amounting to madness that mounted to his head, and finally of the ambition, the immense effort, and of the ill-will that results from pettiness of soul.

His heroes are not only poor and pitiable creatures, but simple-minded sensitive ones, noble strumpets, often victims of hallucination, gifted epileptics, enthusiastic candidates for martyrdom—just those types which we should suspect in the apostles and disciples of the early days of Christianity.

Certainly nothing could be farther removed from the Renaissance.

I am excited to know how I can come into your book.

I remain your faithfully devoted
GEORGE BRANDES.

22. Unstamped. Without further address, undated. Written in a large hand on a piece of paper (not note-paper) ruled in pencil, such as children use. Post-mark: Turin, January 4, 1889.

TO THE FRIEND GEORG

When once you had discovered me, it was easy enough to find me: the difficulty now is to get rid of me ...

The Crucified.

As Herr Max Nordau has attempted with incredible coarseness to brand Nietzsche's whole life-work as the production of a madman, I call attention to the fact that signs of powerful exaltation only appear in

the last letter but one, and that insanity is only evident in the last letter of all, and then not in an unqualified form.

But at the close of the year 1888 this dear and masterly mind began to be deranged. His self-esteem, which had always been very great, acquired a morbid character. His light and delicate self-irony, which appears not unfrequently in the letters here given, gave place to constantly recurring outbursts of anger with the German public's failure to appreciate the value of his works. It ill became a man of Nietzsche's intellect, who only a year before (see Letter No. 2) had desired a small number of intelligent readers, to take such offence at the indifference of the mob. He now gave expression to the most exalted ideas about himself. In his last book but one he had said: "I have given the Germans the profoundest books of any they possess "; in his last he wrote: "I have given mankind the profoundest book it possesses." At the same time he yielded to an impulse to describe the fame he hoped to attain in the future as already his. As the reader will see, he had asked me to furnish him with the addresses of persons in Paris and Petersburg who might be able to make his name known in France and Russia. I chose them to the best of my judgment. But even before the books he sent had reached their destinations, Nietzsche wrote in a German review: "And thus I am treated in Germany, I who am already *studied* in Petersburg and Paris." That his sense of propriety was beginning to be deranged was already shown when sending the book to Princess Ténicheff (see Letter No. 18). This lady wrote to me in astonishment, asking what kind of a strange friend I had recommended to her: he had been sufficiently wanting in taste to give the sender's name on the parcel itself as "The Antichrist." Some

time after I had received the last deranged and touching letter, another was shown me, which Nietzsche had presumably sent the same day, and in which he wrote that he intended to summon a meeting of sovereigns in Rome to have the young German Emperor shot there; this was signed "Nietzsche-Cæsar." The letter to me was signed "The Crucified." It was thus evident that this great mind in its final megalomania had oscillated between attributing to itself the two greatest names in history, so strongly contrasted.

It was exceedingly sad thus to witness the change that in the course of a few weeks reduced a genius without equal to a poor helpless creature, in whom almost the last gleam of mental life was extinguished for ever.

III

(AUGUST 1900)

It sometimes happens that the death of a great individual recalls a half-forgotten name to our memory, and we then disinter for a brief moment the circumstances, events, writings or achievements which gave that name its renown. Although Friedrich Nietzsche in his silent madness had survived himself for eleven and a half years, there is no need at his death to resuscitate his works or his fame. For during those very years in which he lived on in the night of insanity, his name has acquired a lustre unsurpassed by any contemporary reputation, and his works have been translated into every language and are known all over the world.

To the older among us, who have followed Nietzsche from the time of his arduous and embittered struggle against the total indifference of the reading world, this prodigiously rapid attainment of the most absolute and world-wide renown has in it something in the highest degree surprising. No one in our time has experienced anything like it. In the course of five or six years Nietzsche's intellectual tendency —now more or less understood, now misunderstood, now involuntarily caricatured—became the ruling tendency of a great part of the literature of France, Germany, England, Italy, Norway, Sweden and Russia. Note, for example, the influence of this spirit on Gabriele d'Annunzio. To all that was tragic in Nietzsche's life was added this—that, after thirsting for recognition to the point of morbidity, he attained it in an altogether fantastic degree when, though still living, he was shut out from life. But certain it is that in the decade 1890-1900 no one engaged and impressed the minds of his contemporaries as did this son of a North German clergyman, who tried so hard to be taken for a Polish nobleman, and whose

pride it was that his works were conceived in French, though written in German. The little weaknesses of his character were forgotten in the grandeur of the style he imparted to his life and his production.

To be able to explain Nietzsche's rapid and overwhelming triumph, one would want the key to the secret of the psychological life of our time. He bewitched the age, though he seems opposed to all its instincts. The age is ultra-democratic; he won its favour as an aristocrat. The age is borne on a rising wave of religious reaction; he conquered with his pronounced irreligion. The age is struggling with social questions of the most difficult and far-reaching kind; he, the thinker of the age, left all these questions on one side as of secondary importance. He was an enemy of the humanitarianism of the present day and of its doctrine of happiness; he had a passion for proving how much that is base and mean may conceal itself beneath the guise of pity, love of one's neighbour and unselfishness; he assailed pessimism and scorned optimism; he attacked the ethics of the philosophers with the same violence as the thinkers of the eighteenth century had attacked the dogmas of the theologians. As he became an atheist from religion, so did he become an immoralist from morality. Nevertheless the Voltairians of the age could not claim him, since he was a mystic; and contemporary anarchists had to reject him as an enthusiast for rulers and castes.

For all that, he must in some hidden way have been in accord with much that is fermenting in our time, otherwise it would not have adopted him as it has done. The fact of having known Nietzsche, or having been in any way connected with him, is enough at present to make an author famous—more famous,

sometimes, than all his writings have made him.

What Nietzsche, as a young man admired more than anything else in Schopenhauer and Richard Wagner was "the indomitable energy with which they maintained their self-reliance in the midst of the hue and cry raised against them by the whole cultured world." He made this self-reliance his own, and this was no doubt the first thing to make an impression.

In the next place the artist in him won over those to whom the aphorisms of the thinker were obscure. With all his mental acuteness he was a pronounced lyricist. In the autumn of 1888 he wrote of Heine: "How he handled German! One day it will be said that Heine and I were without comparison the supreme artists of the German language." One who is not a German is but an imperfect judge of Nietzsche's treatment of language; but in our day all German connoisseurs are agreed in calling him the greatest stylist of German prose.

He further impressed his contemporaries by his psychological profundity and abstruseness. His spiritual life has its abysses and labyrinths. Self-contemplation provides him with immense material for investigation. And he is not content with self-contemplation. His craving for knowledge is a passion; covetousness he calls it: "In this soul there dwells no unselfishness; on the contrary, an all-desiring self that would see by the help of many as with its own eyes and grasp as with its *own* hands; this soul of mine would even choose to bring back all the past and not lose anything that might belong to it. What a flame is this covetousness of mine!"

The equally strong development of his lyrical and critical qualities made a fascinating combination. But it was the cause of those reversals of his personal

relations which deprive his career (in much the same way as Sören Kierkegaard's) of some of the dignity it might have possessed. When a great personality crossed his path he called all his lyricism to arms and with clash of sword on shield hailed the person in question as a demigod or a god (Schopenhauer and Richard Wagner). When later on he discovered the limitations of his hero, his enthusiasm was apt to turn to hatred, and this hatred found vent without the smallest regard to his former worship. This characteristic is offensively conspicuous in Nietzsche's behaviour to Wagner. But who knows whether this very lack of dignity has not contributed to increase the number of Nietzsche's admirers in an age that is somewhat undignified on this point!

In the last period of his life Nietzsche appeared rather as a prophet than as a thinker. He predicts the Superman. And he makes no attempt at logical proof, but proceeds from a reliance on the correctness and sureness of his instinct, convinced that he himself represents a life-promoting principle and his opponents one hostile to life.

To him the object of existence is, everywhere the production of genius. The higher man in our day is like a vessel in which the future of the race is fermenting in an impenetrable way, and more than one of these vessels is burst or broken in the process. But the human race is not ruined by the failure of a single creature. Man, as we know him, is only a bridge, a transition from the animal to the superman. What the ape is in relation to man, a laughingstock or a thing of shame, that will man be to the superman. Hitherto every species has produced something superior to itself. Nietzsche teaches that man too will and must do the same. He has drawn a

conclusion from Darwinism which Darwin himself did not see.

In the last decade of the nineteenth century Nietzsche and Tolstoy appeared as the two opposite poles. Nietzsche's morality is aristocratic as Tolstoy's is popular, individualistic as Tolstoy's is evangelical; it asserts the self-majesty of the individual, where Tolstoy's proclaims the necessity of self-sacrifice.

In the same decade Nietzsche and Ibsen were sometimes compared. Ibsen, like Nietzsche, was a combative spirit and held entirely aloof from political and practical life. A first point of agreement between them is that they both laid stress on not having come of small folk. Ibsen made known to me in a letter that his parents, both on the father's and the mother's side, belonged to the most esteemed families of their day in Skien in Norway, related to all the patrician families of the place and country. Skien is no world-city, and the aristocracy of Skien is quite unknown outside it; but Ibsen wanted to make it clear that his bitterness against the upper class in Norway was in no wise due to the rancour and envy of the outsider.

Nietzsche always made it known to his acquaintances that he was descended from a Polish noble family, although he possessed no pedigree. His correspondents took this for an aristocratic whim, all the more because the name given out by him, Niëzky, by its very spelling betrayed itself as not Polish. But the fact is otherwise. The true spelling of the name is Nicki, and a young Polish admirer of Nietzsche, Mr. Bernard Scharlitt, has succeeded in proving Nietzsche's descent from the Nicki family, by pointing out that its crest is to be found in a signet which for centuries has been an heirloom in the

family of Nietzsche. Perhaps not quite without reason, Scharlitt therefore sees in Nietzsche's master-morality and his whole aristocratising of the view of the world an expression of the szlachcic spirit inherited from Polish ancestors.

Nietzsche and Ibsen, independently of each other but like Renan, have sifted the thought of breeding moral aristocrats. It is the favourite idea of Ibsen's Rosmer; it remains Dr. Stockmann's. Thus Nietzsche speaks of the higher man as the preliminary aim of the race, before Zarathustra announces the superman.

They meet now and then on the territory of psychology. Ibsen speaks in *The Wild Duck* of the necessity of falsehood to life. Nietzsche loved life so greatly that even truth appeared to him of worth only in the case of its acting for the preservation and advancement of life. Falsehood is to him an injurious and destructive power only in so far as it is life-constricting. It is not objectionable where it is necessary to life.

It is strange that a thinker who abhorred Jesuitism as Nietzsche did should arrive at this standpoint, which leads directly to Jesuitism. Nietzsche agrees here with many of his opponents.

Ibsen and Nietzsche were both solitary, even if they were not at all careless as to the fate of their works. It is the strongest man, says Dr. Stockmann, who is most isolated. Who was most isolated, Ibsen or Nietzsche? Ibsen, who held back from every alliance with others, but exposed his work to the masses of the theatre-going public, or Nietzsche, who stood alone as a thinker but as a man continually—even if, as a rule, in vain—spied after the like-minded and after heralds, and whose works, in the time of his conscious life, remained unread by the great public,

or in any case misunderstood.

Decision does not fall lightly to one who, by a whim of fate, was regarded by both as an ally. Still more difficult is the decision as to which of them has had the deepest effect on the contemporary mind and which will longest retain his fame. But this need not concern us. Wherever Nietzsche's teaching extends, and wherever his great and rare personality is mastered, its attraction and repulsion will alike be powerful; but everywhere it will contribute to the development and moulding of the individual personality.

IV

(1909)

Since the publication of Nietzsche's collected works was completed, Frau Förster-Nietzsche has allowed the Insel-Verlag of Leipzig to issue, at a high price and for subscribers only, Friedrich Nietzsche's posthumous work *Ecce Homo*, which has been lying in manuscript for more than twenty years, and which she herself had formerly excluded from his works, considering that the German reading public was not ripe to receive it in the proper way—which we may doubtless interpret as a fear on her part that the attitude of the book towards Germanism and Christianity would raise a terrible outcry.

Now that Nietzsche holds undisputed sway over German minds and exercises an immense influence in the rest of Europe and in America, it will certainly be read with emotion and discreetly criticised.

It gives us an autobiography, written during Nietzsche's last productive months, almost immediately before the collapse of his powers, between October 15 and November 4, 1888; and in the course of this autobiography each of his books is briefly characterised.

Here as elsewhere Nietzsche's thoughts are centred on the primary conceptions of ascent and descent, growth and decay. Bringing himself into relation with them, he finds that, as the victim of stubborn illness and chronically recurring pain, he is a decadent; but at the same time, as one who in his inmost self is unaffected by his illness, nay, whose strength and fulness of life even increase during its attacks, he is the very reverse of a decadent, a being who is in process of raising himself to a higher form of life. He once more emphasises the fact that the years in which his vitality was lowest were just those in which he threw off all melancholy and recovered his joy in life, his enthusiasm for life, since he had a keen sense that a sick man has no right to pessimism.

He begins by giving us plain, matter-of-fact information about himself, speaking warmly and proudly of his father. The latter had been tutor to four princesses of Altenburg before he was appointed to his living. Out of respect-for Friedrich Wilhelm IV. he gave his son the Hohenzollern names of Friedrich Wilhelm, and he felt the events of 1848 very keenly. His father only reached the age of thirty-six, and Nietzsche lost him when he was himself five years old. But he ascribes to paternal heredity his ability to feel at home in a world of high and delicate things (*in einer Welt hoher und zarter Dinge*). For all that, Nietzsche does not forget to bring in, here as elsewhere, the supposition of his descent from Polish

noblemen; but he did not know this for a fact, and it was only established by Scharlitt's investigation of the family seal.

He describes himself as what we should call a winning personality. He has "never understood the art of arousing ill-feeling against himself." He can tame every bear; he even makes clowns behave decently. However out of tune the instrument "man" may be, he can coax a pleasing tone out of it. During his years of teaching, even the laziest became diligent under him. Whatever offence has been done him, has not been the result of ill-will. The pitiful have wounded him more deeply than the malicious.

Nor has he given vent to feelings of revenge or rancour. His conflict with Christianity is only one instance among many of his antagonism to resentful feelings. It is an altogether different matter that his very nature is that of a warrior. But he confers distinction on the objects of his attacks, and he has never waged war on private individuals, only on types; thus in Strauss he saw nothing but the Culture-Philistine.

He attributes to himself an extremely vivid and sensitive instinct of cleanliness. At the first contact the filth lying at the base of another's nature is revealed to him. The unclean are therefore ill at ease in his presence; nor does the sense of being seen through make them any more fragrant.

And with true psychology he adds that his greatest danger—he means to his spiritual health and balance—is loathing of mankind.

The loathing of mankind is doubtless the best modern expression for what the ancients called misanthropy. No one knows what it is till he has

experienced it. When we read, for instance, in our youth of Frederick the Great that in his later years he was possessed and fettered by contempt for men, this appears to us an unfortunate peculiarity which the king ought to have overcome; for of course he must have seen other men about him besides those who flattered him for the sake of advantage. But the loathing of mankind is a force that surprises and overwhelms one, fed by hundreds of springs concealed in subconsciousness. One only detects its presence after having long entertained it unawares.

Nietzsche cannot be said to have overcome it; he fled from it, took refuge in solitude, and lived outside the world of men, alone in the mountains among cold, fresh springs.

And even if he felt no loathing for individuals, his disgust with men found a collective outlet, since he entertained, or rather worked up, a positive horror of his countrymen, so powerful that at last it breaks out in everything he writes. It reminds us dimly of Byron's dislike of Englishmen, Stendhal's of Frenchmen, and Heine's of Germans. But it is of a more violent character than Stendhal's or Heine's, and it has a pathos and contempt of its own. He shows none of it at the outset. In his first book, *The Birth of Tragedy*, he is no less partial to Germany than Heine was in his first, romantically Teutonic period. But Nietzsche's development carried him with a rush away from Germanism, and in this last book of his the word "German" has become something like his worst term of abuse.

He believes only in French culture; all other culture is a misunderstanding. It makes him angry to see those Frenchmen he values most, infected by German spirit. Thus Taine is, in his opinion, corrupted by

Hegel's influence. This impression is right in so far as Hegel deprived Taine of some of the essentially French element which he originally possessed, and of which certain of his admirers before now have painfully felt the loss. But he overlooks the effect of the study of Hegel in promoting at the same time what one might call the extension of Taine's intellectual horizon. And Nietzsche is satisfied with no narrower generalisation of the case than this: Wherever Germany extends, she ruins culture.

As though to make sure of wounding German national pride, he declares that Heinrich Heine (not Goethe) gave him the highest idea of lyric poetry, and that as concerns Byron's *Manfred*, he has no words, only a look, for those who in the presence of this work dare to utter the name of *Faust*. The Germans, he maintains in connection with *Manfred*, are incapable of any conception of greatness. So uncritical has he become that he puts *Manfred* above *Faust*.

In his deepest instincts Nietzsche is now, as he asserts, so foreign to everything German, that the mere presence of a German "retards his digestion." German intellect is to him indigestion; it can never be finished with anything. If he has been so enthusiastic in his devotion to Wagner, if he still regards his intimate relationship with Wagner as the most profound refreshment of his life, this was because in Wagner he honoured the foreigner, because in him he saw the incarnate protest against all German virtues. In his book, *The Case of Wagner*, he had already hinted that Richard Wagner, the glory of German nationalism, was of Jewish descent, since his real father seems to have been the step-father, Geyer. I could not have survived my youth

without Wagner, he says; I was condemned to the society of Germans and had to take a counter-poison; Wagner was the counter-poison.

Here, by way of exception, he generalises his feeling. We who were children in the 'fifties, he says, necessarily became pessimists in regard to the concept "German." We cannot be anything else than revolutionaries. And he explains this expression thus: We can assent to no state of affairs which allows the canting bigot to be at the top. (Höffding's protest against the use of the word "radicalism" applied to Nietzsche, in *Moderne Filosofer*, is thus beside the mark.) Wagner was a revolutionary; he fled from the Germans. And, Nietzsche adds, as an artist, a man has no other home than Paris—the city which, strangely enough, he was never, to see. He ranks Wagner among the later masters of French romanticism—Delacroix, Berlioz, Baudelaire—and wisely says nothing about the reception of Wagnerian opera in Paris under the Empire.

In everything Nietzsche now adopts the French stand-point—the old and narrow French standpoint —that, for instance, of the elderly Voltaire towards Shakespeare. He declares here, as he has done before, that his artist's taste defends Molière, Corneille and Racine, not without bitterness (*nicht ohne Ingrimm*) against such a wild (*wüstes*) genius as Shakespeare. Strangely enough he repeats here his estimate of Shakespeare's Cæsar as his finest creation, weak as it is: "My highest formula for Shakespeare is that he conceived the type of Cæsar." It must be added that here again Nietzsche assents to the unhappy delusion that Shakespeare never wrote the works that bear his name. Nietzsche is "instinctively" certain that they are due to Bacon,

and, ignoring repeated demonstrations of the impossibility of this fatuous notion, he supports his conjecture by the grotesque assertion that if he himself had christened his Zarathustra by a name not his own—by Wagner's, for instance—the acumen of two thousand years would not have sufficed to guess who was its originator; no one would have believed it possible that the author of *Human, all-too-Human* had conceived the visions of Zarathustra.

He allows the Germans no honour as philosophers: Leibniz and Kant were "the two greatest clogs upon the intellectual integrity of Europe." Just when a perfectly scientific attitude of mind had been attained, they managed to find byways back to "the old ideal." And no less passionately does he deny to the Germans all honour as musicians: "A German *cannot* know what music is. The men who pass as German musicians are foreigners, Slavs, Croats, Italians, Dutchmen or Jews. I am Pole enough to give up all other music for Chopin—except Wagner's *Siegfried-Idyll*, some things of Liszt, and the Italians Rossini and Pietro Gasti" (by this last name he appears to mean his favourite disciple, Köselitz, who wrote under the pseudonym of Peter Gast).

He abhors the Germans as "idealists." All idealism is falsehood in the face of necessity. He finds a pernicious idealism in Henrik Ibsen too, "that typical old maid," as well, as in others whose object it is to poison the clean conscience, the natural spirit, of sexual love. And he gives us a clause of his moral code, in which, under the head of Vice, he combats every kind of opposition to Nature, or if fine words are preferred, every kind of idealism. The clause runs: "Preaching of chastity is a public incitement to unnatural practices. All, depreciation of the sexual

life, all sullying of it with the word 'impure,' is a crime against Life itself—is the real sin against the holy Spirit of Life."

Finally he attacks what he calls the "licentiousness" of the Germans in historical matters. German historians, he declares, have lost all eye for the values of culture; in fact, they have put this power of vision under the ban of the Empire. They claim that a man must in the first place be a German, must belong to the race. If he does, he is in a position to determine values or their absence: the Germans are thus the "moral order of the universe" in history; compared with the power of the Roman Empire they are the champions of liberty; compared with the eighteenth century they are the restorers of morality and of the Categorical Imperative. "History is actually written on Imperial German and Antisemitic lines—and Herr von Treitschke is not ashamed of himself."

The Germans have on their conscience every crime against culture committed in the last four centuries. As Nietzsche in his later years was never tired of asserting, they deprived the Renaissance of its meaning, they wrecked it by the Reformation; that is, by Luther, an impossible monk who, owing to his impossibility, attacked the Church and in so doing restored it. The Catholics would have every reason to honour Luther's name.

And when, upon the bridge between two centuries of decadence, a *force majeure* of genius and will revealed itself, strong enough to weld Europe into political and economic unity, the Germans finally, with their "Wars of Liberation," robbed Europe of the meaning of Napoleon's existence, a prodigy of meaning. Thus they have upon their conscience all

that followed, nationalism, the *névrose nationale* from which Europe is suffering, and the perpetuation of the system of little states, of petty politics.

Last of all, the Germans have upon their conscience their attitude to himself, their indifference, their lack of recognition, the silence in which they buried his life's work. The Germans are bad company. And although his autobiography ends with a poem in which he affects a scorn of fame, "that coin in which the whole world pays, but which he receives with gloved hands and tramples underfoot with loathing "—yet his failure to win renown in Germany during his lifetime contributed powerfully to foster his antipathy.

The exaltation that marks the whole tone of the work, the unrestrained self-esteem which animates it and is ominous of the near approach of madness, have not deprived *Ecce Homo* of its character of surpassing greatness.

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