



The Ethics of Tolstoy and Nietzsche

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dence and choose to believe what we want to believe, only on pain of dulling and deadening the very faculty which enables us to contemplate an ideal at all; for neither conscience nor imagination live independently of reason. If theology is more than superstition, if its arguments are valid, if its objects are verities, it can afford to court the most rigorous examination, and to give praise and cordial welcome to the inquirer who brings to its study the cool impartiality and the searching thoroughness of the scientific spirit.

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THE ETHICS OF TOLSTOY AND NIETZSCHE.

THE eighteenth century, although it gave birth to Rousseau, the greatest of sentimentalists, was preëminently the rationalistic century. The rationalism of Kant dominated the thought of its closing decades. The Critical Philosophy proclaimed the supremacy of the pure reason, and in its ethical teaching found no place for emotion, but scorned all action resulting from good-feeling as non-moral, and "pathological," recognizing as moral only such actions as were performed without other feeling than regard for the abstract form of the moral law.

Against this rationalism, which found the reality of the world in abstract thought—a mere logical scheme of relations without life or feeling; a skeleton unclothed by flesh and blood,—men at length began to revolt. This revolt found its most complete expression in the writings of a man of genius, whose poetic and artistic nature was repelled by the dry formalism of the current theories, and who ventured to think out a philosophy from a new standpoint. Discarding the claims of "reason," Schopenhauer found the real beneath all appearances in "Will" or spontaneous energy, the nature of which is blind and aimless striving. Organisms are evolved

as instruments for the satisfaction of its ceaseless cravings, and these develop and grow more perfect, till, at length, in the higher forms consciousness arises, and as the function of a complex brain, intelligence is evolved which serves to guide the "Will" to the satisfaction of its desires. The intellect reaching its full development, the hopelessness and futility of the striving for individual satisfaction is recognized and the "Will" turns against, and negates itself, seeking for peace and deliverance from the fruitless struggle. This is found in the disinterested pursuit of truth; more fully in artistic contemplation; but chiefly in the life of the saint, or Yogi, in whom striving ceases because universal sympathy has taken the place of the egotism which constitutes the essence of all individual existence.

Schopenhauer's ethics are based on the feeling of sympathy, pity, or compassion. He held that man is by nature entirely selfish. "The natural individual if forced to choose between his own destruction and that of the whole world besides, would destroy the world in order to preserve himself, that drop in the ocean, a little longer." He has no consideration for others save in so far as fear teaches him the necessity of respecting their wishes lest they should injure or destroy him. This necessity, however, does not give rise to morality, but only to the hypocrisy of politeness, and thus man is essentially unmoral; his life and social activities are inspired by pure selfishness, all appearances to the contrary being merely the masks by which men conceal from one another the hideous egotism which is yet the very essence of their being. The instinctive feeling of egotism cannot be overcome by "reason," but only by another instinctive feeling—the feeling of sympathy—which reveals to the heart our unity in the one Will manifested in all the diversity of individual existence. This alone has the power to contend with the "Will to Live"; this alone renders possible that small part of conduct which is truly moral; this alone can substitute the "Ethical," for the "Cosmic" process.

Schopenhauer's philosophy has profoundly influenced the thought of our time. It has seemed to furnish a philosophic

basis for the scientific theory of the struggle for life; by its opposition to rationalism and by basing all morality upon feeling it has harmonized with our repugnance to the abstract thought of the last century, whilst its pessimism has found an echo in the hearts of many, worn out by the stress of life in an age of such rapid change and such fierce excitement. Above all it has formed the starting point of the theories of two of the most influential of modern thinkers, Fredrich Nietzsche and Leo Tolstoy, and colored their whole thought and life.

Tolstoy came under the influence of Schopenhauer when he visited Germany in 1857, and that influence is evident in all his writings, but most, perhaps, in his latest works: Nietzsche, in his college days at Leipzig chanced upon a copy of the "World as Will and Idea" in a second-hand book shop. Turning over the leaves he was struck with its insight. He bought it, and hastening home with his treasure flung himself on the sofa and began, he says, to submit himself to the influence of that vigorous and sombre genius. "Here I saw a mirror in which I perceived the world, life, and my own nature in terrible grandeur. Here there met me the full, unselfish sunlit gaze of art. Here I saw sickness and healing, exile and a haven of refuge, hell and heaven!"

Schopenhauer was an artist rather than a thinker. He excelled in flashes of insight, rather than in logical and systematic thought. His philosophy based on feeling and recognizing no rational order in the world is consequently thoroughly pessimistic. The intellect is the slave of the "Will" and can only attain independence by the negation of the Will to Live. The mere feeling of sympathy is made the sole foundation of morality. Intensely individualistic and finding no organic unity in society binding the life of a man to that of his fellows and giving form to his activities, this philosophy issues in complete asceticism. In Schopenhauer the man and the philosopher were at variance. The timid, cautious, cold-hearted, selfish man, with aristocratic exclusiveness, and contempt for the "vulgar herd," was the very antithesis of the saint demanded by his philosophy for whom Schopenhauer had a per-

fectly sincere admiration which never, however, caused him to attempt to realize the ideal.

To endeavor to do this in actual life and to develop to its remotest consequences the implications of the doctrine of pity and self-negation was reserved for Tolstoy, himself a man of fine artistic sensibility and of keen insight, but above all of a rich emotional nature; ever restless and unsatisfied with life, and filled with a deep longing for deliverance from the fierce and never-ending conflict of impulse and will, of feeling and reason, of the actual and the ideal, within him. After a youth and early manhood spent in the usual fashion of his class and country, except that his sensibilities were far keener, his moral nature much deeper and his life more intense than that of his fellows; first a soldier, then a pleasure seeker, and later on the admired genius of a literary circle—Tolstoy was seized by a feeling of despair over the aimlessness of life. "My life," he confesses—"was but a long indulgence of my passions; it was a thing without meaning, an evil." He tells us how he realized that, like the rest of his class, he was but a social parasite, living a pampered and unreal life on the toil and bloody sweat of multitudes who yet were happier than he, because immersed in the activities and duties of life and sustained by their religious belief they feared neither toil nor death, taking life as it came, and looking upon its good and evil as alike the will of God. Tolstoy sought to find the secret of their happiness and peace, and thinking it arose from their religion, joined with them in the services of the church, and tried to share their beliefs, but in vain. He found it impossible to run counter to his reason and to revive the faith of his childhood. For a long time he lived in despondency till he became acquainted with a peasant of remarkable religious genius who seemed to have really made his own the great secret of life—a secret which lies at the basis of the Christian and Buddhist religions, and which Schopenhauer had formulated in philosophic language. Not content henceforth to merely know the truth, Tolstoy felt constrained to live it, and with all the fiery ardor, the passionate enthusiasm of his nature he cast aside convention, position, and worldly fame, and turned lovingly

to share the life of toil and self-renunciation of those men of the people who passing their lives in "heavy labor and unre-pining content . . . live, suffer, and draw near to death in quiet confidence and oftenest with joy." With more or less consistency he has since lived the peasant life, teaching his doctrine of toil, poverty, non-resistance to evil, and of universal sympathy and love, in novels and tales, in newspaper articles, and in books like "My Religion," "Life," "My Confession," "What to Do," and "The Kreuzer Sonata." At last he has formulated his mature doctrine in a very lucid and concise form in a work entitled "The Christian Teaching," which though intended for posthumous publication, he was persuaded by a friend to give to the world during his lifetime. From this work may be obtained the clearest and most complete idea of Tolstoy's ethical theory.

Man begins to reflect on the meaning of his life because he perceives a contradiction within it. On the one hand he is an animal, with impulses and desires craving for satisfaction, whilst on the other he is a spiritual being. Beginning life as a mere animal he gradually awakens to the consciousness that individual welfare is unattainable—that his life is full of care, and of sorrow, that limitations of all kinds narrow and hem it in, while death surely awaits him at the end; in short, as the old French rhyme has it—

"Avec la suer de ton visaige
Tu gaignerais ta pauvre vie
Après maint travail et usaige
Voici la mort qui te convie."

When once this consciousness has seized hold upon a man, he can no longer return to the careless joy of the animal which lives in the moment without a thought of aught beyond. Life becomes for him a burden and an enigma, the only solution of which is to be found in the Christian teaching which tells him that he is "an angel being born of a beast and that all our life in this world is naught else but this process of birth." He learns that his misery arises from his regarding himself as a separate being, but when he ceases so to regard himself and

realizes that his true desire is for universal welfare he is born into the spiritual world. The true self of man is this Infinite Love which is ever seeking to manifest itself, but man is still, even after the awakening of the "reasonable consciousness" within him, owing to contracted habits of animal life, inclined to perform "acts directed toward the welfare of the separate being and which are contrary to love. By so doing man not only deprives himself of the welfare of true life, but fails to obtain the welfare of his separate being; acting thus he commits sins." Sins, Tolstoy defines as "obstacles to the manifestation of love." They may arise from the natural animal tendency to seek one's own personal welfare, or from traditional modes of life, or from deliberate attempts to find new ways of increasing the welfare of one's separate personality. One may find personal pleasure in the satisfaction of one's needs; one may wish to throw the burden of satisfying these needs upon others, or one may provide for future needs. Again, one may seek to subjugate and dominate others, or to indulge sexual instinct; and finally one may "produce artificial excitement of one's physical and mental faculties." These are the six sins of sensuality, idleness, avarice, ambition, sexual sin, and the sin of intoxication, which preserve the illusion of the separate being, and oppose the manifestation of love.

These sins, when once they have been recognized as such, might be overcome with the greater ease were it not for certain "traditional justifications" or "snares" whereby the sins are "sanctified." Thus, one may justify his regard for his separate well-being, by the necessity of preparation for future good work, such as study, securing a livelihood and so forth; by the demand made upon him by wife and child; by the requirements of some organized work or business in which he is engaged; by fidelity to the interests of members of voluntary associations and fellowships; or finally by regard for the interests of organized society or the state. These "snares" are rendered more powerful by the deceptions practised by religious teachers, who direct reverence to the men who have taught the truth rather than to the truth itself; encourage belief in miracles; hypnotize people by rites and ceremonies, and

above all poison the mind of innocent and trustful childhood by inculcating all kinds of superstitions and falsehoods, thus poisoning life at its very source.

Having freed himself from religious deception a man must not fear to recognize the truth, but must give up lying to himself and thus avoid the "snares" which appear to justify his sins. These latter he must attack in the order of their importance, beginning with "the sin which, if yielded to, precludes the possibility of all contest with others"—the sin of *intoxication*. It must be borne in mind that for Tolstoy, the word intoxication has a very wide meaning; not only drinking, but smoking, the eating of spices and highly seasoned food of all kinds, adornment of one's person or dwelling, dancing, playing, music, gymnastic exercises, gazing at pictures, and even cycling are all forms of "intoxication" because they all pleasurable stimulate the faculties of body or mind; in fact strengthen the Will to Live. "Although," as Tolstoy confesses, "men will never, while in the body, altogether liberate themselves from the excitement and intoxication produced by food, drink, movements and surroundings, the degree of this intoxication may be reduced to the smallest limits." It is easy to see that having dealt with the "sin of intoxication" it will be a light task to overcome the other sins, leading up to what Tolstoy, like his master Schopenhauer, regards as the centre of all, sexual desire. "Reasonable consciousness when awakened in man demands . . . complete abstinence."

Such are the Ethics of extreme self-negation and asceticism expounded with deep conviction, great clearness and contagious enthusiasm in the "Christian Teaching," but the ultimate goal of the theory is stated with unflinching logic and courage in the very remarkable article on the "Demands of Love," published in the *Daily Chronicle* of October 2, 1897. Tolstoy here supposes the case of a man and his wife of the well-to-do class who have "realized the sin of a luxurious and idle life lived amidst people crushed by work and want." Having got rid of their superfluities, they settle in the country, keeping only a small income (Tolstoy supposes £15 a year), for themselves, and for the rest maintaining themselves by their labor.

They try to help their poor neighbors in all possible ways—give away almost everything they possess—but are constantly assailed by the new demands which love makes upon them. Where can they stop? Tolstoy answers the question thus,—“Having worked all day they return home; having no longer a bed or a pillow, they sleep on some straw they have collected, and after a supper of bread, they lie down to sleep. It is autumn. Rain is falling, mingled with snow. Someone knocks at the door. May they refuse to open? A man enters wet and fevered. What must they do? Let him have the dry straw? There is no more dry, so they must either drive away the sick man, or let him, wet as he is, lie on the floor, or give him the straw, and themselves, since one must sleep, share it with him.”

“But even this is not all; a man comes who is a drunkard and a debauché, whom they have helped several times, and who has always drunk whatever they gave him. He comes now, his jaw trembling, and asks for six shillings, to replace money he has stolen and drunk, for which he will be imprisoned if he does not replace it. They say they have only eight shillings, which they want for a payment due to-morrow. Then the man says, ‘Yes, I see, you talk, but when it comes to acts, you’re like the rest: you let the man you call a ‘brother’ perish, rather than suffer yourselves.’

“How is one to act in such cases? Let the fever-stricken man have the damp floor and lie in the dry place yourself—and you will be further from sleep than the other way. If you put him on your straw and lie near him you will get lice and typhus. If you give the beggar six of your last shillings, you will be left without bread to-morrow; but to refuse—means, as he said, to turn from that for the sake of which one lives.”

“How is one to act? What is one to do? Not to draw back is to lose one’s life, to be eaten by lice, to starve, to die, and—apparently—uselessly. To stop is to repudiate that for the sake of which one has acted, for which one has done whatever good has been accomplished. And one cannot repudiate it, for it is no invention of mine, or of Christ’s, that we are brothers and must serve each other; it is real fact, and when it has once

entered you can never tear that consciousness out of the heart of man. How, then, is one to act? Is there no escape?" And Tolstoy answers: "We must go forward prepared to die. Only *that* love is true love which knows no limit to sacrifice—even unto death."

It is impossible to read this without being deeply moved, without admiring the greatness and nobility of the man who with rare intensity of feeling and piercing insight has penetrated to the bottom of human misery and risen to the height of self-devotion and heroic self-sacrifice, and yet we feel that neither here nor in the "Christian Teaching" does Tolstoy satisfy the reason. We feel that the outcome of his teaching is indeed *death*, and more; it is, as he himself seems to have a suspicion, *useless death!* To the people in the village but little good, and it may be, much harm, has been done. They have learned to prey upon others, instead of working and helping themselves; their vices have been cultivated, the drunkard has been given the means to further debauchery, has been helped forward another stage on the road to ruin; a centre of infectious disease has probably been created. Instead of the Happiness which Tolstoy says results from utter devotion to the ideal, there is little but misery. Two cultured people suffering acutely, and a whole village sunk still deeper in misery and despair by their well-meant, but unwise benevolence!

This apparent *reductio ad absurdum* forces us to examine Tolstoy's theory as expounded in the "Christian Teaching" more narrowly, and when we do so we seem able to detect the initial error from which all the rest follows. Tolstoy asks the question, "Why is a spiritual being, love, enclosed within the separate being of man?" and he answers, "Love in every separate man, and in all mankind, is like steam confined in a boiler; the steam expands, drives the piston, and performs the work. As in order that the steam may do its work there *must* be the *resistance of the boiler*, so, also, in order that love may accomplish its work, there must be the resistance caused by the limits of the separate being which encloses it." This may seem a satisfactory answer, but it is not in accordance with the pronouncement we find in another place, and which forms

the foundation of his whole theory of asceticism and absolute self-negation, that *the spiritual* "rejects all the demands of the animal in man," and that when the "reasonable consciousness" awakes in man he desires that his life should be "purely animal or else that it should be purely spiritual." The resistance of the boiler is essential to the useful action of the steam. If the steam *bursts* the boiler it escapes uselessly into the air, and the whole worth of the engine is lost. So uselessly does a man act who helps on a drunkard to ruin and starves himself in consequence. It is not true that man, normally, desires to be "purely animal" or "purely spiritual," a beast or an angel. He desires to be truly a *man*. The rejection of "all the demands of the animal in man" is really the denial of the moral life itself—in the attempt to be a "purely spiritual" being, man either spends his life in vainly trying to fly in a vacuum, which leads to disgust with life and finally to death, or he gives up the attempt in despair and falls back as nearly as possible into the "purely animal."

"All passions have a time when they are fatal only, when with the weight of their folly, they drag their victim down; and they have a later, very much later period, when they wed with spirit, when they are spiritualized. . . . To annihilate passions and desires merely in order to obviate their folly and its unpleasant results appears to us at present simply as an acute form of folly. We no longer admire the dentist who *pulls out* the teeth that they may no longer pain. . . . The Church fights against passion with excision in every sense: its practice, its cure is *castration*. It never asks, How to spiritualize, beautify and deify a desire—it has, at all times, laid the emphasis of discipline upon extermination. . . . But to attack the passions at the root means to attack life itself at the root: the praxis of the Church is *inimical to life*." These wise words of Fredrich Nietzsche's go to the very core of the matter. Reason does not "reject all the demands of the animal in man," but purifies and spiritualizes them and organizes them into the system of a life which is truly human, neither bestial nor ascetic.

In a recent article in the *New Order*, on Marriage, Tolstoy

categorically declares, "there cannot be any such thing as a Christian marriage." In consequence of his abstract separation of the animal and the spiritual he regards marriage as a merely animal union—an indulgence of the lusts of the flesh and denies the possibility of spiritualizing sexual love and thus making it the basis of, and a means to, the love and service of Man. "Falling in love," he declares, "union with the object of one's love (however verse or prose may seek to prove the opposite) never facilitates but always impedes the attainment of an end worthy of man." And again: "The Ideal of the Christian is love to God and to one's neighbor, whereas sexual love, marriage, is service of self, and is, therefore, in any case an obstacle to the service of God and man, and, therefore, from the Christian point of view, a fall, a sin." How much truer is Nietzsche's aphorism: "Chastity and sensuality are not necessarily antithetical; every true marriage, every genuine love affair is beyond such antithesis." "Do I counsel Chastity?" he exclaims in "Zarathustra." Chastity is a virtue with some, but with most almost a vice. "But even your best love is but an enraptured parable, and a painful heat. It is a torch that is to beacon you to higher ways."

"One day ye shall love beyond yourselves! If so, first *learn* how to love. And hence ye have to drink the bitter cup of your love."

"Marriage: thus I call the will of two to create that one which is more than they who created it. I call marriage reverence unto each other as unto those who will such a will."

To find in marriage and the family relationships the means by which we first "learn how to love," the nest in which is nurtured the wider love to humanity; to all that lives and feels, is surely a truer view than that which regards marriage as only a "snare," a "fall," or a "sin." Tolstoy's rejection of marriage is a part of his rejection of all the forms in which the spiritual nature of man has endeavored to express itself. Preparation for life by study, organized labor, voluntary associations of all kinds and finally the state or organized society are all regarded by Tolstoy as like the family, mere "snares," by which sins are justified. He admits that they are explained

“as the result of the demands of the spiritual life itself,” but as his ideal is an ascetic one,—the extirpation of the animal desires instead of their subordination and organization—he finds them mere hindrances to its realization. We have then to join issue with Tolstoy on the question of the *ideal itself*. We wish, indeed, to realize the spiritual life, but we are human beings, in whom the spiritual life is embodied in an animal organism—and this, moreover, is the only spiritual life of which we have any knowledge, or can even form any conception, therefore to endeavor to reject all the demands of the animal in man, leading, as we have seen it does, to the rejection of all the forms in which the spiritual life has organized and rationalized those demands, is to deprive the spiritual of all content, to reduce it to nothingness, to move towards death!

Perhaps the chief value of Nietzsche’s writings is found in the clearness with which he discerns, and the energy with which he repudiates, and combats, the deadly tendency of a morality based solely on the feeling of sympathy, which must finally issue in an asceticism like that of Tolstoy. Of a soft and gentle character, naturally inclined to tenderness and sympathy—he ruined his health by his voluntary service in the military hospitals during the Franco-German war—he came to recognize that “in the beautiful and in pity there was always the greatest danger for me”; he experienced in his own person the nihilistic effects of Schopenhauer’s teaching which he at first so eagerly embraced; vividly realized the inevitable outcome of a life which attempts to be “purely spiritual”; and fought with all the passionate intensity of his soul against this doctrine of death.

“The problem of *décadence* is that which has occupied me most profoundly;” he writes in the preface to “The Case of Wagner.” “I have had reasons for it. ‘Good and evil’ is only a variety of that problem. When one has learned to discern the symptoms of decline, one also understands morality,—one understands what conceals itself under its holiest names and valuation-formula; namely, *impoverished* life, desire for the end, great lassitude. Morality *negates* life.”

This is the fundamental thought of "Beyond Good and Evil," and "A Genealogy of Morals," the works in which Nietzsche most fully develops his ideas on Ethics. He approaches Ethics from the standpoint of Physiology. For him the moral life has no independence. It is entirely subordinated to Biology. The morality of a man is only a symptom of his physiological condition. "Everything good is instinct and consequently easy, natural, free." "A well-bred and prosperous man will necessarily perform certain actions, and instinctively avoid others; he carries the disposition which he physiologically represents into his relations with men and things. His virtue is the consequence of his good fortune." In "Beyond Good and Evil," he describes the evolution of morality from this point of view. There are three periods in the history or moral development. In the first, or Pre-moral period, deeds are estimated solely by their consequences. Then follows the Moral period—that in which we live—when reflection has arisen and the stress is laid on motives, when the "superstition" obtains that the worth of an action lies in the worth of its motive. We are passing out of this period since we are beginning to discover that "intentional morality has been a prejudice, a rashness, a something provisional, perhaps something of the rank of astrology or alchemy, but in any case that which must be transcended," and so we are entering upon the Supra-moral period when the worth of an action is seen to be "precisely in that which was not intended by it," but in that of which the intention was only "a sign and symptom," namely, the health and vigor or the weakness and decay of the organism. Nietzsche regards current morality as nothing more than action motivated solely by the feeling of pity; and the predominance of this feeling is a sign of weakness and degeneracy, and this morality appears to him the symptom of degeneracy, the outcome of the same want of strong, healthy life which finds expression in pessimism and asceticism. "To me this ever-spreading morality of sympathy," he complains, "revealed itself as the most dismal symptom of our dismal grown European civilization, as a round-about way to a new Buddhism? to a European Buddhism? to Nihilism?" It arose, he imag-

ined, among a weak and conquered race, such as the Jews, and begins by the *resentment* of those to whom forcible reaction is impossible and who must be satisfied with an imaginary vengeance against their oppressors. It is, he declares, a slave morality which he thus describes: "Suppose that the oppressed, the suffering, those who are not free, who are uncertain of themselves and weary—suppose that these moralize, what will be the common element in their moral estimates? Probably a pessimistic suspicion in regard to the whole situation of mankind will find expression. The eye of the slave rests with disfavor upon the virtues of the powerful; he feels skepticism and disgust, a refinement of distrust in regard to everything good which such circles hold in honor. . . . On the other hand those qualities are brought into prominence and covered with light which serve to ease the existence of suffering; compassion, the kind, helping hand, the good heart, patience, industry, humility, friendliness, receive here their meed of honor. For these are the most useful qualities and almost the only means to make the pressure of existence endurable. A slave morality is essentially a morality of utility."

Very different is the "Master-morality"—the morality of stoical heroism as opposed to the morality of sympathy. This is a symptom of the health, vigor, and beauty of the dominant races and therefore gives the foremost place to power, courage, pride, self-confidence. In the moral estimates which "took their rise among a ruling race," Nietzsche declares, "it is the proud and elevated states of the soul which are felt as distinctive, and as determining the order of rank. The High-born man separates from himself the beings in whom the opposite of these proud and elevated states finds expression. He despises them. In this . . . kind of morality the opposition, good and bad, it will be noted, is equivalent to well-born and contemptible. . . . The good, *i. e.*, the noble, the powerful, the higher-situated, the high-minded—felt and regarded themselves and their acting as of first rank in contradistinction to everything low, low-minded, mean, and vulgar. Out of this *pathos of distance* they took for themselves the right of creating values, of coining names for these values."

This morality, which in a crude form was practised in primal times, when spiritualized and turned from mere brute strength into the dominance of power combined with intellect and beauty, becomes the supra-morality of the future, and is the complete negation of the morality taught by Schopenhauer. That was the negation of the will to live; this the full and unqualified assertion of the "Will to Power," which for Nietzsche is the real principle of all life and, therefore, the principle of morals also. Nietzsche had only reached this position after a long course of thought. Like Tolstoy he started with the full acceptance of Schopenhauer's doctrine of the irrational will, the consequent aimlessness of life and the need for deliverance from the futile struggle, but at first he sought this deliverance by the way of art. In this he was aided by his friendship for Richard Wagner, whom he met for the first time at Leipzig. "I have found a man," he exclaims in his enthusiasm, "who reveals to me like no one else the picture of what Schopenhauer called the 'genius.'" Nietzsche saw Schopenhauer's philosophy exhibited in a living form in Wagner's music. His delight inspired his first work, "The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music."

In this work Nietzsche argues that the Greeks had imagined the calm and beautiful world of the Olympian Gods—of whom the type is Apollo, the god of sculpture, the art of beauty—as a dream-world of refuge from the cruel reality of the world as conceived of by the old Greek popular wisdom, illustrated by the story of Midas and Silenus. In contrast with this Apollonian art arose the wild cult of Bacchus or Dionysius—the world of intoxication in opposition to the dream-world of beauty. It found expression in music,—the art which expresses the whole soul, not the harmonious alone, but also the discordant; the ugly as well as the beautiful. And to music was added dancing, in which the animal nature expressed itself in voluptuous motion. The poetry of Dionysiac intoxication rejected the objectivity and measured movement of the Epic, and uttered all the life and passion of the soul in Lyrics, which expressed in burning words the passions which inspired the music from which they sprung. From the

union of these two forms of poetry Tragedy was born. Nietzsche thinks that the chorus of Mænads and Satyrs—the true men, half beast, half god—was the original and essential part of Tragedy. It sings how the invisible God, the wise and suffering one, “suffers and is glorified and therefore does not itself act. Later on the *noble man*, as Prometheus or Œdipus, is the central figure,” the essence of whose tragic existence is that “with the heroic impulse of the individual towards the universal, with the attempt to stride over the boundary of individuality and to make himself the sole world-being, he experiences in himself the hidden contradiction in things,—*i. e.*, he becomes criminal, and suffers.” The Attic tragedy died at the hands of Euripides, by the development of critical thought which came to full consciousness of itself in Socrates, the speculative man, who finds all evil in ignorance, and the anodyne of existence in the search for truth. Man now turns away from art, and, in the course of centuries, has reared the mighty fabric of science, on the foundation of the “firm belief that thought with the clue of causality can penetrate to the deepest abyss of being, and that thought has power, not only to know true being but even to correct it. This high metaphysical delusion is given out as the instinct of science and conducts it further and further to its limits when it must transform itself into art. . . . We must conclude that there is an eternal conflict between the theoretical and the tragic view of the world, and only after the spirit of science has been brought to its limits, and its claim for universal validity, through the proof of those limits, has been destroyed, may we hope for the re-birth of tragedy.” This time was come. Kant and Schopenhauer had destroyed the illusion that science can explain and correct the world, and tragedy was born again in the musical drama of Wagner. It is important to dwell upon this remarkable work—historically false indeed, but full of marvellous flashes of thought, and of suggestive ideas expressed in the nervous style of which Nietzsche was master—because it contains the germ of his latest views in a more attractive form than they afterwards assumed. Like Schopenhauer, Nietzsche looks for salvation to art, but to an art which no longer aims at

the beautiful but at the sublime. It is profoundly pessimistic. "Knowledge kills action," Nietzsche declares. "The glance into the horrible truth of things outweighs every motive to action. *Now no comfort exists.* . . . In the consciousness of a truth once beheld one now sees everywhere only the terrible or the absurd, and loathes it. Here, in the greatest danger of the will, Art approaches, as a saving healing enchantress; she alone is able to turn these thoughts of loathing over the terrible or the absurd of existence into shapes with which one can live. These are, the sublime, as the artistic conquest of the terrible; and the comic, as the artistic disburdening of the disgust with the absurd, for only as an æsthetic phenomenon is existence and the world eternally justified." Here, in the conception of the tragic man, we find the germ of the *Uebersensch*, or Beyond-man. He imagines a generation arising with a fearless glance and "heroic bent towards the terrible"; a race of "dragon-slayers" with bold steps who in their proud daring "turn their backs upon all the old optimism and its doctrine of feebleness in order to live resolutely in the whole and the full."

Later on, Nietzsche formed a close friendship with a young scientist, Dr. Paul Rée, and under his influence threw himself for a time with all the ardor of his nature into the study of science. He now claims the first place for truth, is a utilitarian in morals and above all a zealous defender of the evolution theory which seems to give a scientific justification of his philosophic pessimism. Writing of this time, he says, "I became estranged from art, poetry and nature." But the passionate intensity of his nature would not allow him to rest in the calm conclusions of science, and in the next works which came from his pen, "Dawn," and "The Gay Science," the beginnings of his later phase of thought and the growth of his ideal of the "Uebersensch" or "Beyond-man," are discernible. A belief in the Pythagorean year, or great cyclic year of the universe, by the revolution of which everything recurs again and again in the immensity of eternity, had become a veritable nightmare to Nietzsche and deepened his pessimism. "All the unspeakable little and great of thy life must return to thee,

and all in the same order and connection; this spider and this moonlight between the trees, and likewise this moment and I myself—the everlasting hour-glass of existence is turned again and again forever, and thou with it, thou mote of the dust.” “Ah, man forever returns!” he exclaims in agony, “contemptible little man forever returns! Even the greatest were far too mean! And eternal recurrence even for the pettiest! Ah, Loathsome! Loathsome! Loathsome!”

Science seemed no defence against this fear and disgust. “Science itself,” he suspects, may be, after all, only “a fine defence against truth!” Yet in the conception of evolution, of the struggle for life, and the consequent possibility of the improvement and perfectibility of the species, he saw a ray of hope. Could it be possible to create in the course of generations a finer, harder, more strenuous race who should not shrink from any hardship or pain, but who, having pierced the veil of illusion and seen the absurdity and horror of life, should face that horror and absurdity with the stern joy of a warrior and the derisive laughter of a god? This ideal now takes full possession of Nietzsche’s mind and he escapes from the pessimism of his master, to an optimism, indeed, but to an optimism of a promethean kind,—a defiance of the world. “He who like me,” he boasts, “has long troubled himself to think out pessimism to the bottom . . . he has, perhaps, in this way, without exactly willing it, opened his eyes to the opposite ideal—to the ideal of the haughtiest, most truly living, and world-affirming man who has not only come to terms with what was and is, and learned to put up with it, but who desires to have it over again, just as it was and is to all eternity, calling insatiably *Da Capo*, not only to his own existence, but to the whole piece and play and at the bottom to that which needs this spectacle and causes this need.”

Nietzsche now finds life worth living because he conceives of it as a means to a higher form of existence—“Man is a bridge and not a goal.” He dreams of the advent of the *Uebermensch*—the nobler race man is destined to create, and to give place to. In his wild and extravagant, but often strangely

beautiful and suggestive prose-poem or rhapsody, "Thus Spake Zarathustra," he proclaims this ideal, "I teach you the Beyond-man. Man is something that shall be surpassed. What have ye done to surpass him? All beings hitherto have created something beyond themselves; and are ye going to be the ebb of this great tide, and rather revert to the animal than surpass man? What with man is the ape? A joke or a sore shame. Man shall be the same for Beyond-man, a joke or a sore shame."

The race of the Beyond-man would be, before all else, healthy and strong, brave, sincere, keen-sighted, strenuous, free, but also proud, hard, egotistic; scorning all weakness and all sympathy and pity as born of weakness; they would rejoice in meeting opposition, pain and hardship, pressing triumphantly forward through life with heroic will, laughing with a laughter not untouched by cynicism at all weakness, whether in themselves or others.

In noble words "Zarathustra" exhorts his disciples to become the creators of the "Uebermensch."

"O my brethren, I consecrate you to be and show unto you the way unto a new nobility. Ye shall become procreators and breeders and sowers of the future."

"O my brethren, not backward shall your nobility gaze, but *forward*. Expelled shall ye be from all father's and fore-father's lands!"

"Your *children's land* ye shall love (be this love your new nobility!) the land undiscovered, in the remotest sea! For it I bid your sails seek and seek!"

"In your children ye shall *make amends* for being your father's children. *Thus* ye shall redeem all that is past!"

This dream of a noble, a heroic race which should surpass men, as man has surpassed the ape, gradually faded from Nietzsche's mind. He probably came to see that he had misunderstood Darwinism when he believed that functions were quickly developed by inheritance; that "in two or three generations all has already become instinctive,"—but that vast periods of time are required for any great modification of a race to arise by way of inheritance. In his latest work, "Antichrist," we

read: "The problem . . . is not what is to replace mankind in the chain of being (man is an *end*) but what type of man we are to *cultivate*, we are to *will*, as the more valuable, the more worthy of life." The *Uebermensch* of the future is replaced by the "Distinguished Soul," the healthy, beautiful, strong, proud, heroic man who is not destined to arise in some distant future, but exists now, and as the outcome of evolution and the flower of human life, feels his existence justified. He is thoroughly egotistic, without love or pity for the "much too many," the common herd, whom he regards with undisguised contempt, cherishing the immovable belief that to a being such as he "other beings are naturally in subjection, and have to sacrifice themselves. The distinguished soul accepts the fact of its egotism without any question, moreover without any feeling of harshness, compulsion, or arbitrariness about it, rather something that has its basis in the permanent law of things."

The Distinguished Soul as thus conceived, coldly egotistic, proud and stern, the oppressor and despiser of his fellow-men, regarding himself as the meaning and highest product of society and rewarding the sacrifices of others only with scorn and contempt, is assuredly not a lovable being; yet in his fine, robust health and vigor, in his intellectual ability, in his cultivated taste, and above all in his resolute will which finds expression in a life of heroic struggle, strong self-control, and a noble contempt of ease and pleasure, there are not wanting traits of human excellence. But the logic of Nietzsche's thought carries him further, he lays the stress more and more on mere strength.

"What is good?" he asks in his latest work, and he answers, "All that increases the feeling of power, will to power, power itself, in man."

"What is bad? All that proceeds from weakness."

"What is happiness? The feeling that power increases—that a resistance is overcome."

"*Not* contentedness, but more power: *not* peace at any price, but warfare; *not* virtue but capacity (virtue in the Renaissance style, *virtu*, virtue free from any moralic acid).

“The weak and ill-conditioned shall perish: first principle of our charity. And people shall help them to do so.”

“What is more injurious than any crime? Practical sympathy for all the ill-constituted and weak:—Christianity.”

Thus in Nietzsche's ideal the human traits tend to disappear. The heroic will leading the “dragon-slayer” of Nietzsche's earliest work “to live resolutely in the whole and the full” has become the “Will to power” and this necessarily leads on to mere egotism, harshness, and cruelty. At the *base* of all the noble races he admires, Nietzsche finds “the beast of prey, the splendid blind beast roaming wantonly in search of prey.” His “distinguished soul” being entirely self-centred, rejecting human fellowship, sympathy and love with scorn, becomes at last little else than the man of prey or even the beast. Cæsar Borgia and Napoleon, in the latter of whom “appeared the incarnate problem of *the noble ideal as such* Napoleon the synthesis of monster and Beyond-man,” seem to go near exemplifying his ideals.

There is much in Nietzsche's writing which is of great value and worthy of careful study and prolonged thought. His demand for health and strength as a condition of all worthy life is surely sound. His protest against the existence of the weaklings who are so numerous in modern society, and who ought never to have been born and are unfit both in body and mind to face the duties and pains of existence, is sorely needed. His contempt for the sickly and sentimental sympathy which loves to dwell on disease and suffering rather than strenuously strive to remove their causes—which admires itself for its tenderness of heart, but is quite incapable of a manly conflict with evil, is most timely. But his defence of a proud and egotistic aristocracy, of unfeeling and even brutal egotism, even of downright cruelty; his scornful repudiation of love and sympathy and of the feeling of human fellowship which is man's greatest joy, is harmful, false and evil, and tends only to the disruption of society and the loss of the hard-won gains of evolutionary progress.

Tolstoy and Nietzsche are the very antithesis of each other. Tolstoy's asceticism is the reaction of a sympathetic and deeply

religious nature against the parasitic and voluptuous life of his youth. Nietzsche's worship of strength, health, beauty, and vigorous will is the revolt of a proud and sensitive soul, against the limitations, the feebleness and the misery caused by a diseased and suffering organism. Tolstoy preaches the suppression of all instincts, the rejection of all the demands of the animal in man; for Nietzsche "everything good is instinct," while "to *have* to contend with instincts" is for him the sign of *décadence*. Tolstoy finds the only way of happiness in the Christian life, and sums up the conclusions of his life experience in the "Christian Teaching." The last book which Nietzsche wrote is entitled the "Antichrist,"—and in it he characterizes Christianity as "the most subterranean conspiracy that has ever existed,—against healthiness, beauty, well-constitutedness, courage, intellect, *benevolence* of soul, *against life itself*."

Yet they have much in common. Both deny, either formally or by implication, the presence of a rational order in the world, are therefore pessimistic and deny any objective truth or principle of conduct common to all. Tolstoy, it is true, speaks of the "reasonable consciousness" which awakens in man, and of the "Will of God" as determining the conditions of life; but the first merely serves to reveal to us our inner chaos, and to show us the contradictions of our being, without giving us any guidance for solving them, and the second appears as an altogether inscrutable fate. Nietzsche repudiates in the strongest terms the presence of reason in the world or any kind of cosmic harmony. "The character total of the world is to all eternity chaos," he cries, "not in the sense of a missing necessity, but of missing order, articulation, form, beauty, wisdom." So recognizing no appeal to reason, both are dominated by feeling; Tolstoy by the feeling of love and sympathy, Nietzsche by pride and contempt. The ethics of the former are the ethics of self-negation—of the latter of unconditional self-assertion. Neither recognizes the truth that a truly human life is not the uncontrolled indulgence of feeling, but an "activity according to reason."

The writings of Nietzsche and Tolstoy are works of genius,

they abound in flashes of insight, are heavy with deep emotion, full of contagious enthusiasm, and above all suggestive and stimulating to thought. By their unflinching courage and consistency, and the daring with which principles are worked out to their ultimate consequences, they are very helpful in the study of ethical problems. Read together they complement each other. Opposite errors are cancelled and truth made clear to the mind. They offer a complete demonstration of the impossibility of founding ethics on mere feeling, show the necessity of recognizing the claims of reason to organize and harmonize life, and the value of the institutions—sadly imperfect as they are—in which the rational life has expressed itself.

Tolstoy is a pure anarchist. The state he regards as the greatest of all the "snares" that prevent men from fighting against their sins, and the other forms of organized life also fall under his ban. Nietzsche wavers between the position of an individualism which regards the free life of "hermits and hermits in pairs" as its ideal, which sees in the state the "new idol" and the "coldest of all cold monsters," a device of the "much too-many" to fetter and enchain free souls,—“where the state ceaseth, there beginneth that man that is not superfluous”—and that of a kind of aristocratic régime after the model of the Hindu caste system, where everything should be sacrificed to an aristocracy the essence of which he declares to be that "it feels itself not as function (whether of the throne or of the country), but as the meaning and ultimate justification of the whole, that it accepts therefore with a good conscience the sacrifice of innumerable men, who for its sake must be depressed and be reduced to be incomplete men, slaves, instruments."

(Ethics must be founded on the real nature of man, but as man is an animal, the content of his life is found in his needs and desires and in the activities directed to their satisfaction—to reject these and to attempt to make life purely spiritual is, as Nietzsche so clearly saw, to destroy life itself. On the other hand, man is a rational being, and therefore these same instincts and desires, if blindly followed, will deprive life of its human character and reduce it to the level of the beast.

Reason has already, to some extent, organized the animal instincts and impulses in harmony with its ends. We are all born and grow up within such organizations—form part of such organisms. To them we owe that measure of human life to which we have attained. Their evils, imperfections and numberless abuses should not blind us to their worth, lead us to aim at their destruction or to imagine that a higher life could be lived in a state of anarchy, or that a proud and selfish aristocracy scorning to be a function of society could ever realize the highest human excellence, rather should we labor to make the state and all the other forms of social organization a more perfect expression of the reason which has called them into being. Not in a life dominated solely by the feeling of sympathy which rejects all pleasurable activity and offers to others what it refuses for itself, still less in a life of cold and loveless egotism and scornful pride; not in self-assertion alone nor in self-negation is the truly moral life. The true good of man—the principle and goal of Ethics, transcending the antithesis of altruism and egotism—is a Common Good realized in a society so organized as to give effect to the equal rights of all its members which belong to them in virtue of their common humanity, whilst affording opportunities for the development of the faculties with which men are so unequally endowed and giving scope for their exercise in the service of the whole.

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