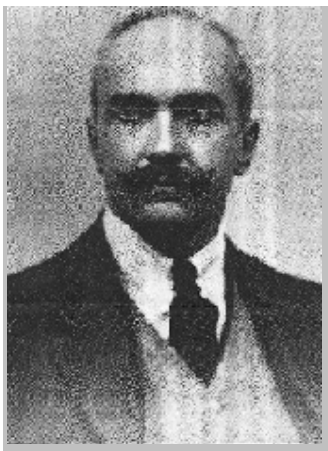
GEORGE SANTAYANA



CHARACTER & OPINION IN THE UNITED STATES

WITH REMINISCENCES OF WILLIAM JAMES AND JOSIAH ROYCE AND ACADEMIC LIFE IN AMERICA

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PREFACE

THE major part of this book is composed of lectures originally addressed to British audiences. I have added a good deal, but I make no apology, now that the whole may fall under American eyes, for preserving the tone and attitude of a detached observer. Not at all on the ground that " to see ourselves as others see us" would be to see ourselves truly ; on the contrary, I agree with Spinoza where he says that other people's idea of a man is apt to be a better expression of their nature than of his. I accept this principle in the present instance, and am willing it should be applied to the judgements contained in this book, in which the reader may see chiefly expressions of my own feelings and hints of my own opinions. Only an American—and I am not one except by long association [1]—can speak for the heart

[1]Perhaps I should add that I have not been in the United States since January 1912. My observations stretched, with some intervals, through the forty years preceding that date.

of America. I try to understand it, as a family friend may who has a different temperament ; but it is only my own mind that I speak for at bottom, or wish to speak for. Certainly my sentiments are of little importance compared with the volume and destiny of the things I discuss here : yet the critic and artist too have their rights, and to take as calm and as long a view as possible seems to be but another name for the love of truth. Moreover, I suspect that my feelings are secretly shared by many people in America, natives and foreigners, who may not have the courage or the occasion to express them frankly. After all, it has been acquaintance with America and American philosophers that has chiefly contributed to clear and to settle my own mind. I have no axe to grind, only my thoughts to burnish, in the hope that some part of the truth of things may be reflected there ; and I am confident of not giving serious offence to the judicious, because they will feel that it is affection for the American people that makes me wish that what is best and most beautiful should not be absent from their lives.

Civilisation is perhaps approaching one of

those long winters that overtake it from time to time. A flood of barbarism from below may soon level all the fair works of our Christian ancestors, as another flood two thousand years ago levelled those of the ancients. Romantic Christendom — picturesque, passionate, unhappy episode—may be coming to an end. Such a catastrophe would be no reason for despair. Nothing lasts for ever ; but the elasticity of life is wonderful, and even if the world lost its memory it could not lose its youth. Under the deluge, and watered by it, seeds of all sorts would survive against the time to come, even if what might eventually spring from them, under the new circumstances, should wear a strange aspect. In a certain measure, and unintentionally, both this destruction and this restoration have already occurred in America. There is much forgetfulness, much callow disrespect for what is past or alien ; but there is a fund of vigour, goodness, and hope such as no nation ever possessed before. In what sometimes looks like American greediness and jostling for the front place, all is love of achievement, nothing is unkindness ; it is a fearless people, and free from malice, as you

might see in their eyes and gestures, even if their conduct did not prove it. This soil is propitious to every seed, and tares must needs grow in it; but why should it not also breed clear thinking, honest judgement, and rational happiness ? These things are indeed not necessary to existence, and without them America might long remain rich and populous like many a barbarous land in the past; but in that case its existence would be hounded, like theirs, by falsity and remorse. May Heaven avert the omen, and make the new world a better world than the old ! In the classical and romantic tradition of Europe, love, of which there was very little, was supposed to be kindled by beauty, of which there was a great deal: perhaps moral chemistry may be able to reverse this operation, and in the future and in America it may breed beauty out of love.

CONTENTS PAGE

CHAPTER I

THE MORAL BACKGROUND

ABOUT the middle of the nineteenth century, in the quiet sunshine of provincial prosperity, New England had an Indian summer of the mind; and an agreeable reflective literature showed how brilliant that russet and yellow season could be. There were poets, historians, orators, preachers, most of whom had studied foreign literatures and had travelled; they demurely kept up with the times; they were universal humanists. But

it was all a harvest of leaves ; these worthies had an expurgated and barren conception of life ; theirs was the purity of sweet old age. Sometimes they made attempts to rejuvenate their minds by broaching native subjects ; they wished to prove how much matter for poetry the new world supplied, and they wrote " Rip van Winkle," "Hia-

watha," or " Evangeline "; but the inspiration did not seem much more American than that of Swift or Ossian or Châteaubriand. These cultivated writers lacked native roots and fresh sap because the American intellect itself lacked them. Their culture was half a pious survival, half an intentional acquirement; it was not the inevitable flowering of a fresh experience. Later there have been admirable analytic novelists who have depicted American life as it is, but rather bitterly, rather sadly; as if the joy and the illusion of it did not inspire them, but only an abstract interest in their own art. If any one, like Walt Whitman, penetrated to the feelings and images which the American scene was able to breed out of itself, and filled them with a frank and broad afflatus of his own, there is no doubt that he misrepresented the conscious minds of cultivated Americans; in them the head as yet did not belong to the trunk.

Nevertheless, *belles-lettres* in the United States—which after all stretch beyond New England—have always had two points of contact with the great national experiment.

One point of contact has been oratory, with that sort of poetry, patriotic, religious, or moral, which has the function of oratory. Eloquence is a republican art, as conversation is an aristocratic one. By eloquence at public meetings and dinners, in the pulpit or in the press, the impulses of the community could be brought to expression; consecrated maxims could be reapplied; the whole latent manliness and shrewdness of the nation could be mobilised. In the form of oratory reflection, rising

out of the
problems of action, could be
turned to guide
or to sanction action, and
sometimes could
attain, in so doing, a notable
elevation of
thought. Although Americans,
and many
other people, usually say that
thought is
for the sake of action, it has
evidently been
in these high moments, when
action became
incandescent in thought, that
they have
been most truly alive,
intensively most
active, and although *doing*
nothing, have
found at last that their existence
was worth
while. Reflection is itself a turn,
and the
top turn, given to life. Here is
the second
point at which literature in
America has
fused with the activities of the
nation : it

has paused to enjoy them. Every animal has his festive and ceremonious moments, when he poses or plumes himself or thinks ; sometimes he even sings and flies aloft in a sort of ecstasy. Somewhat in the same way, when reflection in man becomes dominant, it may become passionate; it may create religion or philosophy — adventures often more thrilling than the humdrum experience they are supposed to interrupt.

This pure flame of mind is nothing new, superadded, or alien in America. It is notorious how metaphysical was the passion that drove the Puritans to those shores; they went there in the hope of living more perfectly in the spirit. And their pilgrim's progress was not finished when they had founded their churches in the wilderness; an endless migration of the mind was still before them, a flight from those new idols and servitudes which prosperity involves, and the eternal lure of spiritual freedom and truth. The moral world always contains undiscovered or thinly peopled continents open to those who are more attached to what might or should be than to what already is. Americans are eminently pro-

phets ; they apply morals to public affairs ; they are impatient and enthusiastic. Their judgements have highly speculative implications, which they often make explicit; they are men with principles, and fond of stating them. Moreover, they have an intense self-reliance ; to exercise private judgement is not only a habit with them but a conscious duty. Not seldom personal conversions and mystical experiences throw their ingrained faith into novel forms, which may be very bold and radical. They are traditionally exercised about religion, and adrift on the subject more than any other people on earth; and if religion is a dreaming philosophy, and philosophy a waking religion, a people so wide awake and so religious as the old Yankees ought certainly to have been rich in philosophers.

In fact, philosophy in the good old sense of curiosity about the nature of things, with readiness to make the best of them, has not been absent from the practice of Americans or from their humorous moods; their humour and shrewdness are sly comments on the shortcomings of some polite convention that everybody accepts tacitly, yet feels to

be insecure and contrary to the principles on which life is actually carried on. Nevertheless, with the shyness which simple competence often shows in the presence of conventional shams, these wits have not taken their native wisdom very seriously. They have not had the leisure nor the intellectual scope to think out and defend the implications of their homely perceptions. Their fresh insight has been whispered in parentheses and asides ; it has been humbly banished, in alarm, from their solemn moments. What people have respected have been rather scraps of official philosophy, or entire systems, which they have inherited or imported, as they have respected operas and art museums. To be on speaking terms with these fine things was a part of social respectability, like having family silver. High thoughts must be at hand, like those candlesticks, probably candleless, sometimes displayed as a seemly ornament in a room blazing with electric light. Even in William James, spontaneous and stimulating as he was, a certain underlying discomfort was discernible ; he had come out into the open, into what should have been the sunshine,

but the vast shadow of the temple still stood between him and the sun. He was worried about what ought to be believed and the

awful deprivations of disbelieving. What he called the cynical view of anything had first to be brushed aside, without stopping to consider whether it was not the true one ; and he was bent on finding new and empirical reasons for clinging to free-will, departed spirits, and tutelary gods. Nobody, except perhaps in this last decade, has tried to bridge the chasm between what he believes in daily life and the " problems " of philosophy. Nature and science have not been ignored, and " practice " in some schools has been constantly referred to; but instead of supplying philosophy with its data they have only constituted its difficulties; its function has been not to build on known facts but to explain them away. Hence a curious alternation and irrelevance, as between weekdays and Sabbaths, between American ways and American opinions.

That philosophy should be attached to tradition would be a great advantage, conducive to mutual understanding, to maturity, and to progress, if the tradition lay in the

highway of truth. To deviate from it in that case would be to betray the fact that, while one might have a lively mind, one was not master of the subject. Unfortunately, in the nineteenth century, in America as elsewhere, the ruling tradition was not only erratic and far from the highway of truth, but the noonday of this tradition was over, and its classic forms were outgrown. A philosophy may have a high value, other than its truth to things, in its truth to method and to the genius of its author ; it may be a feat of synthesis and imagination, like a great poem, expressing one of the eternal possibilities of being, although one which the creator happened to reject when he made this world. It is possible to be a master in false philosophy—easier, in fact, than to be a master in the truth, because a false philosophy can be made as simple and consistent as one pleases. Such had been the masters of the tradition prevalent in New England—Calvin, Hume, Fichte, not to mention others more relished because less pure ; but one of the disadvantages of such perfection in error is that the illusion is harder to transmit to another age and

country. If Jonathan Edwards, for instance, was a Calvinist of pristine force and perhaps the greatest *master* in false philosophy that America has yet produced, he paid the price by being abandoned, even in his lifetime, by his own sect, and seeing the world turn a deaf ear to his logic

without so much as attempting to refute it. One of the peculiarities of recent speculation, especially in America, is that ideas are abandoned in virtue of a mere change of feeling, without any new evidence or new arguments. We do not nowadays refute our predecessors, we pleasantly bid them good-bye. Even if all our principles are unwittingly traditional we do not like to bow openly to authority. Hence masters like Calvin, Hume, or Fichte rose before their American admirers like formidable ghosts, foreign and unseizable. People refused to be encumbered with any system, even one of their own ; they were content to imbibe more or less of the spirit of a philosophy and to let it play on such facts as happened to attract their attention. The originality even of Emerson and of William James was of this incidental character ; they

found new approaches to old beliefs or new expedients in old dilemmas. They were not in a scholastic sense pupils of anybody or masters in anything. They hated the scholastic way of saying what they meant, if they had heard of it ; they insisted on a personal freshness of style, refusing to make their thought more precise than it happened to be spontaneously ; and they lisped their logic, when the logic came.

We must remember that ever since the days of Socrates, and especially after the establishment of Christianity, the dice of thought have been loaded. Certain pledges have preceded inquiry and divided the possible conclusions beforehand into the acceptable and the inacceptable, the edifying and the shocking, the noble and the base. Wonder has no longer been the root of philosophy, but sometimes impatience at having been cheated and sometimes fear of being undeceived. The marvel of existence, in which the luminous and the opaque are so romantically mingled, no longer lay like a sea open to intellectual adventure, tempting the mind to conceive some bold and curious system of the universe, on the

analogy of what had been so far discovered. Instead, people were confronted with an orthodoxy—though not always the same orthodoxy — whispering mysteries and brandishing anathemas. Their wits were absorbed in solving traditional problems, many of them artificial and such as the ruling orthodoxy had created by its gratuitous assumptions. Difficulties were therefore found in some perfectly obvious truths; and obvious fables, if they were hallowed by association, were

seriously weighed in the balance against one another or against the facts; and many an actual thing was proved to be impossible, or was hidden under a false description. In conservative schools the student learned and tried to fathom the received solutions; in liberal schools he was perhaps invited to seek solutions of his own, but still to the old questions. Freedom, when nominally allowed, was a provisional freedom ; if your wanderings did not somehow bring you back to orthodoxy you were a misguided being, no matter how disparate from the orthodox might be the field from which you fetched your little harvest; and if you could not be answered you were called superficial.

-11-

Most spirits are cowed by such disparagement ; but even those who snap their fingers at it do not escape ; they can hardly help feeling that in calling a spade a spade they are petulant and naughty; or if their inspiration is too genuine for that, they still unwittingly shape their opinions in contrast to those that claim authority, and therefore on the same false lines—a terrible tax to pay to the errors of others ; and it is only here and there that a very great and solitary mind, like that of Spinoza, can endure obloquy without bitterness or can pass through perverse controversies without contagion.

Under such circumstances it is obvious that speculation can be frank and happy only where orthodoxy has receded, abandoning a larger and larger field to unprejudiced inquiry; or else (as has happened among liberal Protestants) where the very heart of orthodoxy has melted, has absorbed the most alien substances, and is ready to bloom into anything that anybody finds attractive. This is the secret of that extraordinary vogue which the transcendental philosophy has had for nearly a century in Great Britain

-12-

and America ; it is a method which enables a man to renovate all his beliefs, scientific and religious, from the inside, giving them a new status and interpretation as phases of his own experience or imagination; so that he does not seem to himself to reject anything, and yet is bound to nothing, except to his creative self. Many too who have no inclination to practise this transcendental method—a personal, arduous, and futile art, which requires to be renewed at every moment —have been impressed with the results or the maxims of this or that transcendental philosopher, such as that every opinion leads on to another that reinterprets it, or every evil

to some higher good that contains it ; and they have managed to identify these views with what still seemed to them vital in religion.

In spite of this profound mutation at the core, and much paring at the edges, traditional belief in New England retained its continuity and its priestly unction; and religious teachers and philosophers could slip away from Calvinism and even from Christianity without any loss of elevation or austerity. They found it so pleasant

and easy to elude the past that they really had no quarrel with it. The world, they felt, was a safe place, watched over by a kindly God, who exacted nothing but cheerfulness and good-will from his children; and the American flag was a sort of rainbow in the sky, promising that all storms were over. Or if storms came, such as the Civil War, they would not be harder to weather than was necessary to test the national spirit and raise it to a new efficiency. The subtler dangers which we may now see threatening America had not yet come in sight—material restlessness was not yet ominous, the pressure of business enterprises was not yet out of scale with the old life or out of key with the old moral harmonies. A new type of American had not appeared—the untrained, pushing, cosmopolitan orphan, cock-sure in manner but not too sure in his morality, to whom the old Yankee, with his sour integrity, is almost a foreigner. Was not " increase," in the Bible, a synonym for benefit? Was not " abundance " the same, or almost the same, as happiness?

Meantime the churches, a little ashamed of their past, began to court the good opinion

of so excellent a world. Although called evangelical, they were far, very far, from prophesying its end, or offering a refuge from it, or preaching contempt for it; they existed only to serve it, and their highest divine credential was that the world needed them. Irreligion, dissoluteness, and pessimism—supposed naturally to go together—could never prosper ; they were incompatible with efficiency. That was the supreme test. " Be Christians," I once heard a president of Yale College cry to his assembled pupils, " be Christians and you will be successful." Religion was indispensable and sacred, when not carried too far; but theology might well be unnecessary. Why distract this world with talk of another ? Enough for the day was the good thereof. Religion should be

disentangled as much as possible from history and authority and metaphysics, and made to rest honestly on one's fine feelings, on one's indomitable optimism and trust in life. Revelation was nothing miraculous, given once for all in some remote age and foreign country; it must come to us directly, and with greater authority now than ever before. If evolution was to be taken seriously and to

include moral growth, the great men of the past could only be stepping-stones to our own dignity. To grow was to contain and sum up all the good that had gone before, adding an appropriate increment. Undoubtedly some early figures were beautiful, and allowances had to be made for local influences in Palestine, a place so much more primitive and backward than Massachusetts. Jesus was a prophet more winsome and nearer to ourselves than his predecessors ; but how could any one deny that the twenty centuries of progress since his time must have raised a loftier pedestal for Emerson or Channing or Phillips Brooks ? It might somehow not be in good taste to put this feeling into clear words ; one and perhaps two of these men would have deprecated it ; nevertheless it beamed with refulgent self-satisfaction in the lives and maxims of most of their followers.

All this liberalism, however, never touched the centre of traditional orthodoxy, and those who, for all their modernness, felt that they inherited the faith of their fathers and were true to it were fundamentally right. There was still an orthodoxy among American high - brows at the end of the nineteenth century,

dissent from which was felt to be scandalous ; it consisted in holding that the universe exists and is governed for the sake of man or of the human spirit. This persuasion, arrogant as it might seem, is at bottom an expression of impotence rather than of pride. The soul is originally vegetative ; it feels the weal and woe of what occurs within the body. With locomotion and the instinct to hunt and to flee, animals begin to notice external things also; but the chief point noticed about them is whether they are good or bad, friendly or hostile, far or near. The station of the animal and his interests thus become the measure of all things for him, in so far as he knows them ; and this aspect of them is, by a primitive fatality, the heart of them to him. It is only reason that can discount these childish perspectives, neutralise the bias of each by collating it with the others, and masterfully conceive the field in which

their common objects are deployed, discovering also the principle of foreshortening or projection which produces each perspective in turn. But reason is a later comer into this world, and weak; against its suasion stands the mighty resistance of habit and of

moral presumption. It is in their interest, and to rehabilitate the warm vegetative autonomy of the primitive soul, that orthodox religion and philosophy labour in the western world—for the mind of India cannot be charged with this folly. Although inwardly these systems have not now a good conscience and do not feel very secure (for they are retrograde and sin against the light), yet outwardly they are solemn and venerable ; and they have incorporated a great deal of moral wisdom with their egotism or humanism—more than the Indians with their respect for the infinite. In deifying human interests they have naturally studied and expressed them justly, whereas those who perceive the relativity of human goods are tempted to scorn them—which is itself unreasonable—and to sacrifice them all to the single passion of worship or of despair. Hardly anybody, except possibly the Greeks at their best, has realised the sweetness and glory of being a rational animal.

The Jews, as we know, had come to think that it was the creator of the world, the God of the universe, who had taken them for his chosen people. Christians in turn had

asserted that it was God in person who, having become a man, had founded their church. According to this Hebraic tradition, the dignity of man did not lie in being a mind (which he undoubtedly is) but in being a creature materially highly favoured, with a longer life and a brighter destiny than other creatures in the world. It is remarkable how deep, in the Hebraic religions, is this interest in material existence ; so deep that we are surprised when we discover that, according to the insight of other races, this interest is the essence of irreligion. Some detachment from existence and from hopes of material splendour has indeed filtered into Christianity through Platonism. Socrates and his disciples admired this world, but they did not particularly covet it, or wish to live long in it, or expect to improve it ; what they cared for was an idea or a good which they found expressed in it, something outside it and timeless, in which the contemplative intellect might be literally absorbed. This philosophy was no less humanistic than that

of the Jews, though in a less material fashion : if it did not read the universe in terms of thrift, it read it in terms of art. The pursuit

of a good, such as is presumably aimed at in human action, was supposed to inspire every movement in nature ; and this good, for the sake of which the very heavens revolved, was akin to the intellectual happiness of a Greek sage. Nature was a philosopher in pursuit of an idea. Natural science then took a moralising turn which it has not yet quite outgrown. Socrates required of astronomy, if it was to be true science, that it should show why *it was best* that the sun and moon should be as they are ; and Plato, refining on this, assures us that the eyes are placed in the front of the head, rather than at the back, because the front is the nobler quarter, and that the intestines are long in order that we may have leisure between meals to study philosophy. Curiously enough, the very enemies of final causes sometimes catch this infection and attach absolute values to facts in an opposite sense and in an inhuman interest; and you often hear in America that whatever is is right. These naturalists, while they rebuke the moralists for thinking that nature is ruled magically for our good, think her adorable for being ruled, in scorn of us, only by her own laws ;

and thus we oscillate between egotism and idolatry.

The Reformation did not reform this belief in the cosmic supremacy of man, or the humanity of God ; on the contrary, it took it (like so much else) in terrible German earnest, not suffering it any longer to be accepted somewhat lightly as a classical figure of speech or a mystery resting on revelation. The human race, the chosen people, the Christian elect were like tabernacle within tabernacle for the spirit; but in the holy of holies was the spirit itself, one's own spirit and experience, which was the centre of everything. Protestant philosophy, exploring the domain of science and history with confidence, and sure of finding the spirit walking there, was too conscientious to misrepresent what it found. As the terrible facts could not be altered they had to be undermined. By turning psychology into metaphysics this could be accomplished, and we could reach the remarkable conclusion that the human spirit was not so much the purpose of the universe as its seat, and the only universe there was.

This conclusion, which sums up idealism

on its critical or scientific side, would not of itself give much comfort to religious minds, that usually crave massive support rather than sublime independence; it leads to the heroic egotism of Fichte or Nietzsche rather than to any green pastures beside any still waters. But the critical element in idealism can be used to destroy belief in the natural world ; and by so doing it can open the way to another sort of idealism, not at all critical, which might be called the higher superstition. This views the world as an oracle or charade, concealing a dramatic unity, or formula, or maxim, which all experience exists to illustrate. The habit of regarding existence as a riddle, with a surprising solution which we think we have found, should be the source of rather mixed emotions ; the facts remain as they were, and rival solutions may at any time suggest themselves ; and the one we have hit on may not, after all, be particularly comforting. The Christian may find himself turned by it into a heathen, the humanist into a pantheist, and the hope with which we instinctively faced life may be chastened into mere conformity. Nevertheless, however chilling and

inhuman our higher superstition may prove, it will make us feel that we are masters of a mystical secret, that we have a faith to defend, and that, like all philosophers, we have taken a ticket in a lottery in which if we hit on the truth, even if it seems a blank, we shall have drawn the first prize.

Orthodoxy in New England, even so trans formed and attenuated, did not of course hold the field alone. There are material ists by instinct in every age and country ; there are always private gentlemen whom the clergy and the professors cannot deceive. Here and there a medical or scientific man, or a man of letters, will draw from his special pursuits some hint of the nature of things at large; or a political radical will nurse un dying wrath against all opinions not tartly hostile to church and state. But these clever people are not organised, they are not always given to writing, nor speculative enough to make a system out of their con victions. The enthusiasts and the peda gogues naturally flock to the other camp. The very competence which scientific people and connoisseurs have in their special fields disinclines them to generalise, or renders their

generalisations one-sided; so that their specu
lations are extraordinarily weak and stammer
ing. Both by what they represent and by
what they ignore they are isolated and
deprived of influence, since only those who
are at home in a subject can feel the force of
analogies drawn from that field, whereas
any one can be swayed by sentimental and
moral appeals, by rhetoric and unction.
Furthermore, in America the materialistic
school is without that support from popular
passions which it draws in many European
countries from its association with anti
clericalism or with revolutionary politics;
and it also lacks the maturity, self-confidence,
and refinement proper in older societies to
the great body of Epicurean and disen
chanted opinion, where for centuries wits,
critics, minor philosophers, and men of the
world have chuckled together over their
Horace, their Voltaire, and their Gibbon.
The horror which the theologians have of
infidelity passes therefore into the average
American mind unmitigated by the suspicion
that anything pleasant could lie in that
quarter, much less the open way to nature
and truth and a secure happiness.

There is another handicap, of a more
technical sort, under which naturalistic philo
sophy labours in America, as it does in
England; it has been crossed by scepticism
about the validity of perception and has
become almost identical with psychology.
Of course, for any one who thinks natural
istically (as the British empiricists did in
the beginning, like every unsophisticated
mortal), psychology is the description of a
very superficial and incidental complica
tion in the animal kingdom: it treats of
the curious sensibility and volatile thoughts
awakened in the mind by the growth and
fortunes of the body. In noting these
thoughts and feelings, we can observe how
far they constitute true knowledge of the
world in which they arise, how far they ignore
it, and how far they play with it, by virtue
of the poetry and the syntax of discourse
which they add out of their own exuberance ;
for fancy is a very fertile treacherous thing,
as every one finds when he dreams. But
dreams run over into waking life, and some
times seem to permeate and to underlie it ;
and it was just this suspicion that he
might be dreaming awake, that discourse and

tradition might be making a fool of him,
that prompted the hard-headed Briton, even
before the Reformation, to appeal from
conventional beliefs to " experience." He
was anxious to clear away those sophistries
and impostures of which he was particularly
apprehensive, in view of the somewhat foreign
character of his culture and religion. Ex

perience, he thought, would bear unim peachable witness to the nature of things ; for by experience he understood knowledge produced by direct contact with the object. Taken in this sense, experience is a method of discovery, an exercise of intelligence ; it is the same observation of things, strict, cumulative, and analytic, which produces the natural sciences. It rests on naturalistic assumptions (since we know when and where we find our data) and could not fail to end in materialism. What prevented British empiricism from coming to this obvious conclusion was a peculiarity of the national temperament. The Englishman is not only distrustful of too much reasoning and too much theory (and science and materialism involve a good deal of both), but he is also fond of musing and of withdrawing into

-26-

his inner man. Accordingly his empiricism took an introspective form; like Hamlet he stopped at the how ; he began to think about thinking. His first care was now to arrest experience as he underwent it; though its presence could not be denied, it came in such a questionable shape that it could not be taken at its word. This mere presence of experience, this ghostly apparition to the inner man, was all that empirical philosophy could now profess to discover. Far from being an exercise of intelligence, it retracted all understanding, all interpretation, all in stinctive faith; far from furnishing a sure record of the truths of nature, it furnished a set of pathological facts, the passive subject - matter of psychology. These now seemed the only facts admissible, and psychology, for the philosophers, became the only science. Experience could discover nothing, but all discoveries had to be retracted, so that they should revert to the fact of experience and terminate there. Evidently when the naturalistic background and meaning of experience have dropped out in this way, empiricism is a form of idealism, since what ever objects we can come upon will all be

-27-

a priori and a fortiori and sensu eminentiori ideal in the mind. The irony of logic actually made English empiricism, understood in this psychological way, the starting-point for transcendentalism and for German philo sophy.

Between these two senses of the word experience, meaning sometimes contact with things and at other times absolute feeling, the empirical school in England and America has been helplessly torn, without ever show ing the courage or the self-knowledge to choose between them. I think we may say that on the whole their view has been this :

that feelings or ideas were absolute atoms of existence, without any ground or source, so that the elements of their universe were all mental; but they conceived these psychi cal elements to be deployed in a physical time and even (since there were many simultaneous series of them) in some sort of space. These philosophers were accord ingly idealists about substance but natural ists about the order and relations of exist ences ; and experience on their lips meant feeling when they were thinking of particulars, but when they were thinking broadly, in

matters of history or science, experience meant the universal nebula or cataract which these feelings composed—itself no object of experience, but one believed in and very imperfectly presented in imagination. These men believed in nature, and were materialists at heart and to all practical purposes ; but they were shy intellectually, and seemed to think they ran less risk of error in holding a thing covertly than in openly professing it.

If any one, like Herbert Spencer, kept psychology in its place and in that respect remained a pure naturalist, he often for feited this advantage by enveloping the positive information he derived from the sciences in a whirlwind of generalisations. The higher superstition, the notion that nature dances to the tune of some compre hensive formula or some magic rhyme, thus reappeared among those who claimed to speak for natural science. In their romantic sympathy with nature they attributed to her an excessive sympathy with themselves; they overlooked her infinite complications and continual irony, and candidly believed they could measure her with their thumb-rules. Why should philosophers drag a toy-net of

words, fit to catch butterflies, through the sea of being, and expect to land all the fish in it? Why not take note simply of what the particular sciences can as yet tell us of the world? Certainly, when put together, they already yield a very wonderful, very true, and very sufficient picture of it. Are we impatient of knowing everything? But even if science was much enlarged it would have limits, both in penetration and in extent; and there would always remain, I will not say an infinity of unsolved problems (because " problems " are created by our impatience or our contradictions), but an infinity of undiscovered facts. Nature is like a beautiful woman that may be as de lightfully and as truly known at a certain distance as upon a closer view ; as to know

ing her through and through, that is nonsense in both cases, and might not reward our pains. The love of all-inclusiveness is as dangerous in philosophy as in art. The savour of nature can be enjoyed by us only through our own senses and insight, and an outline map of the entire universe, even if it was not fabulously concocted, would not tell us much that was worth knowing

-30-

about the outlying parts of it. Without suggesting for a moment that the proper study of mankind is man only—for it may be landscape or mathematics—we may safely say that their proper study is what lies within their range and is interesting to them. For this reason the moralists who consider principally human life and paint nature only as a background to their figures are apt to be better philosophers than the speculative naturalists. In human life we are at home, and our views on it, if one-sided, are for that very reason expressive of our character and fortunes. An unfortunate peculiarity of naturalistic philosophers is that usually they have but cursory and wretched notions of the inner life of the mind; they are dead to patriotism and to re ligion, they hate poetry and fancy and passion and even philosophy itself ; and therefore (especially if their science too, as often happens, is borrowed and vague) we need not wonder if the academic and cultivated world despises them, and harks back to the mythology of Plato or Aristotle or Hegel, who at least were conversant with the spirit of man.

-31-

Philosophers are very severe towards other philosophers because they expect too much. Even under the most favourable circum stances no mortal can be asked to seize the truth in its wholeness or at its centre. As the senses open to us only partial perspec tives, taken from one point of view, and report the facts in symbols which, far from being adequate to the full nature of what surrounds us, resemble the coloured signals of danger or of free way which a railway engine-driver peers at in the night, so our speculation, which is a sort of panoramic

sense, approaches things peripherally and expresses them humanly. But how doubly dyed in this subjectivity must our thought be when an orthodoxy dominant for ages has twisted the universe into the service of moral interests, and when even the heretics are entangled in a scepticism so partial and arbitrary that it substitutes psychology, the most derivative and dubious of sciences, for the direct intelligent reading of experi ence ! But this strain of subjectivity is not in all respects an evil ; it is a warm purple dye. When a way of thinking is deeply rooted in the soil, and embodies the instincts

or even the characteristic errors of a people, it has a value quite independent of its truth ; it constitutes a phase of human life and can powerfully affect the intellectual drama in which it figures. It is a value of this sort that attaches to modern philosophy in general, and very particularly to the Ameri can thinkers I am about to discuss. There would be a sort of irrelevance and unfair ness in measuring them by the standards of pure science or even of a classic sagacity, and reproaching them for not having reached perfect consistency or fundamental clearness. Men of intense feeling—and others will hardly count—are not mirrors but lights. If pure truth happened to be what they passionately desired, they would seek it single-mindedly, and in matters within their competence they would probably find it; but the desire for pure truth, like any other, must wait to be satisfied until its organ is ripe and the conditions are favour able. The nineteenth century was not a time and America was not a place where such an achievement could be expected. There the wisest felt themselves to be, as they were, questioners and apostles rather than

serene philosophers. We should not pay them the doubtful compliment of attribut ing to them merits alien to their tradition and scope, as if the nobleness they actually

possessed—their conscience, vigour, timeli
ness, and influence—were not enough.

CHAPTER II

THE ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT

DURING some twenty-five years—from about
1885 to 1910—there was at Harvard College
an interesting congregation of philosophers.
Why at Harvard in particular ? So long as
philosophy is the free pursuit of wisdom, it
arises wherever men of character and pene
tration, each with his special experience or
hobby, look about them in this world. That
philosophers should be professors is an acci
dent, and almost an anomaly. Free reflec
tion about everything is a habit to be imitated,
but not a subject to expound ; and an
original system, if the philosopher has one,
is something dark, perilous, untested, and
not ripe to be taught, nor is there much
danger that any one will learn it. The genu
ine philosopher — as Royce liked to say,
quoting the Upanishads—wanders alone like

the rhinoceros. He may be followed, as he
may have been anticipated; and he may
even be accompanied, though there is as
much danger as stimulus to him in flying
with a flock. In his disputations, if he is
drawn into them, he will still be solilo
quising, and meeting not the arguments
persuasive to others, but only such a version
of them as his own thought can supply. The
value of his questions and answers, as Socrates
knew so well, will lie wholly in the monition
of the argument developing within him and
carrying him whithersoever it will, like a
dream or like a god. If philosophers must
earn their living and not beg (which some
of them have thought more consonant with
their vocation), it would be safer for them
to polish lenses like Spinoza, or to sit in a
black skull-cap and white beard at the door
of some unfrequented museum, selling the
catalogues and taking in the umbrellas;
these innocent ways of earning their bread -
card in the future republic would not preju
dice their meditations and would keep their
eyes fixed, without undue affection, on a
characteristic bit of that real world which
it is their business to understand. Or if,

being mild and bookish, it is thought they
ought to be teachers, they might teach
something else than philosophy ; or if philo
sophy is the only thing they are competent

to teach, it might at least not be their own, but some classic system with which, and against which, mankind is already inoculated —preferably the civilised ethics and charming myths of Plato and Aristotle, which everybody will be the better for knowing and few the worse for believing. At best, the true philosopher can fulfil his mission very imperfectly, which is to pilot himself, or at most a few voluntary companions who may find themselves in the same boat. It is not easy for him to shout, or address a crowd ; he must be silent for long seasons ; for he is watching stars that move slowly and in courses that it is possible though difficult to foresee ; and he is crushing all things in his heart as in a winepress, until his life and their secret flow out together.

The tendency to gather and to breed philosophers in universities does not belong to ages of free and humane reflection : it is scholastic and proper to the Middle Ages and to Germany. And the reason is not far to

-37-

seek. When there is a philosophical orthodoxy, and speculation is expected to be a reasoned defence of some funded inspiration, it becomes itself corporate and traditional, and requires centres of teaching, endowment, and propaganda. Fundamental questions have been settled by the church, the government, or the Zeitgeist, and the function of the professor, himself bred in that school, is to transmit its lore to the next generation, with such original touches of insight or eloquence as he may command. To maintain and elucidate such a tradition, all the schools and universities of Christendom were originally founded; and if philosophy seemed sometimes to occupy but a small place in them—as for instance in the old-fashioned American college—it was only because the entire discipline and instruction of the place were permeated with a particular system of faith and morals, which it was almost superfluous to teach in the abstract. In those universities where philosophical controversy is rife, its traditional and scholastic character is no less obvious ; it lives less on meditation than on debate, and turns on proofs, objections, paradoxes, or expedients for seeming

-38-

to re-establish everything that had come to seem clearly false, by some ingenious change of front or some twist of dialectic. Its subject-matter is not so much what is known of the world, as what often very ignorant philosophers have said in answer to one another ; or else, when the age is out of patience with scholasticism, orthodoxy may take refuge in intuition, and for fear of the letter without the spirit, may excuse itself

from considering at all what is logical or probable, in order to embrace whatever seems most welcome and comforting. The sweet homilies of the professors then become clerical, genteel, and feminine.

Harvard College had been founded to rear puritan divines, and as Calvinism gradu ally dissolved, it left a void there and as it were a mould, which a philosophy expressing the same instincts in a world intellectually transformed could flow into and fill almost without knowing it. Corporate bodies are like persons, long vaguely swayed by early impressions they may have forgotten. Even when changes come over the spirit of their dream, a sense of the mission to which they were first dedicated lingers about them, and

-39-

may revive, like the antiquarian and poetic Catholicism of Oxford in the nineteenth century. In academic America the Platonic and Catholic traditions had never been planted; it was only the Calvinistic tradi tion, when revived in some modern disguise, that could stir there the secret cord of reverence and enthusiasm. Harvard was the seminary and academy for the inner circle of Bostonians, and naturally responded to all the liberal and literary movements of which Boston was the centre. In religion it became first unitarian and afterwards neutral; in philosophy it might long have been satisfied with what other New England colleges found sufficient, namely such lofty views as the president, usually a clergyman, could introduce into his baccalaureate ser mons, or into the course of lectures he might give for seniors on the evidences of Christi anity or on the theory of evolution. Such philosophical initiation had sufficed for the distinguished literary men of the middle of the century, and even for so deep a sage as Emerson. But things cannot stand still, and Boston, as is well known, is not an ordinary place. When the impulse to

-40-

domestic literary expression seemed to be exhausted, intellectual ambition took other forms. It was an age of science, of philo logy, of historical learning, and the laurels of Germany would not let Boston sleep. As it had a great public library, and hoped to have a great art museum, might it not have a great university ? Harvard in one sense was a university already, in that the college (although there was only one) was surrounded by a group of professional schools, notably those of law and medicine, in which studies requisite for the service of the community, and leading potentially to brilliant careers, were carried on with conspicuous success. The number of these professional schools

might have been enlarged, as has been actu
ally done later, until training in all the
professions had been provided. But it hap
pens that the descriptive sciences, languages,
mathematics, and philosophy are not studies
useful for any profession, except that of
teaching these very subjects over again;
and there was no practical way of introducing
them into the Harvard system except to
graft them upon the curriculum of the college;
otherwise neither money nor students could

-41-
have been found for so much ornamental
learning.

This circumstance, external and irrele
vant as it may seem, I think had a great
influence over the temper and quality of the
Harvard philosophers; for it mingled re
sponsibility for the education of youth, and
much labour in it, with their pure speculation.
Teaching is a delightful paternal art, and
especially teaching intelligent and warm-
hearted youngsters, as most American col
legians are ; but it is an art like acting, where
the performance, often rehearsed, must be
adapted to an audience hearing it only once.
The speaker must make concessions to their
impatience, their taste, their capacity, their
prejudices, their ultimate good ; he must
neither bore nor perplex nor demoralise them.
His thoughts must be such as can flow daily,
and be set down in notes; they must come
when the bell rings and stop appropriately
when the bell rings a second time. The best
that is in him, as Mephistopheles says in
Faust, he dare not tell them ; and as the
substance of this possession is spiritual, to
withhold is often to lose it. For it is not
merely a matter of fearing not to be under

-42-
stood, or giving offence; in the presence of
a hundred youthful upturned faces a man
cannot, without diffidence, speak in his own
person, of his own thoughts; he needs
support, in order to exert influence with a
good conscience; unless he feels that he is
the vehicle of a massive tradition, he will
become bitter, or flippant, or aggressive; if
he is to teach with good grace and modesty
and authority, it must not be he that speaks,
but science or humanity that is speaking in
him.

Now the state of Harvard College, and of
American education generally, at the time to
which I refer, had this remarkable effect on
the philosophers there : it made their sense
of social responsibility acute, because they
were consciously teaching and guiding the
community, as if they had been clergy
men ; and it made no less acute their moral
loneliness, isolation, and forced self-reliance,

because they were like clergymen without a church, and not only had no common philo sophic doctrine to transmit, but were ex pected not to have one. They were invited to be at once genuine philosophers and popular professors ; and the degree to which

-43-

some of them managed to unite these con traries is remarkable, especially if we con sider the character of the academic public they had to serve and to please. While the sentiments of most Americans in politics and morals, if a little vague, are very conservative, their democratic instincts, and the force of circumstances, have produced a system of education which anticipates all that the most extreme revolution could bring about ; and while no one dreams of forcibly suppressing private property, religion, or the family, American education ignores these things, and proceeds as much as possible as if they did not exist. The child passes very young into a free school, established and managed by the municipal authorities ; the teachers, even for the older boys, are chiefly unmarried women, sensitive, faithful, and feeble ; their influence helps to establish that separation which is so characteristic of America between things intellectual, which remain wrapped in a feminine veil and, as it were, under glass, and the rough business and passions of life. The lessons are ambitious in range, but are made as easy, as interesting, and as optional as possible ; the stress is divided between

-44-

what the child likes now and what he is going to need in his trade or profession. The young people are sympathetically encouraged to instruct themselves and to educate one another. They romp and make fun like young monkeys, they flirt and have their private " brain-storms " like little supermen and superwomen. They are tremendously in earnest about their college intrigues and intercollegiate athletic wars. They are fond, often compassionately fond, of their parents, and home is all the more sacred to them in that they are seldom there. They enjoy a surprising independence in habits, friendships, and opinions. Brothers and sisters often choose different religions. The street, the school, the young people's club, the magazine, the popular novel, furnish their mental pabulum. The force of example and of passing custom is all the more irresistible in this absence of authority and tradition ; for this sort of independence rather diminishes the power of being original, by supplying a slenderer basis and a thinner soil from which originality might spring. Uniformity is estab lished spontaneously without discipline, as in the popular speech and ethics of every

nation. Against this tendency to uniformity the efforts of a cultivated minority to main tain a certain distinction and infuse it into their lives and minds are not very successful. They have secondary schools for their boys in which the teachers are men, and even boarding-schools in the country, more or less Gothic in aspect and English in regimen; there are other semi-foreign institutions and circles, Catholic or Jewish, in which religion is the dominant consideration. There is also the society of the very rich, with cosmo politan leanings and a vivacious interest in artistic undertakings and personalities. But all these distinctions, important as they may seem to those who cultivate them, are a mere shimmer and ripple on the surface of American life ; and for an observer who sees things in perspective they almost disappear. By a merciful dispensation of nature, the pupils of these choice establishments, the moment they plunge into business or politics, acquire the protective colouring of their environment and become indistinguishable from the generic American. Their native disposition was after all the national one, their attempted special education was perfunctory, and the influence

of their public activities and surroundings is overwhelming. American life is a powerful solvent. As it stamps the immigrant, almost before he can speak English, with an un mistakable muscular tension, cheery self - confidence and habitual challenge in the voice and eyes, so it seems to neutralise every in tellectual element, however tough and alien it may be, and to fuse it in the native good-will, complacency, thoughtlessness, and optimism.

Consider, for instance, the American Catholics, of whom there are nominally many millions, and who often seem to retain their ancestral faith sincerely and affectionately. This faith took shape during the decline of the Roman empire ; it is full of large dis illusions about this world and minute illusions about the other. It is ancient, metaphysical, poetic, elaborate, ascetic, autocratic, and intolerant. It confronts the boastful natural man, such as the American is, with a thou sand denials and menaces. Everything in American life is at the antipodes to such a system. Yet the American Catholic is entirely at peace. His tone in everything, even in religion, is cheerfully American. It is wonderful how silently, amicably, and happily

he lives in a community whose spirit is pro foundly hostile to that of his religion. He seems to take stock in his church as he might in a gold mine—sure it is a grand, dazzling, unique thing; and perhaps he masks, even

to himself, his purely imaginative ardour about it, with the pretext that it is sure to make his fortune both in this life and in the next. His church, he will tell you, is a first - rate church to belong to ; the priests are fine fellows, like the policemen ; the Sisters are dear noble women, like his own sisters ; his parish is flourishing, and always rebuilding its church and founding new schools, orphan asylums, sodalities, confraternities, perpetual adoration societies. No parish can raise so much money for any object, or if there are temporary troubles, the fact still remains that America has three Cardinals and that the Catholic religion is the biggest religion on earth. Attachment to his church in such a temper brings him into no serious conflict with his Protestant neighbours. They live and meet on common ground. Their re spective religions pass among them for family matters, private and sacred, with no political implications.

-48-

Such was the education and such the atmo sphere of intellectual innocence which pre vailed in the public—mostly undergraduates —to which the Harvard philosophers adapted their teaching and to some extent their philosophy. The students were intelligent, ambitious, remarkably able to " do things" ; they were keen about the matters that had already entered into their lives, and invincibly happy in their ignorance of everything else. A gentle contempt for the past permeated their judgements. They were not accustomed to the notion of authority, nor aware that it might have legitimate grounds; they instinctively disbelieved in the superiority of what was out of reach. About high questions of politics and religion their minds were open but vague; they seemed not to think them of practical importance; they acquiesced in people having any views they liked on such subjects; the fluent and fervid enthusi asms so common among European students, prophesying about politics, philosophy, and art, were entirely unknown among them. Instead they had absorbing local traditions of their own, athletic and social, and their college life was their true education, an

-49-

education in friendship, co-operation, and freedom. In the eighteen-eighties a good deal of old-fashioned shabbiness and jollity lingered about Harvard. Boston and Cam bridge in those days resembled in some ways the London of Dickens : the same dismal wealth, the same speechifying, the same anxious respectability, the same sordid back streets, with their air of shiftlessness and decay, the same odd figures and loud humour, and, to add a touch of horror, the monstrous suspicion that some of the inhabitants might

be secretly wicked. Life, for the under graduates, was full of droll incidents and broad farce; it drifted good-naturedly from one commonplace thing to another. Stand ing packed in the tinkling horse-car, their coat-collars above their ears and their feet deep in the winter straw, they jogged in a long half-hour to Boston, there to enjoy the delights of female society, the theatre, or a good dinner. And in the summer days, for Class Day and Commencement, feminine and elderly Boston would return the visit, led by the governor of Massachusetts in his hired carriage-and-four, and by the local orators and poets, brimming with jokes and con

-50-

ventional sentiments, and eager not so much to speed the youngsters on their career, as to air their own wit, and warm their hearts with punch and with collective memories of youth. It was an idyllic, haphazard, humor istic existence, without fine imagination, without any familiar infusion of scholarship, without articulate religion: a flutter of intelligence in a void, flying into trivial play, in order to drop back, as soon as college days were over, into the drudgery of affairs. There was the love of beauty, but without the sight of it ; for the bits of pleasant land scape or the works of art which might break the ugliness of the foreground were a sort of æsthetic miscellany, enjoyed as one enjoys a museum; there was nothing in which the spirit of beauty was deeply interfused, charged with passion and discipline and intricate familiar associations with delicate and noble things. Of course, the sky is above every country, and New England had brilliant sun sets and deep snows, and sea and woods were at hand for the holidays ; and it was notable how much even what a homely art or accident might have done for the towns was studied and admired. Old corners were pointed out

-51-

where the dingy red brick had lost its rigidity and taken on a mossy tinge, and where here and there a pane of glass, surviving all tenants and housemaids, had turned violet in the sunlight of a hundred years; and most precious of all were the high thin elms, spreading aloft, looped and drooping over old streets and commons. And yet it seemed somehow as if the sentiment lavished on these things had been intended by nature for some thing else, for something more important. Not only had the mind of the nation been originally somewhat chilled and impoverished by Protestantism, by migration to a new world, by absorption in material tasks, but what fine sensibility lingered in an older generation was not easily transmitted to the young. The young had their own ways, which on principle were to be fostered and respected; and one of their instincts was to

associate only with those of their own age and calibre. The young were simply young, and the old simply old, as among peasants. Teachers and pupils seemed animals of different species, useful and well-disposed towards each other, like a cow and a milkmaid; periodic contributions could pass between

-52-

them, but not conversation. This circum stance shows how much American intelligence is absorbed in what is not intellectual. Their tasks and their pleasures divide people of different ages ; what can unite them is ideas, impersonal interests, liberal arts. Without these they cannot forget their mutual inferiority.

Certainly those four college years, judged by any external standard, were trivial and wasted; but Americans, although so practical in their adult masculine undertakings, are slow to take umbrage at the elaborate play fulness of their wives and children. With the touching humility of strength, they seem to say to themselves, " Let the dear creatures have their fling, and be happy : what else are we old fellows slaving for ? " And certainly the joy of life is the crown of it ; but have American ladies and collegians achieved the joy of life ? Is that the summit ?

William James had a theory that if some scientific widower, with a child about to learn to walk, could be persuaded to allow the child's feet to be blistered, it would turn out, when the blisters were healed, that the child

-53-

would walk as well as if he had practised and had many a fall; because the machinery necessary for walking would have matured in him automatically, just as the machinery for breathing does in the womb. The case of the old-fashioned American college may serve to support this theory. It blistered young men's heads for four years and prevented them from practising anything useful; yet at the end they were found able to do most things as well, or twice as well, as their con temporaries who had been all that time apprenticed and chained to a desk. Man hood and sagacity ripen of themselves ; it suffices not to repress or distort them. The college liberated the young man from the pursuit of money, from hypocrisy, from the control of women. He could grow for a time according to his nature, and if this growth was not guided by much superior wisdom or deep study, it was not warped by any serious perversion ; and if the intellectual world did not permanently entice him, are we so sure that in philosophy, for instance, it had any thing to offer that was very solid in itself,

or humanly very important ? At least he learned that such things existed, and gathered

-54-

a shrewd notion of what they could do for a man, and what they might make of him.

When Harvard was reformed—and I believe all the colleges are reformed now—the immediate object was not to refine col lege life or render it more scholarly, though for certain circles this was accomplished incidentally ; the object was rather to ex tend the scope of instruction, and make it more advanced. It is natural that every great city, the capital of any nation or region, should wish to possess a university in the literal sense of the word—an encyclo peedic institute, or group of institutes, to teach and foster all the professions, all the arts, and all the sciences. Such a university need have nothing to do with education, with the transmission of a particular moral and intellectual tradition. Education might be courteously presupposed. The teacher would not be a man with his hand on a lad's shoulder, his son or young brother; he would be an expert in some science, deliver ing lectures for public instruction, while perhaps privately carrying on investigations with the aid of a few disciples whom he would be training in his specialty. There

-55-

would be no reason why either the professors or the auditors in such an institution should live together or should have much in common in religion, morals, or breeding, or should even speak the same language. On the contrary, if only each was competent in his way, the more miscellaneous their types the more perfect would these render their *universitas*. The public addressed, also, need not be restricted, any more than the public at a church or a theatre or a town library, by any requirements as to age, sex, race, or attainments. They would come on their own responsibility, to pursue what studies they chose, and so long as they found them profitable. Nor need there be any limit as to the subjects broached, or any division of them into faculties or depart ments, except perhaps for convenience in administration. One of the functions of professors would be to invent new subjects, because this world is so complex, and the play of the human mind upon it is so ex ternal and iridescent, that, as men's interests and attitude vary, fresh unities and fresh aspects are always discernible in everything.

As Harvard University developed, all

-56-

these characteristics appeared in it in

a
more or less marked degree ; but the trans
formation was never complete. The centre
of it remained a college, with its local con
stituency and rooted traditions, and its
thousand or two thousand undergraduates
needing to be educated. Experts in every
science and money to pay them were not
at hand, and the foreign talent that could
be attracted did not always prove morally
or socially digestible. The browsing under
graduate could simply range with a looser
tether, and he was reinforced by a fringe
of graduates who had not yet had enough,
or who were attracted from other colleges.
These graduates came to form a sort of
normal school for future professors, stamped
as in Germany with a Ph.D. ; and the
teachers in each subject became a committee
charged with something of the functions of
a registry office, to find places for their
nurslings. The university could thus acquire
a national and even an international func
tion, drawing in distinguished talent and
youthful ambition from everywhere, and
sending forth in various directions its
apostles of light and learning.

think it is intelligible that in such a
place and at such a crisis philosophy should
have played a conspicuous part, and also
that it should have had an ambiguous
character. There had to be, explicit or im
plicit, a philosophy for the college. A place
where all polite Boston has been educated
for centuries cannot bely its moral principles
and religious questionings ; it must

transmit its austere, faithful, reforming spirit. But at the same time there had now to be a philosophy for the university. A chief part of that traditional faith was the faith in freedom, in inquiry; and it was necessary, in the very interests of the traditional philosophy, to take account of all that was being said in the world, and to incorporate the spirit of the times in the spirit of the fathers. Accordingly, no single abstract opinion was particularly tabooed at Harvard; granted industry, sobriety, and some sem blance of theism, no professor was expected to agree with any other. I believe the authorities would have been well pleased, for the sake of completeness, to have added a Buddhist, a Moslem, and a Catholic scholastic to the philosophical faculty, if

only suitable sages could have been found, house-trained, as it were, and able to keep pace with the academic machine and to attract a sufficient number of pupils. But this official freedom was not true freedom, there was no happiness in it. A slight smell of brimstone lingered in the air. You might think what you liked, but you must consecrate your belief or your unbelief to the common task of encouraging everybody and helping everything on. You might almost be an atheist, if you were troubled enough about it. The atmosphere was not that of intelligence nor of science, it was that of duty.

In the academic life and methods of the university there was the same incomplete

transformation. The teaching required was for the most part college teaching, in college subjects, such as might well have been entrusted to tutors ; but it was given by professors in the form of lectures, excessive in number and too often repeated; and they were listened to by absent-minded youths, ill-grounded in the humanities, and not keenly alive to intellectual interests. The graduates (like the young ladies) were

more attentive and anxious not to miss anything, but they were no better prepared and often less intelligent; and there is no dunce like a mature dunce. Accordingly, the professor of philosophy had to swim against rather a powerful current. Some times he succumbed to the reality; and if, for instance, he happened to mention Dar win, and felt a blank before him, he would add in a parenthesis, " Darwin, Charles, author of the *Origin of Species*, 1859; epoch making work." At other times he might lose himself altogether in the ideal and imagine that he was publishing immortal thoughts to the true university, to the world at large, and was feeling an exhilarating contact with masses of mankind, themselves quickened by his message. He might see in his mind's eye rows of learned men and women before him, familiar with every doubt, hardened to every conflict of opinion, ready for any revolution, whose minds no

thing he could say could possibly shock, or disintegrate any further; on the contrary, the naked truth, which is gentle in its austerity, might come to them as a blessed deliverance, and he might fancy himself

for a moment a sort of hero from the realms of light descending into the nether regions and throwing a sop of reason into the jaws of snarling prejudice and frantic error. Or if the class was small, and only two or three were gathered together, he might imagine instead that he was sowing seeds of wisdom, warmed by affection, in the minds of genuine disciples, future tabernacles of the truth.

It is possible that if the reality had corresponded more nearly with these dreams, and Harvard had actually been an adult university, philosophers there might have distilled their doctrines into a greater purity. As it was, Harvard philosophy had an opposite merit : it represented faithfully the complex inspiration of the place and hour. As the university was a local puritan college opening its windows to the scientific world, so at least the two most gifted of its philosophers were men of intense feeling, religious and romantic, but attentive to the facts of nature and the currents of worldly opinion; and each of them felt himself bound by two different responsibilities, that of describing things as they are, and that of finding them propitious to certain preconceived

human

desires. And while they shared this double allegiance, they differed very much in temper, education, and taste. William James was what is called an empiricist, Josiah Royce an idealist; they were excellent friends and greatly influenced each other, and the very diversity between them rendered their con junction typical of the state of philosophy in England and America, divided between the old British and the German schools. As if all this intellectual complication had not been enough, they were obliged to divide their energies externally, giving to their daily tasks as professors and pedagogues what duty demanded, and only the remainder to scholarship, reflection, and literary work. Even this distracting circumstance, however, had its compensations. College work was a human bond, a common practical interest; it helped to keep up that circulation of the blood which made the whole Harvard school of philosophy a vital unit, and co-operative in its freedom. There was a general momen tum in it, half institutional, half moral, a single troubled, noble, exciting life. Every one was labouring with the contradiction he felt in things, and perhaps in himself;

all were determined to find some honest way out of it, or at least to bear it bravely. It was a fresh morning in the life of reason, cloudy but brightening.

CHAPTER III

WILLIAM JAMES

WILLIAM JAMES enjoyed in his youth what are called advantages: he lived among cultivated people, travelled, had teachers of various nationalities. His father was one of those somewhat obscure sages whom early America produced : mystics of inde pendent mind, hermits in the desert of busi ness, and heretics in the churches. They were intense individualists, full of venera tion for the free souls of their children, and convinced that every one should paddle his own canoe, especially on the high seas. William James accordingly enjoyed a stimu lating if slightly irregular education: he never acquired that reposeful mastery of particular authors and those safe ways of feeling and judging which are fostered in great schools and universities. In conse

quence he showed an almost physical horror of club sentiment and of the stifling atmo- sphere of all officialdom. He had a knack for drawing, and rather the temperament of the artist ; but the unlovely secrets of nature and the troubles of man preoccupied him, and he chose medicine for his profession. Instead of practising, however, he turned to teaching physiology, and from that passed gradually to psychology and philosophy.

In his earlier years he retained some traces of polyglot student days at Paris, Bonn, Vienna, or Geneva; he slipped some- times into foreign phrases, uttered in their full vernacular; and there was an occasional afterglow of Bohemia about him, in the bright stripe of a shirt or the exuberance of a tie. On points of art or medicine he retained a professional touch and an un- conscious ease which he hardly acquired in metaphysics. I suspect he had heartily admired some of his masters in those other subjects, but had never seen a philosopher whom he would have cared to resemble. Of course there was nothing of the artist in William James, as the artist is sometimes conceived in England, nothing of the æsthete,

nothing affected or limp. In person he was short rather than tall, erect, brisk, bearded, intensely masculine. While he shone in expression and would have wished his style to be noble if it could also be strong, he

preferred in the end to be spontaneous, and to leave it at that ; he tolerated slang in himself rather than primness. The rough, homely, picturesque phrase, whatever was graphic and racy, recommended itself to him ; and his conversation outdid his writing in this respect. He believed in improvisation, even in thought ; his lectures were not minutely prepared. Know your subject thoroughly, he used to say, and trust to luck for the rest. There was a deep sense of insecurity in him, a mixture of humility with romanticism: we were likely to be more or less wrong anyhow, but we might be wholly sincere. One moment should respect the insight of another, without trying to establish too regimental a uniformity. If you corrected yourself tartly, how could you know that the correction was not the worse mistake? All our opinions were born free and equal, all children of the Lord, and if they were not consistent that was the Lord's

business, not theirs. In reality, James was consistent enough, as even Emerson (more extreme in this sort of irresponsibility) was too. Inspiration has its limits, sometimes very narrow ones. But James was not consecutive, not insistent; he turned to a subject afresh, without egotism or pedantry ; he dropped his old points, sometimes very good ones; and he modestly looked for light from others, who had less light than himself.

His excursions into philosophy were accordingly in the nature of raids, and it is easy for those who are attracted by one part of his work to ignore other parts, in themselves perhaps more valuable. I think that in fact his popularity does not rest on his best achievements. His popularity rests on three somewhat incidental books, *The Will to Believe, Pragmatism,* and *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, whereas, as it seems to me, his best achievement is his *Principles of Psychology*. In this book he surveys, in a way which for him is very systematic, a subject made to his hand. In its ostensible outlook it is a treatise like any other, but what distinguishes it is the author's gift for

evoking vividly the very life of the mind. This is a work of imagination ; and the subject as he conceived it, which is the flux of immediate experience in men in general, requires imagination to read it at all. It is a literary subject, like autobiography or psychological fiction, and can be treated only poetically; and in this sense Shakespeare is a better psychologist than Locke

or Kant. Yet this gift of imagination is not merely literary; it is not useless in divining the truths of science, and it is invaluable in throwing off prejudice and scientific shams. The fresh imagination and vitality of William James led him to break through many a false convention. He saw that experience, as we endure it, is not a mosaic of distinct sensations, nor the expression of separate hostile faculties, such as reason and the passions, or sense and the categories ; it is rather a flow of mental discourse, like a dream, in which all divisions and units are vague and shifting, and the whole is continually merging together and drifting apart. It fades gradually in the rear, like the wake of a ship, and bites into the future, like the bow cutting the water.

For the candid psychologist, carried bodily on this voyage of discovery, the past is but a questionable report, and the future wholly indeterminate ; everything is simply what it is experienced as being.

At the same time, psychology is supposed to be a science, a claim which would tend to confine it to the natural history of man, or the study of behaviour, as is actually proposed by Auguste Comte and by some of James's own disciples, more jejune if more clear-headed than he. As matters now stand, however, psychology as a whole is not a science, but a branch of philosophy; it brings together the literary description of mental discourse and the scientific description of material life, in order to consider the relation between them, which is the nexus of human nature.

What was James's position on this crucial question ? It is impossible to reply unequivocally. He approached philosophy as mankind originally approached it, without having a philosophy, and he lent himself to various hypotheses in various directions.

He professed to begin his study on the assumptions of common sense, that there is

a material world which the animals that live in it are able to perceive and to think about. He gave a congruous extension to this view in his theory that emotion is purely bodily sensation, and also in his habit of conceiving the mind as a total shifting sensibility. To pursue this path, however, would have led him to admit that nature was automatic and mind simply cognitive, conclusions from which every instinct in him recoiled.

He preferred to believe that mind and matter had independent energies and could lend one another a hand, matter operating by motion and mind by intention. This dramatic, amphibious way of picturing causation is natural to common sense, and might be defended if it were clearly defined; but James was insensibly carried away from it by a subtle implication of his method. This implication was that experience or mental discourse not only constituted a set of substantive facts, but the *only* substantive facts; all else, even that material world which his psychology had postulated, could be nothing but a verbal or fantastic symbol for sensations in their experienced order. So that while nominally the door was kept

open to any hypothesis regarding the conditions of the psychological flux, in truth the question was prejudged. The hypotheses, which were parts of this psychological flux, could have no object save other parts of it. That flux itself, therefore, which he could picture so vividly, was the fundamental existence. The *sense* of bounding over the waves, the *sense* of being on an adventurous voyage, was the living fact ; the rest was dead reckoning. Where one's gift is, there will one's faith be also ; and to this poet appearance was the only reality.

This sentiment, which always lay at the back of his mind, reached something like formal expression in his latest writings, where he sketched what he called radical empiricism. The word experience is like a shrapnel shell, and bursts into a thousand meanings. Here we must no longer think of its setting, its discoveries, or its march ; to treat it radically we must abstract its immediate objects and reduce it to pure data. It is obvious (and the sequel has already proved) that experience so understood would lose its romantic signification, as a personal adventure or a response to the shocks of fortune. " Experi-

ence " would turn into a cosmic dance of absolute entities created and destroyed *in vacuo* according to universal laws, or perhaps by chance. No minds would gather this experience, and no material agencies would impose it; but the immediate objects present to any one would simply be parts of the universal fireworks, continuous with the rest, and all the parts, even if not present to anybody, would have the same status. Experience would then not at all resemble what Shakespeare reports or what James himself had described in his psychology. If it could be experienced

as it flows in its entirety (which is fortunately impracticable), it would be a perpetual mathematical nightmare. Every whirling atom, every changing relation, and every incidental perspective would be a part of it. I am far from wishing to deny for a moment the scientific value of such a cosmic system, if it can be worked out; physics and mathematics seem to me to plunge far deeper than literary psychology into the groundwork of this world ; but human experience is the stuff of literary psychology; we cannot reach the stuff of physics and mathematics except by arresting or even hypostatising some elements of

appearance, and expanding them on an abstracted and hypothetical plane of their own. Experience, as memory and literature rehearse it, remains nearer to us than that : it is something dreamful, passionate, dramatic, and significative.

Certainly this personal human experience, expressible in literature and in talk, and no cosmic system however profound, was what James knew best and trusted most. Had he seen the developments of his radical empiricism, I cannot help thinking he would have marvelled that such logical mechanisms should have been hatched out of that egg. The principal problems and aspirations that haunted him all his life long would lose their meaning in that cosmic atmosphere. The pragmatic nature of truth, for instance, would never suggest itself in the presence of pure data; but a romantic mind soaked in agnosticism, conscious of its own habits and assuming an environment the exact structure of which can never be observed, may well convince itself that, for experience, truth is nothing but a happy use of signs—which is indeed the truth of literature. But if we once accept *any* system of the universe

as literally true, the value of convenient signs to prepare us for such experience as is yet absent cannot be called truth : it is plainly nothing but a necessary inaccuracy. So, too, with the question of the survival of the human individual after death. For radical empiricism a human individual is simply a certain cycle or complex of terms, like any other natural fact; that some echoes of his mind should recur after the regular chimes have ceased, would have nothing paradoxical about it. A mathematical world is a good deal like music, with its repetitions and transpositions, and a little trill, which you might call a person, might well peep up here and

there all over a vast composition. Something of that sort may be the truth of spiritualism ; but it is not what the spiritualists imagine. Their whole interest lies not in the experiences they have, but in the interpretation they give to them, assigning them to troubled spirits in another world; but both another world and a spirit are notions repugnant to a radical empiricism.

I think it is important to remember, if we are not to misunderstand William James, that his radical empiricism and pragmatism were

in his own mind only methods ; his doctrine, if he may be said to have had one, was agnosticism. And just because he was an agnostic (feeling instinctively that beliefs and opinions, if they had any objective beyond themselves, could never be sure they had attained it), he seemed in one sense so favourable to credulity. He was not credulous himself, far from it; he was well aware that the trust he put in people or ideas might betray him. For that very reason he was respectful and pitiful to the trustfulness of others. Doubtless they were wrong, but who were we to say so? In his own person he was ready enough to face the mystery of things, and whatever the womb of time might bring forth ; but until the curtain was rung down on the last act of the drama (and it might have no last act !) he wished the intellectual cripples and the moral hunchbacks not to be jeered at ; perhaps they might turn out to be the heroes of the play. Who could tell what heavenly influences might not pierce to these sensitive half-flayed creatures, which are lost on the thick-skinned, the sane, and the duly goggled? We must not suppose, however, that James meant these contrite

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and romantic suggestions dogmatically. The agnostic, as well as the physician and neurologist in him, was never quite eclipsed. The hope that some new revelation might come from the lowly and weak could never mean to him what it meant to the early Christians. For him it was only a right conceded to them to experiment with their special faiths ; he did not expect such faiths to be discoveries of absolute fact, which everybody else might be constrained to recognise. If any one had made such a claim, and had seemed to have some chance of imposing it universally, James would have been the first to turn against him; not, of course, on the ground that it was *impossible* that such an orthodoxy should be true, but with a profound conviction that it was to be feared and distrusted. No : the degree of authority and honour to be accorded to various human faiths was a moral question, not a theoretical one. All faiths were what they were experienced as being, in their capacity of faiths ; these faiths, not their objects, were the hard facts we must respect. We cannot pass, except under the illusion of the moment, to anything firmer or on a deeper level. There was

accordingly no sense of security, no joy, in James's apology for personal religion. He did not really believe ; he merely believed in the right of believing that you might be right if you believed.

It is this underlying agnosticism that explains an incoherence which we might find in his popular works, where the story and the moral do not seem to hang together. Professedly they are works of psychological observation; but the tendency and suasion in them seems to run to disintegrating the idea of truth, recommending belief without reason, and encouraging superstition. A psychologist who was not an agnostic would have indicated, as far as possible, whether the beliefs and experiences he was describing were instances of delusion or of rare and fine perception, or in what measure they were a mixture of both. But James—and this is what gives such romantic warmth to these

writings of his—disclaims all antecedent or superior knowledge, listens to the testimony of each witness in turn, and only by accident allows us to feel that he is swayed by the eloquence and vehemence of some of them rather than of others. This method is modest,

generous, and impartial ; but if James intended, as I think he did, to picture the *drama* of human belief, with its risks and triumphs, the method was inadequate. Dramatists never hesitate to assume, and to let the audience perceive, who is good and who bad, who wise and who foolish, in their pieces; otherwise their work would be as impotent dramatically as scientifically. The tragedy and comedy of life lie precisely in the contrast between the illusions or passions of the characters and their true condition and fate, hidden from them at first, but evident to the author and the public. If in our diffidence and scrupulous fairness we refuse to take this judicial attitude, we shall be led to strange conclusions. The navigator, for instance, trusting his " experience " (which here, as in the case of religious people, means his imagination and his art), insists on believing that the earth is spherical; he has sailed round it. That is to say, he has seemed to himself to steer westward and westward, and has seemed to get home again. But how should he know that home is now where it was before, or that his past and present impressions of it come from the same, or

from any, material object ? How should he know that space is as trim and tri-dimensional as the discredited Euclidians used to say it was ? If, on the contrary, my worthy aunt, trusting to her longer and less ambiguous experience of her garden, insists that the earth is flat, and observes that the theory that it is round, which is only a theory, is much less often tested and found useful than her own perception of its flatness, and that moreover that theory is pedantic, intellectualistic, and a product of academies, and a rash dogma to impose on mankind for ever and ever, it might seem that on James's principle we ought to agree with her. But no ; on James's real principles we need not agree with her, nor with the navigator either. Radical empiricism, which is radical agnosticism, delivers us from so benighted a choice. For the quarrel becomes unmeaning when we remember that the earth is *both* flat and round, if it is experienced as being both. The substantive fact is not a single object on which both the perception and the theory

are expected to converge; the substantive facts are the theory and the perception themselves. And we may note in passing that

empiricism, when it ceases to value experience as a means of discovering external things, can give up its ancient prejudice in favour of sense as against imagination, for imagination and thought are immediate experiences as much as sensation is: they are therefore, for absolute empiricism, no less actual ingredients of reality.

In *The Varieties of Religious Experience* we find the same apologetic intention running through a vivid account of what seems for the most part (as James acknowledged) religious disease. Normal religious experience is hardly described in it. Religious experience, for the great mass of mankind, consists in simple faith in the truth and benefit of their religious traditions. But to James something so conventional and rationalistic seemed hardly experience and hardly religious ; he was thinking only of irruptive visions and feelings as interpreted by the mystics who had them. These interpretations he ostensibly presents, with more or less wistful sympathy, for what they were worth ; but emotionally he wished to champion them. The religions that had sprung up in America spontaneously — communistic, hysterical,

spiritistic, or medicinal—were despised by select and superior people. You might inquire into them, as you might go slumming, but they remained suspect and distasteful. This picking up of genteel skirts on the part of his acquaintance prompted William James to roll up his sleeves—not for a knock-out blow, but for a thorough clinical demonstration. He would tenderly vivisect the experiences in question, to show how living they were, though of course he could not guarantee, more than other surgeons do, that the patient would survive the operation. An operation that eventually kills may be technically successful, and the man may die cured ; and so a description of religion that showed it to be madness might first show how real and how warm it was, so that if it perished, at least it would perish understood.

I never observed in William James any personal anxiety or enthusiasm for any of these dubious tenets. His conception even of such a thing as free-will, which he always ardently defended, remained vague; he

avoided defining even what he conceived to be desirable in such matters. But he wished

to protect the weak against the strong, and what he hated beyond everything was the *non possumus* of any constituted authority. Philosophy for him had a Polish constitution ; so long as a single vote was cast against the majority, nothing could pass. The suspense of judgement which he had imposed on himself as a duty, became almost a necessity. I think it would have depressed him if he had had to confess that any important question was finally settled. He would still have hoped that something might turn up on the other side, and that just as the scientific hangman was about to despatch the poor convicted prisoner, an unexpected witness would ride up in hot haste, and prove him innocent. Experience seems to most of us to lead to conclusions, but empiricism has sworn never to draw them.

In the discourse on " The Energies of Men," certain physiological marvels are recorded, as if to suggest that the resources of our minds and bodies are infinite, or can be infinitely enlarged by divine grace. Yet James would not, I am sure, have accepted that inference. He would, under pressure, have drawn in his mystical horns under his

scientific shell; but he was not naturalist enough to feel instinctively that the wonderful and the natural are all of a piece, and that only our degree of habituation distinguishes them. A nucleus, which we may poetically call the soul, certainly lies within us, by which our bodies and minds are generated and controlled, like an army by a government. In this nucleus, since nature in a small compass has room for anything, vast quantities of energy may well be stored up, which may be tapped on occasion, or which may serve like an electric spark to let loose energy previously existing in the grosser parts. But the absolute autocracy of this central power, or its success in imposing extraordinary trials on its subjects, is not an obvious good. Perhaps, like a democratic government, the soul is at its best when it merely collects and co-ordinates the impulses coming from the senses. The inner man is at times a tyrant, parasitical, wasteful, and voluptuous. At other times he is fanatical and mad. When he asks for and obtains violent exertions from the body, the question often is, as with the exploits of conquerors and conjurers, whether the impulse to do such prodigious things was

not gratuitous, and the things nugatory. Who would wish to be a mystic? James himself, who by nature was a spirited rather than a spiritual man, had no liking for sanctimonious transcendentalists, visionaries, or ascetics; he hated minds that run thin. But he hastened to correct this manly impulse, lest it should be unjust, and forced himself to overcome his repugnance. This was made easier when the unearthly phenomenon had a healing or saving function in the everyday material world ; miracle then re-established its ancient identity with medicine, and both of them were humanised. Even when this union was not attained, James was reconciled to the miracle-workers partly by his great charity, and partly by his hunter's instinct to follow a scent, for he believed discoveries to be imminent. Besides, a philosopher who is a teacher of youth is more concerned to give people a right start than a right conclusion. James fell in with the hortatory tradition of college sages; he turned his psychology, whenever he could do so honestly, to purposes of edification; and his little sermons on habit, on will, on faith, and this on the latent capacities of men, were fine and stirring, and

Inevitable necessity, and compelled to ascend the scaffold.

Hester shook her head.

"Woman, transgress not beyond the limits of Heaven's mercy!" cried the Reverend Mr. Wilson, more harshly than before. "That little babe hath been gifted with a voice, to second and confirm the counsel which thou hast heard. Speak out the name ! That, and thy repentance, may avail to take the scarlet letter off thy breast"

" Never," replied Hester Prynne, looking, not at Mr. Wilson, but into the deep and troubled eyes of the younger clergyman. " It is too deeply branded. Ye cannot take it off. And would that I might endure his agony as well as mine!"

" Speak, woman!" said another voice, coldly and sternly, proceeding from the crowd about the scaffold. " Speak ; and give your child a father ! "

"I will not speak ! " answered Hester, turning pale as death, but responding to this voice, which she too surely recognised. " And my child must seek a heavenly father; she shall never know an earthly one!"

" She will not speak!" murmured Mr. Dimmes dale, who, leaning over the balcony, with his hand

upon his heart, had awaited the result of his appeal. He now drew back with a long respiration. "Won drous strength and generosity of a woman's heart t She will not speak!"

Discerning the impracticable state of the poor culprit's mind, the elder clergyman, who had carefully prepared himself for the occasion, addressed to the multitude a discourse on sin, in all its branches, but

-85-

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with continual reference to the ignominious letter. So forcibly did he dwell upon this symbol, for the hour or more during which his periods were rolling over the people's heads, that it assumed new terrors in their imagination, and seemed to derive its scarlet hue from the flames of the infernal pit. Hester Prynne, meanwhile, kept her place upon the pedestal of shame, with glazed eyes, and an air of weary indifference. She had borne that morning all that nature could endure; and as her temperament was not of the order that escapes from too intense suffering by a swoon, her spirit could only shelter itself beneath a stony crust of insensibility, while the faculties of animal life remained entire. In this state, the voice of the preacher thundered remorselessly, but unavailingly, upon her ears. The infant, during the latter portion of her ordeal, pierced the air with its wailings and screams; she strove to hush it mechanically, but seemed scarcely to sympathise with its trouble. With the same hard demeanour, she was led back to prison, and vanished from the public gaze within its iron-clamped portal. It was whispered by those who peered after her that the scarlet letter threw a lurid gleam along the dark passage-way of the interior.

-86-

just the sermons to preach to the young Christian soldier. He was much less sceptical in morals than in science. He seems to have felt sure that certain thoughts and hopes— those familiar to a liberal Protestantism— were every man's true friends in life. This assumption would have been hard to defend if he or those he habitually addressed had ever questioned it; yet his whole argument for voluntarily cultivating these beliefs rests on this assumption, that they are beneficent. Since, whether we will or no, we cannot escape the risk of error, and must succumb to some human or pathological bias, at least we might do so gracefully and in the form that would profit us most, by clinging to those prejudices which help us to lead what we all feel is a good life. But what is a good life ? Had William James, had the people about him, had modern philosophers anywhere, any notion of that ? I cannot think so. They had much experience of personal goodness,

and love of it ; they had standards of
character and right conduct; but as to what
might render human existence good, excellent,
beautiful, happy, and worth having as a
whole, their notions were utterly thin and