CHAPTER VII

# SCHOPENHAUER

## I. THE AGE

WHY did the first half of the nineteenth century lift up, as voices of the age, a group of pessimistic poets —Byron in England, De Musset in France, Heine in Germany, Leopardi in Italy, Pushkin and Lermontof in Russia; a group of pessimistic composers—Schubert, Schumann, Chopin, and even the later Beethoven (a pessimist trying to convince himself that he is an optimist); and above all, a profoundly pessimistic philosopher—Arthur Schopenhauer?

That great anthology of woe, *The World as Will and Idea*, appeared in 1818. It was the age of the "Holy" Alliance. Waterloo had been fought, the Revolution was dead, and the "Son of the Revolution" was rotting on a rock in a distant sea. Something of Schopenhauer's apotheosis of Will was due to that magnificent and bloody apparition of the Will made flesh in the little Corsican; and something of his despair of life came from the pathetic distance of St. Helena—Will defeated at last, and dark Death the only victor of all the wars. The Bourbons were restored, the feudal barons were returning to claim their lands, and the pacific idealism of Alexander had unwittingly mothered a league for the suppression of progress everywhere. The great age was over. "I thank God," said Goethe, "that I am not young in so thoroughly finished a world."

All Europe lay prostrate. Millions of strong men had perished; millions of acres of land had been neglected or laid waste; everywhere on the Continent life had to begin again at the bottom, to recover painfully and slowly the civilizing economic surplus that had been swallowed up in war.

Schopenhauer, traveling through France and Austria in 1804, was struck by the chaos and uncleanliness of the villages, the wretched poverty of the farmers, the unrest and misery of the towns. The passage of the Napoleonic and counter-Napoleonic armies had left scars of ravage on the face of every country. Moscow was in ashes. In England, proud victor in the strife, the farmers were ruined by the fall in the price of wheat; and the industrial workers were tasting all the horrors of the nascent and uncontrolled factory-system. Demobilization added to unemployment. "I have heard my father say," wrote Carlyle, "that in the years when oatmeal was as high as ten shillings a stone, he had noticed the laborers retire each separately to a brook, and there drink instead of dining, anxious only to hide their misery from one another." [1] Never had life seemed so meaningless, or so mean.

Yes, the Revolution was dead; and with it the life seemed to have gone out of the soul of Europe. That new heaven, called Utopia, whose glamour had relieved the twilight of the gods, had receded into a dim future where only young eyes could see it; the older ones had followed that lure long enough, and turned away from it now as a mockery of men's hopes. Only the young can live in the future, and only the old can live in the past; men were most of them forced to live in the present, and the present was a ruin. How many thousands of heroes and believers had fought for the Revolution! How the hearts of youth everywhere in Europe had turned towards the young republic, and had lived on the light and hope of it,—until Beethoven tore into shreds the dedication of his Heroic Symphony to the man who had ceased to be the Son of the Revolution and had become the son-in-law of reaction. How many had fought even then for the great hope, and had believed, with passionate uncertainty, to the very end? And now here was the very end: Waterloo, and St. Helena, and Vienna; and on the throne of prostrate France a Bourbon who had learned nothing and forgotten nothing.

[1] Froude: *Life and Letters of Thomas Carlyle*, I, p. 52.

This was the glorious dénouement of a generation of such hope and effort as human history had never known before. What a comedy this tragedy was—for those whose laughter was yet bitter with tears!

Many of the poor had, in these days of disillusionment and suffering, the consolation of religious hope; but a large proportion of the upper classes had lost their faith, and looked out upon a ruined world with no alleviating vision of a vaster life in whose final justice and beauty these ugly ills would be dissolved. And in truth it was hard enough to believe that such a sorry planet as men saw in 1818 was held up in the hand of an intelligent and benevolent God. Mephistopheles had triumphed, and every Faust was in despair. Voltaire had sown the whirlwind, and Schopenhauer was to reap the harvest.

Seldom had the problem of evil been flung so vividly and insistently into the face of philosophy and religion. Every martial grave from Boulogne to Moscow and the Pyramids lifted a mute interrogation to the indifferent stars. How long, O Lord, and Why? Was this almost universal calamity the vengeance of a just God on the Age of Reason and unbelief? Was it a call to the penitent intellect to bend before the ancient virtues of faith, hope and charity? So Schlegel thought, and Novalis, and Chateaubriand, and De Musset, and Southey, and Wordsworth, and Gogol; and they turned back to the old faith like wasted prodigals happy to be home again. But some others made harsher answer: that the chaos of Europe but reflected the chaos of the universe; that there was no divine order after all, nor any heavenly hope; that God, if God there was, was blind, and Evil brooded over the face of the earth. So Byron, and Heine, and Lermontof, and Leopardi, and our philosopher.

### II. THE MAN

Schopenhauer was born at Dantzig on February 22, 1788. His father was a merchant noted for ability, hot temper,

independence of character, and love of liberty. He moved from Dantzig to Hamburg when Arthur was five years old, because Dantzig lost its freedom in the annexation of Poland in 1793. Young Schopenhauer, therefore, grew up in the midst of business and finance; and though he soon abandoned the mercantile career into which his father had pushed him, it left its mark upon him in a certain bluntness of manner, a realistic turn of mind, a knowledge of the world and of men; it made him the antipodes of that closet or academic type of philosopher whom he so despised. The father died, apparently by his own hand, in 1805. The paternal grandmother had died insane.

"The character or will," says Schopenhauer, "is inherited from the father; the intellect from the mother." [1] The mother had intellect—she became one of the most popular novelists of her day—but she had temperament and temper too. She had been unhappy with her prosaic husband; and when he died she took to free love, and moved to Weimar as the fittest climate for that sort of life. Arthur Schopenhauer reacted to this as Hamlet to his mother's re-marriage; and his quarrels with his mother taught him a large part of those half-truths about women with which he was to season his philosophy. One of her letters to him reveals the state of their affairs: "You are unbearable and burdensome, and very hard to live with; all your good qualities are overshadowed by your conceit, and made useless to the world simply because you cannot restrain your propensity to pick holes in other people." [2] So they arranged to live apart; he was to come only to her "at homes," and be one guest among others; they could then be as polite to each other as strangers, instead of hating each other like relatives. Goethe, who liked Mme. Schopenhauer because she let him bring his Christiane with him, made matters worse by telling the mother that her son would become a very famous man; the mother had never

[1] *The World as Will and Idea;* London, 1883; iii, 300.
[2] In Wallace: *Life of Schopenhauer;* London, no date; p. 59.

heard of two geniuses in the same family. Finally, in some culminating quarrel, the mother pushed her son and rival down the stairs; whereupon our philosopher bitterly informed her that she would be known to posterity only through him. Schopenhauer quitted Weimar soon afterward; and though the mother lived twenty-four years more, he never saw her again. Byron, also a child of 1788, seems to have had similar luck with his mother. These men were almost by this circumstance doomed to pessimism; a man who has not known a mother's love—and worse, has known a mother's hatred—has no cause to be infatuated with the world.

Meanwhile Schopenhauer had gone through "gymnasium" and university, and had learned more than was on their schedules. He had his fling at love and the world, with results that affected his character and his philosophy.[1] He became gloomy, cynical, and suspicious; he was obsessed with fears and evil fancies; he kept his pipes under lock and key, and never trusted his neck to a barber's razor; and he slept with loaded pistols at his bedside—presumably for the convenience of the burglar. He could not bear noise: "I have long held the opinion," he writes, "that the amount of noise which anyone can bear undisturbed stands in inverse proportion to his mental capacity, and may therefore be regarded as a pretty fair measure of it. . . . Noise is a torture to all intellectual people. . . . The superabundant display of vitality which takes the form of knocking, hammering, and tumbling things about, has proved a daily torment to me all my life long."[2] He had an almost paranoiac sense of unrecognized greatness; missing success and fame, he turned within and gnawed at his own soul.

He had no mother, no wife, no child, no family, no country. "He was absolutely alone, with not a single friend; and between one and none there lies an infinity."[3] Even more than

[1] Cf. Wallace, 92.
[2] *The World as Will and Idea,* ii, 199; *Essays,* "On Noise."
[3] Nietzsche: *Schopenhauer as Educator;* London, 1910; p. 122.

Goethe he was immune to the nationalistic fevers of his age. In 1813 he so far fell under the sway of Fichte's enthusiasm for a war of liberation against Napoleon, that he thought of volunteering, and actually bought a set of arms. But prudence seized him in time; he argued that "Napoleon gave after all only concentrated and untrammeled utterance to that self-assertion and lust for more life which weaker mortals feel but must perforce disguise." [1] Instead of going to war he went to the country and wrote a doctor's thesis in philosophy.

After this dissertation *On the Fourfold Root of Sufficient Reason* (1813),[2] Schopenhauer gave all his time, and devoted all his power, to the work which was to be his masterpiece—*The World as Will and Idea.* He sent the MS. to the publisher *magna cum laude;* here, he said, was no mere rehash of old ideas, but a highly coherent structure of original thought, "clearly intelligible, vigorous, and not without beauty"; a book "which would hereafter be the source and occasion of a hundred other books." [3] All of which was outrageously egotistic, and absolutely true. Many years later Schopenhauer was so sure of having solved the chief problems of philosophy that he thought of having his signet ring carved with an image of the Sphinx throwing herself down the abyss, as she had promised to do on having her riddles answered.

Nevertheless, the book attracted hardly any attention; the world was too poor and exhausted to read about its poverty and exhaustion. Sixteen years after publication Schopenhauer was informed that the greater part of the edition had been sold

[1] Wallace: Article "Schopenhauer" in the *Encyclopedia Brittanica.*

[2] Schopenhauer insists, hardly with sufficient reason, and almost to the point of salesmanship, that this book must be read before the *World as Will and Idea* can be understood. The reader may nevertheless rest content with knowing that the "principle of sufficient reason" is the "law of cause and effect," in four forms: 1—Logical, as the determination of conclusion by premises; 2—Physical, as the determination of effect by cause; 3—Mathematical, as the determination of structure by the laws of mathematics and mechanics; and 4—Moral, as the determination of conduct by character.

[3] In Wallace, *Life,* p. 107.

as waste paper. In his essay on Fame, in "The Wisdom of Life," he quotes, with evident allusion to his masterpiece, two remarks of Lichtenberger's: "Works like this are as a mirror: if an ass looks in you cannot expect an angel to look out"; and "when a head and a book come into collision, and one sounds hollow, is it always the book?" Schopenhauer goes on, with the voice of wounded vanity: "The more a man belongs to posterity—in other words, to humanity in general—so much the more is he an alien to his contemporaries; for since his work is not meant for them as such, but only in so far as they form part of mankind at large, there is none of that familiar local color about his productions which would appeal to them." And then he becomes as eloquent as the fox in the fable: "Would a musician feel flattered by the loud applause of an audience if he knew that they were nearly all deaf, and that to conceal their infirmity he saw one or two persons applauding? And what would he say if he discovered that those one or two persons had often taken bribes to secure the loudest applause for the poorest player?"—In some men egotism is a compensation for the absence of fame; in others, egotism lends a generous coöperation to its presence.

So completely did Schopenhauer put himself into this book that his later works are but commentaries on it; he became Talmudist to his own Torah, exegete to his own Jeremiads. In 1836 he published an essay *On the Will in Nature*, which was to some degree incorporated into the enlarged edition of *The World as Will and Idea* which appeared in 1844. In 1841 came *The Two Ground-Problems of Ethics*, and in 1851 two substantial volumes of *Parerga et Paralipomena*—literally, "By-products and Leavings"—which have been translated into English as the *Essays*. For this, the most readable of his works, and replete with wisdom and wit, Schopenhauer received, as his total remuneration, ten free copies. Optimism is difficult under such circumstances.

Only one adventure disturbed the monotony of his studious

seclusion after leaving Weimar. He had hoped for a chance to present his philosophy at one of the great universities of Germany; the chance came in 1822, when he was invited to Berlin as *privat-docent.* He deliberately chose for his lectures the very hours at which the then mighty Hegel was scheduled to teach; Schopenhauer trusted that the students would view him and Hegel with the eyes of posterity. But the students could not so far anticipate, and Schopenhauer found himself talking to empty seats. He resigned, and revenged himself by those bitter diatribes against Hegel which mar the later editions of his *chef-d'œuvre.* In 1831 a cholera epidemic broke out in Berlin; both Hegel and Schopenhauer fled; but Hegel returned prematurely, caught the infection, and died in a few days. Schopenhauer never stopped until he reached Frankfort, where he spent the remainder of his seventy-two years.

Like a sensible pessimist, he had avoided that pitfall of optimists—the attempt to make a living with the pen. He had inherited an interest in his father's firm, and lived in modest comfort on the revenue which this brought him. He invested his money with a wisdom unbecoming a philosopher. When a company in which he had taken shares failed, and the other creditors agreed to a 70% settlement, Schopenhauer fought for full payment, and won. He had enough to engage two rooms in a boarding-house; there he lived the last thirty years of his life, with no comrade but a dog. He called the little poodle Atma (the Brahmins' term for the World-Soul), but the wags of the town called it "Young Schopenhauer." He ate his dinners, usually, at the Englischer Hof. At the beginning of each meal he would put a gold coin upon the table before him; and at the end of each meal he would put the coin back into his pocket. It was, no doubt, an indignant waiter who at last asked him the meaning of this invariable ceremony. Schopenhauer answered that it was his silent wager to drop the coin into the poor-box on the first day that the English officers din-

ing there should talk of anything else than horses, women, or dogs.[1]

The universities ignored him and his books, as if to substantiate his claim that all advances in philosophy are made outside of academic walls. "Nothing," says Nietzsche, "so offended the German savants as Schopenhauer's unlikeness to them." But he had learned some patience; he was confident that, however belated, recognition would come. And at last, slowly, it came. Men of the middle classes—lawyers, physicians, merchants—found in him a philosopher who offered them no mere pretentious jargon of metaphysical unrealities, but an intelligible survey of the phenomena of actual life. A Europe disillusioned with the ideals and efforts of 1848 turned almost with acclamation to this philosophy that had voiced the despair of 1815. The attack of science upon theology, the socialist indictment of poverty and war, the biological stress on the struggle for existence,—all these factors helped to lift Schopenhauer finally to fame.

He was not too old to enjoy his popularity: he read with avidity all the articles that appeared about him; he asked his friends to send him every bit of printed comment they could find—he would pay the postage. In 1854 Wagner sent him a copy of *Der Ring der Nibelugen*, with a word in appreciation of Schopenhauer's philosophy of music. So the great pessimist became almost an optimist in his old age; he played the flute assiduously after dinner, and thanked Time for ridding him of the fires of youth. People came from all over the world to see him; and on his seventieth birthday, in 1858, congratulations poured in upon him from all quarters and every continent.

It was not too soon; he had but two more years to live. On September 21, 1860, he sat down alone to breakfast, apparently well. An hour later his landlady found him still seated at the table, dead.

[1] Wallace, 171.

# SCHOPENHAUER

## III. THE WORLD AS IDEA

What strikes the reader at once upon opening *The World as Will and Idea* is its style. Here is no Chinese puzzle of Kantian terminology, no Hegelian obfuscation, no Spinozist geometry; everything is clarity and order; and all is admirably centered about the leading conception of the world as will, and therefore strife, and therefore misery. What blunt honesty, what refreshing vigor, what uncompromising directness! Where his predecessors are abstract to the point of invisibility, with theories that give out few windows of illustration upon the actual world, Schopenhauer, like the son of a business man, is rich in the concrete, in examples, in applications, even in humor.[1] After Kant, humor in philosophy was a startling innovation.

But why was the book rejected? Partly because it attacked just those who could have given it publicity—the university teachers. Hegel was philosophic dictator of Germany in 1818; yet Schopenhauer loses no time in assailing him. In the preface to the second edition he writes:

> No time can be more unfavorable to philosophy than that in which it is shamefully misused on the one hand to further political objects, on the other as a means of livelihood. . . . Is there then nothing to oppose to the maxim, *Primum vivere, deinde philosophari?*[2] These gentlemen desire to live, and indeed to live by philosophy. To philosophy they are assigned, with their wives and children. . . . The rule, "I sing the song of him whose bread I eat," has always held

[1] One instance of his humor had better be buried in the obscurity of a foot-note. "The actor Unzelmann," notorious for adding remarks of his own to the lines of the playwright, "was forbidden, at the Berlin theatre, to improvise. Soon afterwards he had to appear upon the stage on horseback." Just as they entered, the horse was guilty of conduct seriously unbecoming a public stage. "The audience began to laugh; whereupon Unzelmann severely reproached the horse:—'Do you not know that we are forbidden to improvise?'"—Vol. ii, p. 273.

[2] First one must live, then one may philosophize.

> good; the making of money by philosophy was regarded by the ancients as the characteristic of the sophists. . . . Nothing is to be had for gold but mediocrity. . . . It is impossible that an age which for twenty years has applauded a Hegel—that intellectual Caliban—as the greatest of the philosophers, . . . could make him who has looked on at that desirous of its approbation. . . . But rather, truth will always be *paucorum hominum*,[1] and must therefore quietly and modestly wait for the few whose unusual mode of thought may find it enjoyable. . . . Life is short, but truth works far and lives long; let us speak the truth.

These last words are nobly spoken; but there is something of sour grapes in it all; no man was ever more anxious for approbation than Schopenhauer. It would have been nobler still to say nothing ill of Hegel; *de vivis nil nisi bonum*—of the living let us say nothing but good. And as for modestly awaiting recognition,—"I cannot see," says Schopenhauer, "that between Kant and myself anything has been done in philosophy." [2] "I hold this thought—that the world is will—to be that which has long been sought for under the name of philosophy, and the discovery of which is therefore regarded, by those who are familiar with history, as quite as impossible as the discovery of the philosopher's stone." [3] "I only intend to impart a single thought. Yet, notwithstanding all my endeavors, I could find no shorter way of imparting it than this whole book. . . . Read the book twice, and the first time with great patience." [4] So much for modesty! "What is modesty but hypocritical humility, by means of which, in a world swelling with envy, a man seeks to obtain pardon for excellences and merits from those who have none?" [5] "No doubt, when modesty was made a virtue, it

[1] Of few men.
[2] Vol. ii, p. 5.
[3] Vol. i, p. vii.
[4] *Ibid.*, viii. In fact, this is just what one must do; many have found even a third reading fruitful. A great book is like a great symphony, which must be heard many times before it can be really understood.
[5] I, 303.

was a very advantageous thing for the fools; for everybody is expected to speak of himself as if he were one." [1]

There was no humility about the first sentence of Schopenhauer's book. "The world," it begins, "is my idea." When Fichte had uttered a similar proposition even the metaphysically sophisticated Germans had asked,—"What does his wife say about this?" But Schopenhauer had no wife. His meaning, of course, was simple enough: he wished to accept at the outset the Kantian position that the external world is known to us only through our sensations and ideas. There follows an exposition of idealism which is clear and forceful enough, but which constitutes the least original part of the book, and might better have come last than first. The world took a generation to discover Schopenhauer because he put his worst foot forward, and hid his own thought behind a two-hundred-page barrier of second-hand idealism.[2]

The most vital part of the first section is an attack on materialism. How can we explain mind as matter, when we know matter only through mind?

> If we had followed materialism thus far with clear ideas, when we reached its highest point we would suddenly be seized with a fit of the inextinguishable laughter of the Olympians. As if waking from a dream, we would all at once become aware that its final result—knowledge—which it had reached so laboriously, was presupposed as the indispensable condition of its very starting-point. Mere matter; and when we imagined that we thought matter, we really thought only the subject that perceives matter: the eye that sees it,

[1] *Essays*, "On Pride."

[2] Instead of recommending books about Schopenhauer it would be better to send the reader to Schopenhauer himself: all three volumes of his main work (with the exception of Part I in each volume) are easy reading, and full of matter; and all the Essays are valuable and delightful. By way of biography Wallace's *Life* should suffice. In this essay it has been thought desirable to condense Schopenhauer's immense volumes not by rephrasing their ideas, but by selecting and coördinating the salient passages, and leaving the thought in the philosopher's own clear and brilliant language. The reader will have the benefit of getting Schopenhauer at first hand, however briefly.

> the hand that feels it, the understanding that knows it. Thus the tremendous *petitio principii* reveals itself unexpectedly; for suddenly the last link is seen to be the starting-point, the chain a circle; and the materialist is like Baron Münchausen, who, when swimming on horseback, drew the horse into the air with his legs, and himself by his queue.[1] . . . The crude materialism which even now, in the middle of the nineteenth century,[2] has been served up again under the ignorant delusion that it is original, . . . stupidly denies vital force, and first of all tries to explain the phenomena of life from physical and chemical forces, and those again from the mechanical effects of matter.[3] . . . But I will never believe that even the simplest chemical combination will ever admit of mechanical explanation; much less the properties of light, heat, and electricity. These will always require a dynamical explanation.[4]

No: it is impossible to solve the metaphysical puzzle, to discover the secret essence of reality, by examining matter first, and then proceeding to examine thought: we must begin with that which we know directly and intimately—ourselves. "We can never arrive at the real nature of things from without. However much we may investigate, we can never reach anything but images and names. We are like a man who goes round a castle seeking in vain for an entrance, and sometimes sketching the façades."[5] Let us enter within. If we can ferret out the ultimate nature of our own minds we shall perhaps have the key to the external world.

### IV. THE WORLD AS WILL

#### 1. *The Will to Live*

Almost without exception, philosophers have placed the essence of mind in thought and consciousness; man was the

[1] I, 34.
[2] Vogt, Büchner, Moleschott, Feuerbach, etc.
[3] I, 159.
[4] III, 43.
[5] I, 128.

knowing animal, the *animal rationale.* "This ancient and universal radical error, this enormous *proton pseudos,*[1] . . . must before everything be set aside." [2] "Consciousness is the mere surface of our minds, of which, as of the earth, we do not know the inside but only the crust." [3] Under the conscious intellect is the conscious or unconscious *will,* a striving, persistent vital force, a spontaneous activity, a will of imperious desire. The intellect may seem at times to lead the will, but only as a guide leads his master; the will "is the strong blind man who carries on his shoulders the lame man who can see." [4] We do not want a thing because we have found reasons for it, we find reasons for it because we want it; we even elaborate philosophies and theologies to cloak our desires.[5] Hence Schopenhauer calls man the "metaphysical animal": other animals desire without metaphysics. "Nothing is more provoking, when we are arguing against a man with reasons and explanations, and taking all pains to convince him, than to discover at last that he *will* not understand, that we have to do with his *will.*" [6] Hence the uselessness of logic: no one ever convinced anybody by logic; and even logicians use logic only as a source of income. To convince a man, you must appeal to his self-interest, his desires, his will. Observe how long we remember our victories, and how soon we forget our defeats; memory is the menial of *will.*[7] "In doing accounts we make mistakes much oftener in our own favor than to our disadvantage; and this without the slightest dishonest intention." [8] "On the other hand, the understanding of the stupidest man becomes keen when objects

[1] First lie, initial mistake.
[2] II, 409. Schopenhauer forgets (or does he take his lead from?) Spinoza's emphatic statement: "Desire is the very essence of man."—*Ethics,* part iv, prop. 18. Fichte had also emphasized the will.
[3] II, 328.
[4] II, 421.
[5] A source of Freud.
[6] III, 443.
[7] *Essays,* "Counsels and Maxims," p. 126.
[8] II, 433.

are in question that closely concern his wishes";[1] in general, the intellect is developed by danger, as in the fox, or by want, as in the criminal. But always it seems subordinate and instrumental to desire; when it attempts to displace the will, confusion follows. No one is more liable to mistakes than he who acts only on reflection.[2]

Consider the agitated strife of men for food, mates, or children; can this be the work of reflection? Certainly not; the cause is the half conscious will to live, and to live fully. "Men are only apparently drawn from in front; in reality they are pushed from behind";[3] they think they are led on by what they see, when in truth they are driven on by what they feel, —by instincts of whose operation they are half the time unconscious. Intellect is merely the minister of foreign affairs; "nature has produced it for the service of the individual will. Therefore it is only designed to know things so far as they afford motives for the will, but not to fathom them or to comprehend their true being."[4] "The will is the only permanent and unchangeable element in the mind; . . . it is the will which," through continuity of purpose, "gives unity to consciousness and holds together all its ideas and thoughts, accompanying them like a continuous harmony."[5] It is the organ-point of thought.

Character lies in the will, and not in the intellect; character too is continuity of purpose and attitude: and these are will. Popular language is correct when it prefers the "heart" to the "head"; it knows (because it has not reasoned about it) that a "good will" is profounder and more reliable than a clear mind; and when it calls a man "shrewd," "knowing," or "cunning" it implies its suspicion and dislike. "Brilliant qualities of mind win admiration, but never affection"; and "all religions promise a reward . . . for excellences of the

[1] II, 437.
[2] II, 251.
[3] III, 118.
[4] II, 463, 826; a source of Bergson.
[5] II, 333.

*will* or heart, but none for excellences of the head or understanding." [1]

Even the body is the product of the will. The blood, pushed on by that will which we vaguely call life, builds its own vessels by wearing grooves in the body of the embryo; the grooves deepen and close up, and become arteries and veins.[2] The will to know builds the brain just as the will to grasp forms the hand, or as the will to eat develops the digestive tract.[3] Indeed, these pairs—these forms of will and these forms of flesh—are but two sides of one process and reality. The relation is best seen in emotion, where the feeling and the internal bodily changes form one complex unit.[4]

> The act of will and the movement of the body are not two different things objectively known, which the bond of causality unites; they do not stand in the relation of cause and effect; they are one and the same, but they are given in entirely different ways,—immediately, and again in perception. . . . The action of the body is nothing but the act of the will objectified. This is true of every movement of the body; . . . the whole body is nothing but objectified will. . . . The parts of the body must therefore completely correspond to the principal desires through which the will manifests itself; they must be the visible expression of these desires. Teeth, throat and bowels are objectified hunger; the organs of generation are objectified sexual desire. . . . The whole nervous system constitutes the antennae of the will, which it stretches within and without. . . . As the human body generally corresponds to the human will generally, so the individual bodily structure corresponds to the individually modified will, the character of the individual.[5]

The intellect tires, the will never; the intellect needs sleep, but the will works even in sleep. Fatigue, like pain, has its

[1] II, 450, 449.
[2] II, 479.
[3] II, 486. This is the Lamarckian view of growth and evolution as due to desires and functions compelling structures and begetting organs.
[4] I, 132. A source for the James-Lange theory of emotion?
[5] I, 130–141; II, 482. Cf. Spinoza, *Ethics*, III, 2.

seat in the brain; muscles not connected with the cerebrum (like the heart) never tire.[1] In sleep the brain feeds; but the will requires no food. Hence the need for sleep is greatest in brain-workers. (This fact, however, "must not mislead us into extending sleep unduly; for then it loses in intensity . . . and becomes mere loss of time.")[2] In sleep the life of man sinks to the vegetative level, and then "the will works according to its original and essential nature, undisturbed from without, with no diminution of its power through the activity of the brain and the exertion of knowing, which is the heaviest organic function; . . . therefore in sleep the whole power of the will is directed to the maintenance and improvement of the organism. Hence all healing, all favorable crises, take place in sleep."[3] Burdach was right when he declared sleep to be the original state. The embryo sleeps almost continuously, and the infant most of the time. Life is "a struggle against sleep: at first we win ground from it, which in the end it recovers. Sleep is a morsel of death borrowed to keep up and renew that part of life which has been exhausted by the day."[4] It is our eternal foe; even when we are awake it possesses us partly. After all, what is to be expected of heads even the wisest of which is every night the scene of the strangest and the most senseless dreams, and which has to take up its meditations again on awakening from them?"[5]

Will, then, is the essence of man. Now what if it is also the essence of life in all its forms, and even of "inanimate" matter? What if will is the long-sought-for, the long-despaired-of, "thing-in-itself,"—the ultimate inner reality and secret essence of all things?

Let us try, then, to interpret the external world in terms of

[1] II, 424. But is there no such thing as the satiation or exhaustion of desire? In profound fatigue or sickness even the will to live fades.
[2] II, 468.
[3] II, 463.
[4] "Counsels and Maxims," essay "On Our Relations to Ourselves."
[5] II, 333.

will. And let us go at once to the bottom; where others have said that will is a form of force let us say that force is a form of will.[1] To Hume's question—What is causality?—we shall answer, Will. As will is the universal cause in ourselves, so is it in things; and unless we so understand cause as will, causality will remain only a magic and mystic formula, really meaningless. Without this secret we are driven to mere occult qualities like "force," or "gravity," or "affinity"; we do not know what these forces are, but we know—at least a little more clearly—what will is; let us say, then, that repulsion and attraction, combination and decomposition, magnetism and electricity, gravity and crystallization, are Will.[2] Goethe expressed this idea in the title of one of his novels, when he called the irresistible attraction of lovers *die Wahlverwandschaften* —"elective affinities." The force which draws the lover, and the force which draws the planet, are one.

So in plant life. The lower we go among the forms of life the smaller we find the rôle of intellect; but not so with will.

> That which in us pursues its ends by the light of knowledge, but here . . . only strives blindly and dumbly in a one-sided and unchangeable manner, must yet in both cases come under the name of Will. . . . Unconsciousness is the original and natural condition of all things, and therefore also the basis from which, in particular species of beings, consciousness results as their highest efflorescence; wherefore even then unconsciousness always continues to predominate. Accordingly, most existences are without consciousness; but yet they act according to the laws of their nature,—i. e., of their will. Plants have at most a very weak analogue of consciousness; the lowest species of animals only the dawn of it. But even after it has ascended through the whole series of animals to man and his reason, the unconsciousness of plants, from which it started, still re-

[1] I, 144.
[2] I, 142.

mains the foundation, and may be traced in the necessity for sleep.[1]

Aristotle was right: there is a power within that moulds every form, in plants and planets, in animals and men. "The instinct of animals in general gives us the best illustration of what remains of teleology in nature. For as instinct is an action similar to that which is guided by the conception of an end, and yet is entirely without this; so all construction in nature resembles that which is guided by the conception of an end, and yet is entirely without it."[2] The marvelous mechanical skill of animals shows how prior the will is to the intellect. An elephant which had been led through Europe, and had crossed hundreds of bridges, refused to advance upon a weak bridge, though it had seen many horses and men crossing it. A young dog fears to jump down from the table; it foresees the effect of the fall not by reasoning (for it has no experience of such a fall) but by instinct. Orang-outangs warm themselves by a fire which they find, but they do not feed the fire; obviously, then, such actions are instinctive, and not the result of reasoning; they are the expression not of intellect but of will.[3]

The will, of course, is a will to live, and a will to maximum life. How dear life is to all living things!—and with what silent patience it will bide its time! "For thousands of years galvanism slumbered in copper and zinc, and they lay quietly beside silver, which must be consumed in flame as soon as all three are brought together under the required conditions. Even in the organic kingdom we see a dry seed preserve the slumbering force of life through three thousand years, and, when at last the favorable circumstances occur, grow up as a plant." Living toads found in limestone lead to the conclusion that even animal life is capable of suspension for thou-

[1] I, 153; II, 418, 337.
[2] I, 210.
[3] I, 29.

sands of years.[1] The will is a will to live; and its eternal enemy is death.

But perhaps it can defeat even death?

### 2. *The Will to Reproduce*

It can, by the strategy and martyrdom of reproduction.

Every normal organism hastens, at maturity, to sacrifice itself to the task of reproduction: from the spider who is eaten up by the female he has just fertilized, or the wasp that devotes itself to gathering food for offspring it will never see, to the man who wears himself to ruin in the effort to feed and clothe and educate his children. Reproduction is the ultimate purpose of every organism, and its strongest instinct; for only so can the will conquer death. And to ensure this conquest of death, the will to reproduce is placed almost entirely beyond control of knowledge or reflection: even a philosopher, occasionally, has children.

> The will shows itself here as independent of knowledge, and works blindly, as in unconscious nature. . . . Accordingly, the reproductive organs are properly the focus of will, and form the opposite pole to the brain, which is the representative of knowledge. . . . The former are the life-sustaining principle,—they ensure endless life; "for this reason they were worshipped by the Greeks in the *phallus* and by the Hindus in the *lingam*. . . . Hesiod and Parmenides said very significantly that Eros is the first, the creator, the principle from which all things proceed. The relation of the sexes . . . is really the invisible central point of all action and conduct, and peeps out everywhere in spite of all veils thrown over it. It is the cause of war and the end of peace; the basis of what is serious, and the aim of the jest; the inexhaustible source of wit, the key of all allusions, and the meaning of all mysterious hints.[2] . . . We see it at

[1] I, 178.

[2] A source of Freud's theory of "wit and the unconscious."

every moment seat itself, as the true and hereditary lord of the world, out of the fullness of its own strength, upon the ancestral throne; and looking down thence with scornful glance, laugh at the preparations made to bind it, or imprison it, or at least limit it and, wherever possible, keep it concealed, and even so to master it that it shall only appear as a subordinate, secondary concern of life.[1]

The "metaphysics of love" revolves about this subordination of the father to the mother, of the parent to the child, of the individual to the species. And first, the law of sexual attraction is that the choice of mate is to a large extent determined, however unconsciously, by mutual fitness to procreate.

Each seeks a mate that will neutralize his defects, lest they be inherited; . . . a physically weak man will seek a strong woman. . . . Each one will especially regard as beautiful in another individual those perfections which he himself lacks, nay, even those imperfections which are the opposite of his own.[2] . . . The physical qualities of two individuals can be such that for the purpose of restoring as far as possible the type of the species, the one is quite specially and perfectly the completion and supplement of the other, which therefore desires it exclusively. . . . The profound consciousness with which we consider and ponder every part of the body, . . . the critical scrupulosity with which we look at a woman who begins to please us . . . the individual here acts, without knowing it, by order of something higher than himself. . . . Every individual loses attraction for the opposite sex in proportion as he or she is removed from the fittest period for begetting or conceiving: . . . youth without beauty has still always attraction; beauty without youth has none. . . . That in every case of falling in love, . . . what alone is

[1] I, 426, 525; III, 314. Schopenhauer, like all who have suffered from sex, exaggerates its rôle; the parental relation probably outweighs the sexual in the minds of normal adults.

[2] A source of Weininger.

looked to is the production of an individual of a definite nature, is primarily confirmed by the fact that the essential matter is not the reciprocation of love, but possession.[1]

Nevertheless, no unions are so unhappy as these love marriages—and precisely for the reason that their aim is the perpetuation of the species, and not the pleasure of the individual.[2] "He who marries from love must live in sorrow," runs a Spanish proverb. Half the literature of the marriage problem is stultified because it thinks of marriage as mating, instead of thinking of it as an arrangement for the preservation of the race. Nature does not seem to care whether the parents are "happy forever afterwards," or only for a day, so long as reproduction is achieved. Marriages of convenience, arranged by the parents of the mates, are often happier than marriages of love. Yet the woman who marries for love, against the advice of her parents, is in a sense to be admired; for "she has preferred what is of most importance, and has acted in the spirit of nature (more exactly, of the species), while the parents advised in the spirit of individual egoism."[3] Love is the best eugenics.

Since love is a deception practiced by nature, marriage is the attrition of love, and must be disillusioning. Only a philosopher can be happy in marriage, and philosophers do not marry.

Because the passion depended upon an illusion which represented that which has value only for the species as valuable for the individual, the deception must vanish after the attainment of the end of the species. The individual discovers that he has been the dupe of the species. If Petrarch's passion had been gratified, his song would have been silenced.[4]

1 III, 342, 357, 347, 360, 359, 352, 341.
2 III, 372.
3 III, 371.
4 III, 370.

The subordination of the individual to the species as instrument of its continuance, appears again in the apparent dependence of individual vitality on the condition of the reproductive cells.

> The sexual impulse is to be regarded as the inner life of the tree (the species) upon which the life of the individual grows, like a leaf that is nourished by the tree and assists in nourishing the tree; this is why that impulse is so strong, and springs from the depths of our nature. To castrate an individual means to cut him off from the tree of the species upon which he grows, and thus severed, leaves him to wither; hence the degradation of his mental and physical powers. That the service of the species, i. e., fecundation, is followed in the case of every animal individual by momentary exhaustion and debility of all the powers, and in the case of most insects, indeed, by speedy death,—on account of which Celsus said, *Seminis emissio est partis animae jactura;* that in the case of man the extinction of the generative power shows that the individual approaches death; that excessive use of this power at every age shortens life, while on the other hand, temperance in this respect increases all the powers, and especially the muscular powers, on which account it was part of the training of the Greek athletes; that the same restraint lengthens the life of the insect even to the following spring; all this points to the fact that the life of the individual is at bottom only borrowed from that of the species. . . . Procreation is the highest point; and after attaining to it, the life of the first individual quickly or slowly sinks, while a new life ensures to nature the endurance of the species, and repeats the same phenomena. . . . Thus the alternation of death and reproduction is as the pulse-beat of the species. . . . Death is for the species what sleep is for the individual; . . . this is nature's great doctrine of immortality. . . . For the whole world, with all its phenomena, is the objectivity of the one indivisible will, the Idea, which is related to all other Ideas as harmony is related to the single voice. . . . In Eckermann's *Conversations with Goethe* (vol. i, p. 161), Goethe says: "Our spirit is a being

> of a nature quite indestructible, and its activity continues from eternity to eternity. It is like the sun, which seems to set only to our earthly eyes, but which, in reality, never sets, but shines on unceasingly." Goethe has taken the simile from me, not I from him.[1]

Only in space and time do we seem to be separate beings; they constitute the "principle of individuation" which divides life into distinct organisms as appearing in different places or periods; space and time are the Veil of Maya,—Illusion hiding the unity of things. In reality there is only the species, only life, only will. "To understand clearly that the individual is only the phenomenon, not the thing-in-itself," to see in "the constant change of matter the fixed permanence of form," —this is the essence of philosophy.[2] "The motto of history should run: *Eadem, sed aliter.*"[3] The more things change, the more they remain the same.

> He to whom men and all things have not at all times appeared as mere phantoms or illusions, has no capacity for philosophy. . . . The true philosophy of history lies in perceiving that, in all the endless changes and motley complexity of events, it is only the self-same unchangeable being that is before us, which today pursues the same ends as it did yesterday and ever will. The historical philosopher has accordingly to recognize the identical character in all events, . . . and in spite of all the variety of special circumstances, of costumes and manners and customs, has to see everywhere the same humanity. . . . To have read Herodotus is, from a philosophical point of view, to have studied enough history. . . . Throughout and everywhere the true symbol of nature is the circle, because it is the schema or type of recurrence.[4]

We like to believe that all history is a halting and imperfect preparation for the magnificent era of which we are the salt

[1] III, 310; I, 214; III, 312, 270, 267; I, 206, 362.
[2] I, 357–8.
[3] III, 227. "The same things, but in different ways."
[4] III, 227, 267; Wallace, 97. Cf. Nietzsche's "eternal recurrence."

and summit; but this notion of progress is mere conceit and folly. "In general, the wise in all ages have always said the same things, and the fools, who at all times form the immense majority, have in their way too acted alike, and done the opposite; and so it will continue. For, as Voltaire says, we shall leave the world as foolish and wicked as we found it." [1]

In the light of all this we get a new and grimmer sense of the inescapable reality of determinism. "Spinoza says (Epistle 62) that if a stone which has been projected through the air had consciousness, it would believe that it was moving of its own free will. I add to this only that the stone would be right. The impulse given it is for the stone what the motive is for me; and what in the stone appears as cohesion, gravitation, rigidity, is in its inner nature the same as that which I recognize in myself as will, and what the stone also, if knowledge were given to it, would recognize as will." [2] But in neither the stone nor the philosopher is the will "free." Will as a whole is free, for there is no other will beside it that could limit it; but each part of the universal Will—each species, each organism, each organ—is irrevocably determined by the whole.

> Everyone believes himself *à priori* to be perfectly free, even in his individual actions, and thinks that at every moment he can commence another manner of life, which just means that he can become another person. But *à posteriori*, through experience, he finds to his astonishment that he is not free, but subjected to necessity; that in spite of all his resolutions and reflections he does not change his conduct, and that from the beginning of his life to the end of it, he must carry out the very character which he himself condemns, and as it were, play the part which he has undertaken, to the very end.[3]

[1] Introduction to "The Wisdom of Life."
[2] II, 164.
[3] I, 147.

### V. THE WORLD AS EVIL

But if the world is will, it must be a world of suffering.

And first, because will itself indicates want, and its grasp is always greater than its reach. For every wish that is satisfied there remain ten that are denied. Desire is infinite, fulfilment is limited—"it is like the alms thrown to a beggar, that keeps him alive today in order that his misery may be prolonged tomorrow. . . . As long as our consciousness is filled by our will, so long as we are given up to the throng of desires with their constant hopes and fears, so long as we are subject to willing, we can never have lasting happiness or peace." [1] And fulfilment never satisfies; nothing is so fatal to an ideal as its realization. "The satisfied passion oftener leads to unhappiness than to happiness. For its demands often conflict so much with the personal welfare of him who is concerned that they undermine it." [2] Each individual bears within himself a disruptive contradiction; the realized desire develops a new desire, and so on endlessly. "At bottom this results from the fact that the will must live on itself, for there exists nothing besides it, and it is a hungry will." [3]

> In every individual the measure of the pain essential to him was determined once for all by his nature; a measure which could neither remain empty, nor be more than filled. . . . If a great and pressing care is lifted from our breast, . . . another immediately replaces it, the whole material of which was already there before, but could not come into consciousness as care because there was no capacity left for it. . . . But now that there is room for this it comes forward and occupies the throne.[4]

Again, life is evil because pain is its basic stimulus and reality, and pleasure is merely a negative cessation of pain.

[1] I, 253.
[2] III, 368.
[3] I, 201.
[4] I, 409.

Aristotle was right: the wise man seeks not pleasure, but freedom from care and pain.

> All satisfaction, or what is commonly called happiness, is, in reality and essence, negative only. . . . We are not properly conscious of the blessings and advantages we actually possess, nor do we prize them, but think of them merely as a matter of course, for they gratify us only negatively, by restraining suffering. Only when we have lost them do we become sensible of their value; for the want, the privation, the sorrow, is the positive thing, communicating itself directly to us. . . . What was it that led the Cynics to repudiate pleasure in any form, if it was not the fact that pain is, in a greater or less degree, always bound up with pleasure? . . . The same truth is contained in that fine French proverb: *le mieux est l'ennemi du bien*—leave well enough alone.[1]

Life is evil because "as soon as want and suffering permit rest to a man, *ennui* is at once so near that he necessarily requires diversion," [2]—i. e., more suffering. Even if the socialist Utopia were attained, innumerable evils would be left, because some of them—like strife—are essential to life; and if every evil were removed, and strife were altogether ended, boredom would become as intolerable as pain. So "life swings like a pendulum backward and forward between pain and *ennui*. . . . After man had transformed all pains and torments into the conception of hell, there remained nothing for heaven except *ennui*." [3] The more successful we become, the more we are bored. "As want is the constant scourge of the people, so *ennui* is the scourge of the fashionable world. In middle-class life *ennui* is represented by the Sundays and want by the week-days." [4]

Life is evil because the higher the organism the greater the suffering. The growth of knowledge is no solution.

[1] I, 411; "Counsels and Maxims," p. 5. "The better is enemy of the good."
[2] I, 404.
[3] I, 402.
[4] I, 404.

> For as the phenomenon of will becomes more complete, the suffering becomes more and more apparent. In the plant there is as yet no sensibility, and therefore no pain. A certain very small degree of suffering is experienced by the lowest species of animal life—Infusoria and Radiata; even in insects the capacity to feel and suffer is still limited. It first appears in a high degree with the complete nervous system of vertebrate animals, and always in a higher degree the more intelligence develops. Thus, in proportion as knowledge attains to distinctness, as consciousness ascends, pain also increases, and reaches its highest degree in man. And then, again, the more distinctly a man knows—the more intelligent he is—the more pain he has; the man who is gifted with genius suffers most of all.[1]

He that increaseth knowledge, therefore, increaseth sorrow. Even memory and foresight add to human misery; for most of our suffering lies in retrospect or anticipation; pain itself is brief. How much more suffering is caused by the thought of death than by death itself!

Finally, and above all, life is evil because life is war. Everywhere in nature we see strife, competition, conflict, and a suicidal alternation of victory and defeat. Every species "fights for the matter, space, and time of the others."

> The young hydra, which grows like a bud out of the old one, and afterwards separates itself from it, fights, while it is still joined to the old one, for the prey that offers itself, so that the one snatches it out of the mouth of the other. But the bull-dog ant of Australia affords us the most extraordinary example of this kind; for if it is cut in two, a battle begins between the head and the tail. The head seizes the tail with its teeth, and the tail defends itself bravely by stinging the head; the battle may last for half an hour, until they die or are dragged away by other ants. This contest takes place every time the experiment is tried. . . . Yunghahn relates that he saw in Java a plain, as far as the

[1] I, 400.

eye could reach, entirely covered with skeletons, and took it for a battle-field; they were, however, merely the skeletons of large turtles, . . . which come this way out of the sea to lay their eggs, and are then attacked by wild dogs who with their united strength lay them on their backs, strip off the small shell from the stomach, and devour them alive. But often then a tiger pounces upon the dogs. . . . For this these turtles are born. . . . Thus the will to live everywhere preys upon itself, and in different forms is its own nourishment, till finally the human race, because it subdues all the others, regards nature as a manufactory for its own use. Yet even the human race . . . reveals in itself with most terrible distinctness this conflict, this variance of the will with itself; and we find *homo homini lupus*.[1]

The total picture of life is almost too painful for contemplation; life depends on our not knowing it too well.

If we should bring clearly to a man's sight the terrible sufferings and miseries to which his life is constantly exposed, he would be seized with horror; and if we were to conduct the confirmed optimist through the hospitals, infirmaries, and surgical operating-rooms, through the prisons, torture-chambers, and slave kennels, over battle-fields and places of execution; if we were to open to him all the dark abodes of misery, where it hides itself from the glance of cold curiosity, and, finally, allow him to look into the starving dungeons of Ugolino, he too would understand at last the nature of this "best of all possible worlds." For whence did Dante take the materials of his hell but from our actual world? And yet he made a very proper hell out of it. But when, on the other hand, he came to describe heaven and its delights, he had an insurmountable difficulty before him, for our world affords no materials at all for this. . . . Every epic and dramatic poem can only represent a struggle, an effort, a fight for happiness; never enduring and complete happiness itself. It conducts its heroes through a thousand dangers and difficulties to the goal; as soon as this is reached it hastens to let the curtain fall; for now there would remain

[1] I, 192; III, 112; I, 191. "Man is a wolf to man."

> nothing for it to do but to show that the glittering goal in which the hero expected to find happiness had only disappointed him, and that after its attainment he was no better off than before.[1]

We are unhappy married, and unmarried we are unhappy. We are unhappy when alone, and unhappy in society: we are like hedge-hogs clustering together for warmth, uncomfortable when too closely packed, and yet miserable when kept apart. It is all very funny; and "the life of every individual, if we survey it as a whole, . . . and only lay stress on its most significant features, is really always a tragedy; but gone through in detail it has the character of a comedy." [2] Think of it:

> At the age of five years to enter a spinning-cotton or other factory, and from that time forth to sit there daily, first ten, then twelve, and ultimately fourteen hours, performing the same mechanical labor, is to purchase dearly the satisfaction of drawing breath. But this is the fate of millions, and that of millions more is analogous to it. . . . Again, under the firm crust of the planet dwell powerful forces of nature, which, as soon as some accident affords them free play, must necessarily destroy the crust, with everything living upon it, as has already taken place at least three times upon our planet, and will probably take place oftener still. The earthquake of Lisbon, the earthquake of Haiti, the destruction of Pompeii, are only small playful hints of what is possible.[3]

In the face of all this, "optimism is a bitter mockery of men's woes"; [4] and "we cannot ascribe to the *Theodicy*" of Leibnitz, "as a methodical and broad unfolding of optimism, any other merit than this, that it gave occasion later for the immortal *Candide* of the great Voltaire; whereby Leibnitz' oft-repeated and lame excuse for the evil of the world—that the

[1] I, 419, 413.
[2] I, 415.
[3] III, 389, 395.
[4] I, 420.

bad sometimes brings about the good—received a confirmation which was unexpected by him." [1] In brief, "the nature of life throughout presents itself to us as intended and calculated to awaken the conviction that nothing at all is worth our striving, our efforts and struggles; that all good things are vanity, the world in all its ends bankrupt, and life a business which does not cover expenses." [2]

To be happy, one must be as ignorant as youth. Youth thinks that willing and striving are joys; it has not yet discovered the weary insatiableness of desire, and the fruitlessness of fulfilment; it does not yet see the inevitableness of defeat.

> The cheerfulness and vivacity of youth are partly due to the fact that when we are ascending the hill of life, death is not visible; it lies down at the bottom of the other side. . . . Towards the close of life, every day we live gives us the same kind of sensation as the criminal experiences at every step on his way to the gallows. . . . To see how short life is, one must have lived long. . . . Up to our thirty-sixth year we may be compared, in respect to the way in which we use our vital energy, to people who live on the interest of their money; what they spend today they have again tomorrow. But from the age of thirty-six onward, our position is like that of the investor who begins to entrench on his capital. . . . It is the dread of this calamity that makes love of possession increase with age. . . . So far from youth being the happiest period of life, there is much more truth in the remark made by Plato, at the beginning of the *Republic*, that the prize should rather be given to old age, because then at last a man is freed from the animal passion which has hitherto never ceased to disquiet him. . . . Yet it should not be forgotten that, when this passion is extinguished, the true kernel of life is gone, and nothing remains but the hollow shell; or, from another point of view, life then becomes like a comedy which, begun by real actors, is continued and brought to an end by automata dressed in their clothes.[3]

[1] III, 394.
[2] III, 383.
[3] "Counsels and Maxims," 124–139.

At the end, we meet death. Just as experience begins to coördinate itself into wisdom, brain and body begin to decay. "Everything lingers for but a moment, and hastens on to death." [1] And if death bides its time it is but playing with us as a cat with a helpless mouse. "It is clear that as our walking is admittedly nothing but a constantly-prevented falling, so the life of our bodies is nothing but a constantly-prevented dying, an ever-postponed death." [2] "Among the magnificent ornaments and apparel of Eastern despots there is always a costly vial of poison." [3] The philosophy of the East understands the omnipresence of death, and gives to its students that calm aspect and dignified slowness of carriage, which comes of a consciousness of the brevity of personal existence. The fear of death is the beginning of philosophy, and the final cause of religion. The average man cannot reconcile himself to death; therefore he makes innumerable philosophies and theologies; the prevalence of a belief in immortality is a token of the awful fear of death.

Just as theology is a refuge from death, so insanity is a refuge from pain. "Madness comes as a way to avoid the memory of suffering"; [4] it is a saving break in the thread of consciousness; we can survive certain experiences or fears only by forgetting them.

> How unwillingly we think of things which powerfully injure our interests, wound our pride, or interfere with our wishes; with what difficulty do we determine to lay such things before our intellects for careful and serious investigation. . . . In that resistance of the will to allowing what is contrary to it to come under the examination of the intellect lies the place at which madness can break in upon the mind. . . . If the resistance of the will against the apprehension of some knowledge reaches such a degree that that operation is not performed in its entirety, then certain ele-

[1] II, 454; III, 269.
[2] "Counsels and Maxims," 28, note.
[3] I, 119.
[4] I, 250.

ments or circumstances become for the intellect completely suppressed, because the will cannot endure the sight of them; and then, for the sake of the necessary connections, the gaps that thus arise are filled up at pleasure; thus madness appears. For the intellect has given up its nature to please the will; the man now imagines what does not exist. Yet the madness which has thus arisen is the lethe of unendurable suffering; it was the last remedy of harassed nature, i. e., of the will.[1]

The final refuge is suicide. Here at last, strange to say, thought and imagination conquer instinct. Diogenes is said to have put an end to himself by refusing to breathe;—what a victory over the will to live! But this triumph is merely individual; the will continues in the species. Life laughs at suicide, and smiles at death; for every deliberate death there are thousands of indeliberate births. "Suicide, the wilful destruction of the single phenomenal existence, is a vain and foolish act, for the thing-in-itself—the species, and life, and will in general—remains unaffected by it, even as the rainbow endures however fast the drops which support it for the moment may chance to fall." [2] Misery and strife continue after the death of the individual, and must continue, so long as will is dominant in man. There can be no victory over the ills of life until the will has been utterly subordinated to knowledge and intelligence.

### VI. THE WISDOM OF LIFE

#### 1. *Philosophy*

Consider, first, the absurdity of the desire for material goods. Fools believe that if they can only achieve wealth, their wills can be completely gratified; a man of means is supposed to be a man with means for the fulfilment of every desire. "People are often reproached for wishing for money above all things, and for loving it more than anything else;

[1] III, 167–9. A source of Freud.
[2] I, 515.

but it is natural and even inevitable for people to love that which, like an unwearied Proteus, is always ready to turn itself into whatever object their wandering wishes or their manifold desires may fix upon. Everything else can satisfy only *one* wish; money alone is absolutely good, . . . because it is the abstract satisfaction of every wish." [1] Nevertheless, a life devoted to the acquisition of wealth is useless unless we know how to turn it into joy; and this is an art that requires culture and wisdom. A succession of sensual pursuits never satisfies for long; one must understand the ends of life as well as the art of acquiring means. "Men are a thousand times more intent on becoming rich than on acquiring culture, though it is quite certain that what a man *is* contributes more to his happiness than what he *has*." [2] "A man who has no mental needs is called a Philistine"; [3] he does not know what to do with his leisure—*difficilis in otio quies;* [4] he searches greedily from place to place for new sensations; and at last he is conquered by that nemesis of the idle rich or the reckless voluptuary—*ennui.*[5]

Not wealth but wisdom is the Way. "Man is at once impetuous striving of will (whose focus lies in the reproductive system), and eternal, free, serene subject of pure knowledge (of which the focus is the brain)." [6] Marvelous to say, knowledge, though born of the will, may yet master the will. The possibility of the independence of knowledge first appears in the indifferent way in which the intellect occasionally responds to the dictates of desire. "Sometimes the intellect refuses to obey the will: e. g., when we try in vain to fix our minds upon something, or when we call in vain upon the memory for something that was entrusted to it. The anger of the will against the intellect on such occasions makes its relation

[1] *Essays,* "Wisdom of Life," p. 47.
[2] *Ibid.,* p. 11.
[3] P. 41.
[4] P. 39. "Quiet in leisure is difficult."
[5] P. 22.
[6] I, 262.

to it, and the difference of the two, very plain. Indeed, vexed by this anger, the intellect sometimes officiously brings what was asked of it hours afterward, or even the following morning, quite unexpectedly and unseasonably." [1] From this imperfect subservience the intellect may pass to domination. "In accordance with previous reflection, or a recognized necessity, a man suffers, or accomplishes in cold blood, what is of the utmost, and often terrible, importance to him: suicide, execution, the duel, enterprises of every kind fraught with danger to life; and in general, things against which his whole animal nature rebels. Under such circumstances we see to what an extent reason has mastered the animal nature." [2]

This power of the intellect over the will permits of deliberate development; desire can be moderated or quieted by knowledge; and above all by a determinist philosophy which recognizes everything as the inevitable result of its antecedents. "Of ten things that annoy us, nine would not be able to do so if we understood them thoroughly in their causes, and therefore knew their necessity and true nature. . . . For what bridle and bit are to an unmanageable horse, the intellect is for the will in man." [3] "It is with inward as with outward necessity: nothing reconciles us so thoroughly as distinct knowledge." [4] The more we know of our passions, the less they control us; and "nothing will protect us from external compulsion so much as the control of ourselves." [5] *Si vis tibi omnia subjicere, subjice te rationi.*[6] The greatest of all wonders is not the conqueror of the world, but the subduer of himself.

So philosophy purifies the will. But philosophy is to be

[1] II, 439.
[2] I, 112.
[3] II, 426.
[4] I, 396.
[5] "Counsels and Maxims," p. 51.
[6] "If you would subject all things to yourself, subject yourself to reason." —*Seneca.*

understood as experience and thought, not as mere reading or passive study.

> The constant streaming in of the thoughts of others must confine and suppress our own; and indeed in the long run paralyze the power of thought. . . . The inclination of most scholars is a kind of *fuga vacui* [1] from the poverty of their own minds, which forcibly draws in the thoughts of others. . . . It is dangerous to read about a subject before we have thought about it ourselves. . . . When we read, another person thinks for us; we merely repeat his mental process. . . . So it comes about that if anyone spends almost the whole day in reading, . . . he gradually loses the capacity for thinking. . . . Experience of the world may be looked upon as a kind of text, to which reflection and knowledge form the commentary. Where there is a great deal of reflection and intellectual knowledge, and very little experience, the result is like those books which have on each page two lines of text to forty lines of commentary.[2]

The first counsel, then, is Life before books; and the second is, Text before commentary. Read the creators rather than the expositors and the critics. "Only from the authors themselves can we receive philosophic thoughts: therefore whoever feels himself drawn to philosophy must seek out its immortal teachers in the still sanctuary of their own works." [3] One work of genius is worth a thousand commentaries.

Within these limitations, the pursuit of culture, even through books, is valuable, because our happiness depends on what we have in our heads rather than on what we have in our pockets. Even fame is folly; "other people's heads are a wretched place to be the home of a man's true happiness." [4]

> What one human being can be to another is not a very great deal; in the end everyone stands alone; and the im-

[1] Vacuum suction.
[2] II, 254; *Essays,* "Books and Reading"; "Counsels and Maxims," p. 21.
[3] I, xxvii.
[4] "Wisdom of Life," p. 117.

portant thing is, who it is that stands alone. . . . The happiness which we receive from ourselves is greater than that which we obtain from our surroundings. . . . The world in which a man lives shapes itself chiefly by the way in which he looks at it. . . . Since everything which exists or happens for a man exists only in his consciousness, and happens for him alone, the most essential thing for a man is the constitution of his consciousness. . . . Therefore it is with great truth that Aristotle says, "To be happy means to be self-sufficient." [1]

The way out of the evil of endless willing is the intelligent contemplation of life, and converse with the achievements of the great of all times and countries; it is only for such loving minds that these great ones have lived. "Unselfish intellect rises like a perfume above the faults and follies of the world of Will." [2] Most men never rise above viewing things as objects of desire—hence their misery; but to see things purely as objects of understanding is to rise to freedom.

When some external cause or inward disposition lifts us suddenly out of the endless stream of willing, and delivers knowledge out of the slavery of the will, the attention is no longer directed to the motives of willing, but comprehends things free from their relation to the will, and thus observes them without personal interest, without subjectivity, purely objectively,—gives itself entirely up to them so far as they are ideas, but not in so far as they are motives. Then all at once the peace which we were always seeking, but which always fled from us on the former path of the desires, comes to us of its own accord, and it is well with us. It is the painless state which Epicurus prized as the highest good and as the state of the gods; for we are for the moment set free from the miserable striving of the will; we keep the Sabbath of the penal servitude of willing; the wheel of Ixion stands still.[3]

[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 27, 4–9.
[2] "Wisdom of Life," 34, 108.
[3] I, 254. Ixion, according to classical mythology, tried to win Juno from Jupiter, and was punished by being bound to a forever-revolving wheel.

### 2. *Genius*

Genius is the highest form of this will-less knowledge. The lowest forms of life are entirely made up of will, without knowledge; man in general is mostly will and little knowledge; genius is mostly knowledge and little will. "Genius consists in this, that the knowing faculty has received a considerably greater development than the service of the will demands." [1] This involves some passage of force out of reproductive into intellectual activity. "The fundamental condition of genius is an abnormal predominance of sensibility and irritability over reproductive power." [2] Hence the enmity between genius and woman, who represents reproduction and the subjugation of the intellect to the will to live and make live. "Women may have great talent, but no genius, for they always remain subjective"; [3] with them everything is personal, and is viewed as a means to personal ends. On the other hand,

> genius is simply the completest objectivity,—i. e., the objective tendency of the mind. . . . Genius is the power of leaving one's own interests, wishes and aims entirely out of sight, of entirely renouncing one's own personality for a time, so as to remain pure knowing subject, clear vision of the world. . . . Therefore the expression of genius in a face consists in this, that in it a decided predominance of knowledge over will is visible. In ordinary countenances there is a predominant expression of will, and we see that knowledge only comes into activity under the impulse of the will, and is directed merely by motives of personal interest and advantage.[4]

Freed from will, the intellect can see the object as it is; "genius holds up to us the magic glass in which all that is essential and significant appears to us collected and placed in the clearest light, and what is accidental and foreign is left

[1] III, 139.
[2] III, 159.
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] I, 240, 243.

out." [1] Thought pierces through passion as sunlight pours through a cloud, and reveals the heart of things; it goes behind the individual and particular to the "Platonic Idea" or universal essence of which it is a form—just as the painter sees, in the person whom he paints, not merely the individual character and feature, but some universal quality and permanent reality for whose unveiling the individual is only a symbol and a means. The secret of genius, then, lies in the clear and impartial perception of the objective, the essential, and the universal.

It is this removal of the personal equation which leaves the genius so maladapted in the world of will-ful, practical, personal activity. By seeing so far he does not see what is near; he is imprudent and "queer"; and while his vision is hitched to a star he falls into a well. Hence, partly, the unsociability of the genius; he is thinking of the fundamental, the universal, the eternal; others are thinking of the temporary, the specific, the immediate; his mind and theirs have no common ground, and never meet. "As a rule, a man is sociable just in the degree in which he is intellectually poor and generally vulgar." [2] The man of genius has his compensations, and does not need company so much as people who live in perpetual dependence on what is outside them. "The pleasure which he receives from all beauty, the consolation which art affords, the enthusiasm of the artist, . . . enable him to forget the cares of life," and "repay him for the suffering that increases in proportion to the clearness of consciousness, and for his desert loneliness among a different race of men." [3]

The result, however, is that the genius is forced into isolation, and sometimes into madness; the extreme sensitiveness which brings him pain along with imagination and intuition, combines with solitude and maladaptation to break the bonds that hold the mind to reality. Aristotle was right again:

[1] I, 321.
[2] "Wisdom of Life," p. 24. An *apologia pro vita sua.*
[3] I, 345.

"Men distinguished in philosophy, politics, poetry or art appear to be all of a melancholy temperament." [1] The direct connection of madness and genius "is established by the biographies of great men, such as Rousseau, Byron, Alfieri, etc." [2] "By a diligent search in lunatic asylums, I have found individual cases of patients who were unquestionably endowed with great talents, and whose genius distinctly appeared through their madness." [3]

Yet in these semi-madmen, these geniuses, lies the true aristocracy of mankind. "With regard to the intellect, nature is highly aristocratic. The distinctions which it has established are greater than those which are made in any country by birth, rank, wealth, or caste." [4] Nature gives genius only to a few because such a temperament would be a hindrance in the normal pursuits of life, which require concentration on the specific and immediate. "Nature really intended even learned men to be tillers of the soil; indeed, professors of philosophy should be estimated according to this standard; and then their achievements will be found to come up to all fair expectations." [5]

### 3. *Art*

This deliverance of knowledge from servitude to the will, this forgetting of the individual self and its material interest, this elevation of the mind to the will-less contemplation of truth, is the function of art. The object of science is the universal that contains many particulars; the object of art is the particular that contains a universal. "Even the portrait ought to be, as Winckelmann says, the ideal of the in-

[1] In "Wisdom of Life," p. 19.
[2] The source of Lombroso—who adds Schopenhauer to the list.
[3] I, 247.
[4] II, 342.
[5] III, 20. The professor of philosophy might avenge himself by pointing out that by nature we seem to be hunters rather than tillers; that agriculture is a human invention, not a natural instinct.

dividual." [1] In painting animals the most characteristic is accounted the most beautiful, because it best reveals the species. A work of art is successful, then, in proportion as it suggests the Platonic Idea, or universal, of the group to which the represented object belongs. The portrait of a man must aim, therefore, not at photographic fidelity, but at exposing, as far as possible, through one figure, some essential or universal quality of man." [2] Art is greater than science because the latter proceeds by laborious accumulation and cautious reasoning, while the former reaches its goal at once by intuition and presentation; science can get along with talent, but art requires genius.

Our pleasure in nature, as in poetry or painting, is derived from contemplation of the object without admixture of personal will. To the artist the Rhine is a varied series of bewitching views, stirring the senses and the imagination with suggestions of beauty; but the traveler who is bent on his personal affairs "will see the Rhine and its banks only as a line, and the bridges only as lines cutting the first line." [3] The artist so frees himself from personal concerns that "to artistic perception it is all one whether we see the sunset from a prison or from a palace." [4] "It is this blessedness of will-less perception which casts an enchanting glamour over the past and the distant, and presents them to us in so fair a light." [5] Even hostile objects, when we contemplate them without excitation of the will, and without immediate danger, become sublime. Similarly, tragedy may take an esthetic value, by delivering us from the strife of the individual will, and enabling us to see our suffering in a larger view. Art alleviates the ills of life by showing us the eternal and universal behind the tran-

[1] I, 290.

[2] So in literature, character-portrayal rises to greatness—other things equal—in proportion as the clearly-delineated individual represents also a universal type, like Faust and Marguerite or Quixote and Sancho Panza.

[3] III, 145.

[4] I, 265.

[5] I, 256.

sitory and the individual. Spinoza was right: "in so far as the mind sees things in their eternal aspect it participates in eternity." [1]

This power of the arts to elevate us above the strife of wills is possessed above all by music.[2] "Music is by no means like the other arts, the copy of the Ideas" or essences of things, but it is "the copy of the will itself"; it shows us the eternally moving, striving, wandering will, always at last returning to itself to begin its striving anew. "This is why the effect of music is more powerful and penetrating than the other arts, for they speak only of shadows, while it speaks of the things itself." [3] It differs too from the other arts because it affects our feelings directly,[4] and not through the medium of ideas; it speaks to something subtler than the intellect. What symmetry is to the plastic arts, rhythm is to music; hence music and architecture are antipodal; architecture, as Goethe said, is frozen music; and symmetry is rhythm standing still.

### 4. *Religion*

It dawned upon Schopenhauer's maturity that his theory of art—as the withdrawal of the will, and the contemplation of the eternal and universal—was also a theory of religion. In youth he had received very little religious training; and his temper did not incline him to respect the ecclesiastical organizations of his time. He despised theologians: "As *ultima ratio,*" or the final argument, "of theologians we find among many nations the stake"; [5] and he described religion as "the

[1] I, 230. Cf. Goethe: "There is no better deliverance from the world" of strife "than through art."—*Elective Affinities,* New York, 1902, p. 336.

[2] "Schopenhauer was the first to recognize and designate with philosophic clearness the position of music with reference to the other fine arts."—Wagner, *Beethoven,* Boston, 1872, p. 23.

[3] I, 333.

[4] Hanslick (*The Beautiful in Music,* London, 1891, p. 23) objects to this, and argues that music affects only the imagination directly. Strictly, of course, it affects only the senses directly.

[5] II, 365.

metaphysics of the masses."[1] But in later years he began to see a profound significance in certain religious practices and dogmas. "The controversy which is so perseveringly carried on in our own day between supernaturalists and rationalists rests on the failure to recognize the allegorical nature of all religion."[2] Christianity, for example, is a profound philosophy of pessimism; "the doctrine of original sin (assertion of the will) and of salvation (denial of the will) is the great truth which constitutes the essence of Christianity."[3] Fasting is a remarkable expedient for weakening those desires that lead never to happiness but either to disillusionment or to further desire. "The power by virtue of which Christianity was able to overcome first Judaism, and then the heathenism of Greece and Rome, lies solely in its pessimism, in the confession that our state is both exceedingly wretched and sinful, while Judaism and heathenism were both optimistic":[4] they thought of religion as a bribe to the heavenly powers for aid towards earthly success; Christianity thought of religion as a deterrent from the useless quest of earthly happiness. In the midst of worldly luxury and power it has held up the ideal of the saint, the Fool in Christ, who refuses to fight, and absolutely overcomes the individual will.[5]

Buddhism is profounder than Christianity, because it makes the destruction of the will the entirety of religion, and preaches Nirvana as the goal of all personal development. The Hindus were deeper than the thinkers of Europe, because their interpretation of the world was internal and intuitive, not external and intellectual; the intellect divides everything, intuition unites everything; the Hindus saw that the "I" is a delusion; that the individual is merely phenomenal, and that the only reality is the Infinite One—"That art thou." "Whoever is able to say this to himself, with regard to every being

[1] *Essays*, "Religion," p. 2.
[2] II, 369.
[3] I, 524.
[4] II, 372.
[5] I, 493.

with whom he comes in contact,"—whoever is clear-eyed and clear-souled enough to see that we are all members of one organism, all of us little currents in an ocean of will,—he "is certain of all virtue and blessedness, and is on the direct road to salvation." [1] Schopenhauer does not think that Christianity will ever displace Buddhism in the East: "it is just the same as if we fired a bullet against a cliff." [2] Rather, Indian philosophy streams into Europe, and will profoundly alter our knowledge and our thought. "The influence of the Sanskrit literature will penetrate not less deeply than did the revival of Greek letters in the fifteenth century." [3]

The ultimate wisdom, then, is Nirvana: to reduce one's self to a minimum of desire and will. The world-will is stronger than ours; let us yield at once. "The less the will is excited, the less we suffer." [4] The great masterpieces of painting have always represented countenances in which "we see the expression of the completest knowledge, which is not directed to particular things, but has . . . become the quieter of all will." [5] "That peace which is above all reason, that perfect calm of the spirit, that deep rest, that inviolable confidence and serenity, . . . as Raphael and Correggio have represented it, is an entire and certain gospel; only knowledge remains, the will has vanished." [6]

### VII. THE WISDOM OF DEATH

And yet, something more is needed. By Nirvana the individual achieves the peace of will-lessness, and finds salvation; but after the individual? Life laughs at the death of the individual; it will survive him in his offspring, or in the offspring of others; even if his little stream of life runs dry there are

[1] I, 483.
[2] I, 460.
[3] I, xiii. Perhaps we are witnessing a fulfillment of this prophecy in the growth of theosophy and similar faiths.
[4] "Counsels and Maxims," p. 19.
[5] I, 300.
[6] 531.

a thousand other streams that grow broader and deeper with every generation. How can *Man* be saved? Is there a Nirvana for the race as well as for the individual?

Obviously, the only final and radical conquest of the will must lie in stopping up the source of life—the will to reproduce. "The satisfaction of the reproductive impulse is utterly and intrinsically reprehensible because it is the strongest affirmation of the lust for life." [1] What crime have these children committed that they should be born?

> If, now, we contemplate the turmoil of life, we behold all occupied with its want and misery, straining all their powers to satisfy its infinite needs and to ward off its multifarious sorrows, yet without daring to hope for anything else than simply the preservation of this tormented existence for a short span of time. In between, however, and in the midst of this tumult, we see the glance of two lovers meet longingly; yet why so secretly, fearfully, and stealthily? Because these lovers are the traitors who seek to perpetuate the whole want and drudgery which would otherwise speedily reach an end; . . . here lies the profound reason for the shame connected with the process of generation.[2]

It is woman that is the culprit here; for when knowledge has reached to will-lessness, her thoughtless charms allure man again into reproduction. Youth has not intelligence enough to see how brief these charms must be; and when the intelligence comes, it is too late.

> With young girls Nature seems to have had in view what, in the language of the drama, is called a *striking effect;* as for a few years she dowers them with a wealth of beauty and is lavish in her gift of charm, at the expense of all the rest of their lives; so that during those years they may capture the fancy of some man to such a degree that he is hurried away into undertaking the honorable care of them . . . as long as they live—a step for which there would not seem to be any

[1] In Wallace, p. 29.
[2] III, 374; I, 423.

sufficient warrant if only reason directed man's thoughts. . . . Here, as elsewhere, Nature proceeds with her usual economy; for just as the female ant, after fecundation, loses her wings, which are then superfluous, nay, actually a danger to the business of breeding; so, after giving birth to one or two children, a woman generally loses her beauty; probably, indeed, for similar reasons.[1]

Young men ought to reflect that "if the object which inspires them today to write madrigals and sonnets had been born eighteen years earlier, it would scarcely have won a glance from them." [2] After all, men are much more beautiful in body than women.

It is only a man whose intellect is clouded by his sexual impulse that could give the name of the *fair sex* to that undersized, narrow-shouldered, broad-hipped, and short-legged race; for the whole beauty of the sex is bound up with this impulse. Instead of calling them beautiful there would be more warrant for describing women as the unesthetic sex. Neither for music, nor for poetry, nor for the fine arts, have they really and truly any sense of susceptibility; it is a mere mockery if they make a pretense of it in order to assist their endeavor to please. . . . They are incapable of taking a purely objective interest in anything. . . . The most distinguished intellects among the whole sex have never managed to produce a single achievement in the fine arts that is really genuine and original; or given to the world any work of permanent value in any sphere.[3]

This veneration of women is a product of Christianity and of German sentimentality; and it is in turn a cause of that Romantic movement which exalts feeling, instinct and will above the intellect.[4] The Asiatics know better, and frankly recognize the inferiority of woman. "When the laws gave women equal rights with men, they ought also to have endowed

[1] Essay on Women, p. 73.
[2] III, 339.
[3] Essay on Women, p. 79.
[4] III, 209–14.

them with masculine intellects."[1] Asia again shows a finer honesty than ours in its marriage institutions; it accepts as normal and legal the custom of polygamy, which, though so widely practiced among us, is covered with the fig-leaf of a phrase. "Where are there any real monogamists?"[2]—And how absurd it is to give property-rights to women! "All women are, with rare exceptions, inclined to extravagance," because they live only in the present, and their chief out-door sport is shopping. "Women think that it is men's business to earn money, and theirs to spend it";[3] this is their conception of the division of labor. "I am therefore of opinion that women should never be allowed altogether to manage their own concerns, but should always stand under actual male supervision, be it of father, of husband, of son, or of the state—as is the case in Hindostan; and that consequently they should never be given full power to dispose of any property they have not themselves acquired."[4] It was probably the luxury and extravagance of the women of Louis XIII's court that brought on the general corruption of government which culminated in the French Revolution.[5]

The less we have to do with women, then, the better. They are not even a "necessary evil";[6] life is safer and smoother without them. Let men recognize the snare that lies in women's beauty, and the absurd comedy of reproduction will end. The development of intelligence will weaken or frustrate the will to reproduce, and will thereby at last achieve the extinction of the race. Nothing could form a finer dénouement to the insane tragedy of the restless will;—why should the curtain that has just fallen upon defeat and death always rise again upon a new life, a new struggle, and a new defeat?

[1] Essay on Women, p. 84.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 86.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 75.
[4] In Wallace, p. 80. An echo of Schopenhauer's dissatisfaction with his mother's extravagance.
[5] Essay on Women, p. 89.
[6] Carlyle's phrase.

How long shall we be lured into this much-ado-about-nothing, this endless pain that leads only to a painful end? When shall we have the courage to fling defiance into the face of the Will, —to tell it that the loveliness of life is a lie, and that the greatest boon of all is death?

### VIII. CRITICISM

The natural response to such a philosophy is a medical diagnosis, of the age and of the man.

Let us realize again that we have here a phenomenon akin to that which, in the days after Alexander and after Caesar, brought first to Greece and then to Rome a flood of Oriental faiths and attitudes. It is characteristic of the East to see the external Will in nature as so much more powerful than the will in man, and to come readily to a doctrine of resignation and despair. As the decay of Greece brought the pallor of Stoicism and the hectic flush of Epicureanism upon the cheeks of Hellas, so the chaos of the Napoleonic wars brought into the soul of Europe that plaintive weariness which made Schopenhauer its philosophic voice. Europe had a terrible headache in 1815.[1]

The personal diagnosis can take its lead from Schopenhauer's admission that a man's happiness depends on what he is, rather than on external circumstance. Pessimism is an indictment of the pessimist. Given a diseased constitution and a neurotic mind, a life of empty leisure and gloomy *ennui*, and there emerges the proper physiology for Schopenhauer's philosophy. One must have leisure to be a pessimist; an active life almost always brings good spirits in body and in mind. Schopenhauer admires the serenity that comes of modest aims and a steady life,[2] but he could hardly speak of these from personal experience. *Difficilis in otio quies*, truly; he had money enough for continuous leisure, and he found continu-

[1] Compare the apathy and despondency of Europe today (1924), and the popularity of such books as Spengler's *Downfall of the Western World.*

[2] I, 422.

ous leisure to be more intolerable than continuous work. Perhaps the tendency of philosophers toward melancholy is due to the unnaturalness of sedentary occupations; too often an attack upon life is merely a symptom of the lost art of excretion.

Nirvana is the ideal of a listless man, a Childe Harold or a Réné, who has begun by desiring too much, by staking all on one passion, and then, having lost, spends the remainder of his life in a passionless and petulant boredom. If intellect arises as the servant of will, it is quite likely that the particular product of the intellect which we know as the philosophy of Schopenhauer was the cover and apology of a diseased and indolent will. And no doubt his early experiences with women and with men developed an abnormal suspiciousness and sensitivity, as it did in Stendhal and Flaubert and Nietzsche. He became cynical and solitary. He writes: "A friend in need is not a friend indeed; he is merely a borrower"; [1] and, "Do not tell a friend anything that you would conceal from an enemy." [2] He advises a quiet, monotonous, hermit life; he fears society, and has no sense of the values or joys of human association.[3] But happiness dies when it is not shared.

There is, of course, a large element of egotism in pessimism: the world is not good enough for us, and we turn up our philosophic noses to it. But this is to forget Spinoza's lesson, that our terms of moral censure and approbation are merely human judgments, mostly irrelevant when applied to the cosmos as a whole. Perhaps our supercilious disgust with existence is a cover for a secret disgust with ourselves: we have botched and bungled our lives, and we cast the blame upon the "environment," or the "world," which have no tongues to utter a defense. The mature man accepts the natural limitations of life; he does not expect Providence to be prejudiced in his favor; he does not ask for loaded dice with

[1] "Counsels and Maxims," p. 86.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 96.
[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 24, 87.

which to play the game of life. He knows, with Carlyle, that there is no sense in vilifying the sun because it will not light our cigars. And perhaps, if we are clever enough to help it, the sun will do even that; and this vast neutral cosmos may turn out to be a pleasant place enough if we bring a little sunshine of our own to help it out. In truth the world is neither with us nor against us; it is but raw material in our hands, and can be heaven or hell according to what we are.

Part of the cause of pessimism, in Schopenhauer and his contemporaries, lay in their romantic attitudes and expectations. Youth expects too much of the world; pessimism is the morning after optimism, just as 1815 had to pay for 1789. The romantic exaltation and liberation of feeling, instinct and will, and the romantic contempt for intellect, restraint, and order, brought their natural penalties; for "the world," as Horace Walpole said, "is a comedy for those who think, but a tragedy for those who feel." "Perhaps no movement has been so prolific of melancholy as emotional romanticism. . . . When the romanticist discovers that his ideal of happiness works out into actual unhappiness, he does not blame his ideal. He simply assumes that the world is unworthy of a being so exquisitely organized as himself." [1] How could a capricious universe ever satisfy a capricious soul?

The spectacle of Napoleon's rise to empire, Rousseau's denunciation—and Kant's critique—of the intellect, and his own passionate temperament and experiences, conspired to suggest to Schopenhauer the primacy and ultimacy of the will. Perhaps, too, Waterloo and St. Helena helped to develop a pessimism born, no doubt, of bitter personal contact with the stings and penalties of life. Here was the most dynamic individual will in all history, imperiously commanding continents; and yet its doom was as certain and ignominious as that of the insect to which the day of its birth brings unenviable death. It never occurred to Schopenhauer that it was better to have fought and lost than never to have fought

[1] Babbitt, *Rousseau and Romanticism*. p. 208.

at all; he did not feel, like the more masculine and vigorous Hegel, the glory and desirability of strife; he longed for peace, and lived in the midst of war. Everywhere he saw strife; he could not see, behind the strife, the friendly aid of neighbors, the rollicking joy of children and young men, the dances of vivacious girls, the willing sacrifices of parents and lovers, the patient bounty of the soil, and the renaissance of spring.

And what if desire, fulfilled, leads only to another desire? Perhaps it is better that we should never be content. Happiness, says an old lesson, lies rather in achievement than in possession or satiation. The healthy man asks not so much for happiness as for an opportunity to exercise his capacities; and if he must pay the penalty of pain for this freedom and this power he makes the forfeit cheerfully; it is not too great a price. We need resistance to raise us, as it raises the airplane or the bird; we need obstacles against which to sharpen our strength and stimulate our growth. Life without tragedy would be unworthy of a man.[1]

Is it true that "he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow," and that it is the most highly organized beings that suffer most? Yes; but it is also true that the growth of knowledge increases joy as well as sorrow, and that the subtlest delights, as well as the keenest pains, are reserved for the developed soul. Voltaire rightly preferred the Brahmin's "unhappy" wisdom to the blissful ignorance of the peasant woman; we wish to experience life keenly and deeply, even at the cost of pain; we wish to venture into its innermost secrets, even at the cost of disillusionment.[2] Virgil, who had tasted every

1 Cf. Schopenhauer himself: "To have no regular work, no set sphere of activity,—what a miserable thing it is! . . . Effort, struggles with difficulties! that is as natural to a man as grubbing in the ground is to a mole. To have all his wants satisfied is something intolerable—the feeling of stagnation which comes from pleasures that last too long. To overcome difficulties is to experience the full delight of existence."—"Counsels and Maxims," p. 53. One would like to know more of what the maturer Schopenhauer thought of the brilliant philosophy of his youth.

2 Anatole France (Voltaire's last avatar) has dedicated one of his masterpieces—*The Human Tragedy*—to the task of showing that though

pleasure, and knew the luxuries of imperial favor, at last "tired of everything except the joys of understanding." When the senses cease to satisfy, it is something to have won access, however arduously, to comradeship with those artists, poets and philosophers whom only the mature mind can comprehend. Wisdom is a bitter-sweet delight, deepened by the very discords that enter into its harmony.

Is pleasure negative? Only a sorely wounded soul, drawing itself in from contact with the world, could have uttered so fundamental a blasphemy against life. What is pleasure but the harmonious operation of our instincts?—and how can pleasure be negative except where the instinct at work makes for retreat rather than for approach? The pleasures of escape and rest, of submission and security, of solitude and quiet are no doubt negative, because the instincts that impel us to them are essentially negative—forms of flight and fear; but shall we say the same of the pleasures that come when positive instincts are in command—instincts of acquisition and possession, of pugnacity and mastery, of action and play, of association and love? Is the joy of laughter negative, or the romping of the child, or the song of the mating bird, or the crow of Chanticleer, or the creative ecstasy of art? Life itself is a positive force, and every normal function of it holds some delight.

It remains true, no doubt, that death is terrible. Much of its terror disappears if one has lived a normal life; one must have lived well in order to die well. And would deathlessness delight us? Who envies the fate of Ahasuerus, to whom immortal life was sent as the heaviest punishment that could be inflicted upon man? And why is death terrible if not because life is sweet? We need not say with Napoleon that all who fear death are atheists at heart; but we may surely say

"the joy of understanding is a sad joy," yet "those who have once tasted it would not exchange it for all the frivolous gaieties and empty hopes of the vulgar herd." Cf. *The Garden of Epicurus,* New York, 1908, p. 120.

that a man who lives to three-score years and ten has survived his pessimism. No man, said Goethe, is a pessimist after thirty. And hardly before twenty; pessimism is a luxury of self-conscious and self-important youth; youth that comes out of the warm bosom of the communistic family into the cold atmosphere of individualistic competition and greed, and then yearns back to its mother's breast; youth that hurls itself madly against the windmills and evils of the world, and sadly sheds utopias and ideals with every year. But before twenty is the joy of the body, and after thirty is the joy of the mind; before twenty is the pleasure of protection and security; and after thirty, the joy of parentage and home.

How should a man avoid pessimism who has lived almost all his life in a boarding-house? And who abandoned his only child to illegitimate anonymity?[1] At the bottom of Schopenhauer's unhappiness was his rejection of the normal life,—his rejection of women and marriage and children. He finds in parentage the greatest of evils, where a healthy man finds in it the greatest of life's satisfactions. He thinks that the stealthiness of love is due to shame in continuing the race—could anything be more pedantically absurd? He sees in love only the sacrifice of the individual to the race, and ignores the delights with which the instinct repays the sacrifice,—delights so great that they have inspired most of the poetry of the world.[2] He knows woman only as shrew and as sinner, and he imagines that there are no other types. He thinks that the man who undertakes to support a wife is a fool;[3] but apparently such men are not much more unhappy than our passionate apostle of single infelicity; and (as Balzac said) it costs as much to support a vice as it does to support a family. He scorns the beauty of woman,—as if there were any forms of beauty that we could spare, and that we should not cherish

[1] Finot, *The Science of Happiness*, New York, 1914, p. 70.

[2] Cf., again, Schopenhauer himself: "It is just this not seeking of one's own things (which is everywhere the stamp of greatness) that gives to passionate love the touch of sublimity."—III, 368.

[3] Essay on Women, p. 73.

as the color and fragrance of life. What hatred of women one mishap had generated in this unfortunate soul!

There are other difficulties, more technical and less vital, in this remarkable and stimulating philosophy. How can suicide ever occur in a world where the only real force is the will to live? How can the intellect, begotten and brought up as servant of the will, ever achieve independence and objectivity? Does genius lie in knowledge divorced from will, or does it contain, as its driving force, an immense power of will, even a large alloy of personal ambition and conceit?[1] Is madness connected with genius in general, or rather with only the "romantic" type of genius (Byron, Shelley, Poe, Heine, Swinburne, Strindberg, Dostoievski, etc.); and is not the "classic" and profounder type of genius exceptionally sound (Socrates, Plato, Spinoza, Bacon, Newton, Voltaire, Goethe, Darwin, Whitman, etc.)? What if the proper function of intellect and philosophy is not the denial of the will but the coördination of desires into a united and harmonious will? What if "will" itself, except as the unified product of such coördination, is a mythical abstraction, as shadowy as "force"?

Nevertheless there is about this philosophy a blunt honesty by the side of which most optimistic creeds appear as soporific hypocrisies. It is all very well to say, with Spinoza, that good and bad are subjective terms, human prejudices; and yet we are compelled to judge this world not from any "impartial" view, but from the standpoint of actual human sufferings and needs. It was well that Schopenhauer should force philosophy to face the raw reality of evil, and should point the nose of thought to the human tasks of alleviation. It has been harder, since his day, for philosophy to live in the unreal atmosphere of a logic-chopping metaphysics; thinkers begin to realize that thought without action is a disease.

After all, Schopenhauer opened the eyes of psychologists to the subtle depth and omnipresent force of instinct. In-

[1] Cf. Schopenhauer: "The greatest intellectual capacities are only found in connection with a vehement and passionate will."—II, 413.

tellectualism—the conception of man as above all a thinking animal, consciously adapting means to rationally chosen ends —fell sick with Rousseau, took to its bed with Kant, and died with Schopenhauer. After two centuries of introspective analysis philosophy found, behind thought, desire; and behind the intellect, instinct;—just as, after a century of materialism, physics finds, behind matter, energy. We owe it to Schopenhauer that he revealed our secret hearts to us, showed us that our desires are the axioms of our philosophies, and cleared the way to an understanding of thought as no mere abstract calculation of impersonal events, but as a flexible instrument of action and desire.

Finally, and despite exaggerations, Schopenhauer taught us again the necessity of genius, and the value of art. He saw that the ultimate good is beauty, and that the ultimate joy lies in the creation or cherishing of the beautiful. He joined with Goethe and Carlyle in protest against the attempt of Hegel and Marx and Buckle to eliminate genius as a fundamental factor in human history; in an age when all the great seemed dead he preached once more the ennobling worship of heroes. And with all his faults he succeeded in adding another name to theirs.