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Friedrich Nietzsche

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Human, All Too Human

Friedrich Nietzsche

A Book for Free Spirits, Volume I

Plain modern English

Translated from the German by Blue Energy People, Inc. (SUN), with AI assistance from Claude Opus 5.5.

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Human, All Too Human

A Book for Free Spirits

Friedrich Nietzsche

Human, All Too Human.

A Book for Free Spirits

Volume One

Instead of a Preface

For a while, I thought about the many different kinds of work that people give their lives to, and I tried to pick out the best one. But there is no need to tell here what thoughts I had along the way. It is enough to say that, for my part, nothing seemed better to me than to stick firmly to my plan. That means: to spend my whole lifetime training my power to reason, and to follow the tracks of the truth in the way I had set out for myself. I had already tasted some of the fruits of this path, and in my judgment, nothing more pleasant and nothing more innocent can be found in this life. On top of that, ever since I started using this way of looking at things, every single day let me discover something new. It was always something of some importance, and not at all something everyone already knew. In the end, my soul became so full of joy that nothing else could harm it anymore.

Translated from the Latin of Descartes.

Preface

1.

People have told me often enough, and always with great surprise, that all my books have something in common, something that sets them apart. This goes from "The Birth of Tragedy" all the way to the one I published most recently, "Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future." All of them, I have been told, contain traps and nets for careless birds. They also contain an almost constant, hidden invitation to turn upside down the things people usually value, and the habits people value most. What? Is everything only human, all too human? People say they come away from my books with that sigh. They feel a kind of shyness and distrust, even toward morality itself. In fact, they feel quite tempted and encouraged, for once, to stand up and speak for the worst things, as if those things might simply be the ones that have been most unfairly slandered. My books have been called a school of suspicion, and even more a school of contempt, but luckily also a school of courage, and even of daring. And truly, I myself do not believe that anyone has ever looked at the world with such deep suspicion as I have. I have done it not only as a devil's advocate now and then, but just as much, to put it in the language of religion, as God's enemy, the one who calls God to account. Anyone who can guess something of what follows from every deep suspicion will understand me. Every deep suspicion brings the chills and fears of being alone, because anyone who sees things in a completely different way is doomed to that loneliness. Whoever understands this will also understand how often I tried to take shelter somewhere, to get a rest from myself, as if to forget myself for a while. I looked for that shelter in some kind of worship, or some hatred, or in scholarly work, or in

being carefree, or in plain stupidity. They will also understand why, when I could not find what I needed, I had to force it into being by artificial means. I had to fake it until it fit, make it up until it fit. (And what else have poets ever done? And what would all the art in the world be for?) But what I needed most of all, again and again, to heal myself and get myself back, was this: the belief that I was not so alone, not alone in the way I saw things. I needed a magical suspicion that someone else was related to me and like me in what they saw and what they longed for. I needed to rest in the trust of a friendship. I needed two people to be blind together, without suspicion and without question marks. I needed to enjoy the things in front of me, the surfaces, what is near and nearest, everything that has color and skin and outward appearance. Maybe, on this point, someone could accuse me of a lot of "art," a lot of clever, delicate forgery, like making fake coins. For example, they could say that I knowingly and on purpose closed my eyes to Schopenhauer's blind determination to cling to morality, at a time when I already saw clearly enough through morality. They could say the same about Richard Wagner: that I fooled myself about his incurable Romanticism, as if it were a beginning and not an ending. The same about the Greeks. The same about the Germans and their future. And maybe there would be a whole long list of such "the same abouts"? But suppose all this were true, and you had good reason to accuse me of it. What do you know about it? What could you possibly know about how much cunning for staying alive, how much good sense and higher protection, is hidden in fooling oneself like this? And what could you know about how much falseness I still need, so that I can keep allowing myself the luxury of being truthful?... Enough. I am still alive. And life, after all, was not designed by morality. Life wants illusion. It lives on illusion... But see? I am already starting again, doing what I have always done, I, the old immoralist and bird-catcher. I am talking in an immoral way, outside of morality, "beyond good and evil," am I not?

2.

So that is how, once upon a time, when I needed them, I also invented the "free spirits" for myself. This sad yet brave book, called "Human, All Too Human," is dedicated to them. Such "free spirits" do not exist, and they never did. But back then, as I said, I needed them for company, to stay in good spirits in the middle of bad things: illness, loneliness, living in strange places, a gloomy lack of will, and having nothing to do. They were brave companions and ghosts, the kind you chat and laugh with when you feel like chatting and laughing, and the kind you send to the devil when they get boring. They made up for the friends I did not have. But that such free spirits might one day really exist, I would not doubt in the least. I believe our Europe will have such cheerful and daring fellows among its sons of tomorrow and the day after. They will be real, with bodies you can touch, and not only, as in my case, phantoms and a shadow play put on by a hermit. I can already see them coming, slowly, slowly. And perhaps I can do something to make them come faster, if I describe ahead of time what kinds of fate I see shaping them, and by what roads I see them coming?

3.

We can guess that a mind in which the type called "free spirit" is one day meant to ripen fully and sweetly has had its deciding moment in a great breaking away. We can also guess that, before this, it was all the more a tied-down mind, and seemed chained forever to its corner and its pillar. What ties us down most tightly? Which ropes are almost impossible to tear? For people of a high and rare kind, it will be their duties. It will be that deep respect that belongs to the young, that shyness and gentleness toward everything that has long been honoured and held worthy, and that gratitude for the soil they grew out of, for the hand that guided them, for the holy place where they

learned to pray. Their very finest moments will be what ties them most tightly and binds them the longest. For people tied down like this, the great breaking away comes suddenly, like an earthquake. All at once the young soul is shaken, torn loose, ripped right out, and it does not itself understand what is happening. A drive and a push takes over and rules it like an order. A will and a wish wake up: to go away, anywhere, whatever the cost. A fierce, dangerous curiosity about an undiscovered world blazes and flickers in all its senses. "Better to die than to live here": that is how the commanding, tempting voice sounds. And this "here", this "at home", is everything the soul had loved until then! Then comes a sudden fear and suspicion toward what it loved. There is a flash of contempt for what it had called "duty". There is a rebellious, reckless desire, bursting out like a volcano, for wandering, for foreign places, for becoming a stranger, for cooling down, sobering up, freezing over. There is a hatred of love. Perhaps there is a grab and a glance backward that feels like smashing up a temple, back toward the place where it used to worship and love. Perhaps there is a hot blush of shame over what it has just done, and at the same time a cheer of joy that it did it: a drunken, inner, gleeful shiver that gives away a victory. A victory? Over what? Over whom? A puzzling victory, full of questions and open to question, but still the first victory. Bad and painful things like these belong to the story of the great breaking away. It is also a sickness that can destroy a person, this first outburst of strength and of the will to decide for oneself and to set one's own values, this will to free will. And how much sickness shows in the wild experiments and odd behaviour by which the freed, broken-loose person now tries to prove to himself that he is master over things! He roams about cruelly, with a hungry craving that is never satisfied. Whatever he captures has to pay for the dangerous tension of his pride. He tears apart whatever attracts him. With a wicked laugh he turns over whatever he finds covered up and protected by some sense of shame: he tests how these things look when you

turn them upside down. There is wilfulness in it, and pleasure in being wilful, when he now perhaps turns his favour toward things that used to have a bad name, and when he creeps, curious and tempting, around the most forbidden things. Behind all his doings and roaming, for he travels restless and without a goal, as if in a desert, stands the question mark of a more and more dangerous curiosity. "Can't all values be turned upside down? Is good maybe evil? Is God only an invention and a clever trick of the devil? Is everything maybe false, deep down? And if we are the ones being fooled, doesn't that make us people who fool others too? Don't we have to fool others too?" Thoughts like these lead him on and lead him astray, further and further away, further and further off. Loneliness surrounds him and coils around him like a snake, more and more threatening, choking, squeezing his heart. Loneliness is that terrible goddess, that "cruel mother of desires", as an old Latin poet called her. But who today knows what loneliness really is?...

4.

From this sick isolation, from the desert of such years of experimenting, the road is still long. It is a long way to that huge, overflowing sureness and health which does not even want to do without sickness, because sickness can be a tool and a fishing hook for knowledge. It is a long way to that ripe freedom of mind which is just as much self-control and discipline of the heart, and which opens the paths to many different and even opposite ways of thinking. It is a long way to that inner breadth, that being spoiled by having more than enough, which removes the danger that the mind might lose itself in its own paths, fall in love with them, and stay stuck in some corner, as if drunk. And it is a long way to that surplus of powers to shape, to heal, to rebuild and to restore, which is the very sign of great health. That surplus gives the free spirit the dangerous privilege of living as

an experiment and offering himself up to adventure: the master's privilege of the free spirit! In between there may be long years of recovery. They are years full of many-coloured changes, painful and magical at once, ruled and kept on a short rein by a tough will to be healthy, a will that often already dares to dress itself up and disguise itself as health. In this time there is a middle stage which a person with such a fate later remembers with tender feeling. A pale, delicate light and a sunny happiness belong to it. There is a feeling of freedom like a bird, of looking around like a bird from up high, of a bird's high spirits: something new, a third thing, in which curiosity and a gentle scorn have joined together. "A free spirit": in that stage, this cool word feels good, it almost warms you. You live no longer in the chains of love and hate, without yes, without no, close when you choose, far away when you choose. Most of all you like to slip away, dodge, flutter off, go away again, fly upward again. You are spoiled, like anyone who has once seen a huge variety of things spread out below him. And you have become the opposite of those people who worry about things that are none of their business. In fact, the free spirit is now surrounded by nothing but things that are his business, and so many things!, which no longer worry him...

5.

One step further in recovery, and the free spirit moves closer to life again. He does it slowly, of course, almost stubbornly, almost suspiciously. It grows warmer around him again, more golden, you might say. Feeling and sympathy gain depth, and thawing winds of every kind blow over him. He almost feels as if his eyes are only now opening to what is close by. He is amazed and sits still: where has he been? These near and nearest things: how changed they seem to him! What soft fuzz and magic they have gained in the meantime! He looks back with gratitude. He is grateful for his wandering, for his hardness and

his being a stranger to himself, for his looking far away and his bird-like flights into cold heights. How good that he did not stay always "at home", always "by himself", like a soft, dull loafer hanging around on a street corner! He was outside himself: there is no doubt about it. Only now does he see himself, and what surprises he finds in doing so! What shivers he has never felt before! What happiness even in tiredness, in the old sickness, in the setbacks of someone getting better! How he enjoys sitting still while he suffers, spinning out his patience like a thread, lying in the sun! Who understands, as well as he does, the happiness of winter, the patches of sunlight on the wall! These people getting better, half turned back toward life again, are like lizards: they are the most grateful animals in the world, and the most modest ones too. There are some among them who will not let a single day go by without hanging a little song of praise on the trailing hem of its robe as it passes. And to speak seriously: it is a thorough cure for all pessimism, that gloomy view of life which, as everyone knows, is the cancer of old idealists and big liars. The cure is to get sick the way these free spirits do, to stay sick for a good while, and then, over a longer and longer time, to become healthy, I mean "healthier". There is wisdom in this, wisdom about life: to prescribe health itself to yourself for a long time only in small doses.

6.

Around that time, at last, it may happen that the free spirit, who keeps growing freer, begins to see the meaning of that great breaking away. It is as if a veil is lifted. This happens in the sudden flashes of light that come from a health that is still wild and still changing. Until then, the puzzle had been waiting in his memory: dark, doubtful, almost too painful to touch. For a long time he hardly dared to ask himself: "Why so far off to the side? Why so alone? Why did I give up everything I once looked up to? Why did I give up looking up to any-

thing at all? Why this hardness, this suspicion, this hatred of my own good qualities?" But now he dares to ask it out loud, and he already hears something like an answer. The answer goes: "You were meant to become master of yourself, and master of your own good qualities too. Before, they were your masters. But they should only be your tools, alongside other tools. You were meant to gain control over your 'for' and 'against', and learn how to switch them on and off, like hanging something up and taking it down again, depending on your higher goal. You were meant to learn that every judgment of value depends on where you stand and how you look. You were meant to understand how a point of view shifts and twists things, how the horizon seems to be arranged with a purpose when it isn't, and everything else that comes with seeing from one angle. You were also meant to see the bit of stupidity that comes with taking one side against the opposite side, and the whole loss to the mind that every 'for' and every 'against' costs. You were meant to understand that every 'for' and 'against' is necessarily unfair. Unfairness cannot be separated from life, and life itself depends on seeing from a point of view, with all the unfairness that brings. Above all, you were meant to see with your own eyes where the unfairness is always greatest. It is greatest where life is at its smallest, narrowest, poorest and most undeveloped, and yet that life cannot help treating itself as the goal and the measuring stick of everything. To keep itself going, it quietly, pettily and endlessly chips away at whatever is higher, greater and richer, and calls it into question. You were meant to see the problem of the ranking of values with your own eyes, and to see how power, and right, and the breadth of one's view all grow upward together. You were meant to..." Enough. The free spirit now knows which 'you must' he has been obeying. And he also knows what he can do now, and what he is only now allowed to do...

7.

This is how the free spirit answers himself about the puzzle of the breaking away. In the end he turns his own case into a general rule and makes up his mind about what he lived through. "What happened to me," he tells himself, "must happen to everyone in whom a task wants to take on a body and be born into the world." The hidden power and need of this task will be at work beneath and within each thing that happens to him, like a pregnancy he does not know about. This goes on long before he has looked the task in the face and knows its name. Our destiny is in charge of us even when we do not know it yet. It is the future that sets the rules for our today. Suppose that the problem of the ranking of values is the one we can call our problem, we free spirits. Only now, at the midday of our lives, do we understand how much preparation the problem needed before it was allowed to rise up in front of us. It needed detours, tests, temptations and disguises. We see now that we first had to go through the most varied and contradictory states of hardship and happiness, in soul and in body. We had to be adventurers, sailing around that inner world called 'human being'. We had to be surveyors, measuring every 'higher' and every 'one above the other', which is also called 'human being'. We pushed in everywhere, almost without fear. We looked down on nothing and lost nothing. We tasted everything to the full. We cleaned everything of what was mere chance, sifting it, so to speak. Until at last we were allowed to say, we free spirits: "Here is a new problem! Here is a long ladder, and we ourselves have sat and climbed on its steps. At some point we ourselves were those steps! Here is a higher and a lower, a below-us, a huge long order, a ranking of values, which we can see. Here it is: our problem!"

8.

No one who understands the mind, and no one who knows how to read signs, will be left in doubt for even a moment about where this book belongs in the growth I have just described, or where it has been placed. But where are there people who understand the mind today? In France, certainly. Perhaps in Russia. Certainly not in Germany. There is no shortage of reasons why Germans today might even count this as something to be proud of. That is bad enough for someone who, in this respect, has turned out not German at all! This German book has managed to find readers across a wide circle of countries and peoples. It has been on its way for about ten years. It must know some kind of music, some kind of flute-playing, that tempts even stubborn foreign ears to listen. And yet it is in Germany, of all places, that this book has been read most carelessly and heard most badly. Why is that? "It asks too much," people have answered me. "It speaks to people who are not weighed down by rough, heavy duties. It wants fine and spoiled senses. It needs plenty to spare: plenty of time, plenty of clear sky and a clear heart, plenty of free time in the boldest sense of the word. All of these are good things that we Germans of today do not have, and so we cannot give them either." After such a polite answer, my philosophy advises me to keep quiet and ask nothing more. After all, as the saying hints, in certain cases the only way to remain a philosopher is to keep quiet.

Nice, in the spring of 1886.

Part One

About First and Last Things

1.

The chemistry of ideas and feelings. – Today the problems of philosophy are again asking almost exactly the same question they asked two thousand years ago. How can something come from its opposite? For example, how can reason come from what has no reason, feeling from what is dead, logic from what is not logical, calm looking without wanting anything from greedy wanting, living for others from selfishness, or truth from mistakes? Until now, the kind of philosophy that believes in a world beyond got around this problem by denying that one thing comes from the other. For the things it valued more highly, it assumed a miracle origin: they came straight out of the core and inner nature of "the thing as it really is." On the other hand, there is philosophy that studies how things came to be. It is the very newest of all ways of doing philosophy, and you can no longer think of it as separate from natural science. In some cases it has found out (and probably this will be its finding in all cases) that these are not opposites at all, except in the usual exaggeration of the everyday view or the view of those who believe in a world beyond. It has found that a mistake of reason lies underneath this setting of things against each other. As it explains, strictly speaking there is no such thing as a selfless action, and no completely disinterested looking either. Both are only a refined-down form of something else. In them, the basic ingredient seems almost to have evaporated, and only the closest observation shows that it is still there. – All we need, and something that can only be given to us now that the separate sciences have reached their present level, is a chemistry of our moral, religious and

artistic ideas and feelings. We also need a chemistry of all those stirrings we feel inside ourselves in the big and small dealings of culture and society, and even when we are alone. What if this chemistry ended with the result that, in this area too, the most splendid colours have been made from low, even despised materials? Will many people want to follow such investigations? Humanity likes to push questions about where things come from and how they began out of its mind. Wouldn't you almost have to be less than human to feel the opposite urge in yourself? –

2.

The inborn fault of philosophers. – All philosophers share the same fault. They start from the human being of today and think that by taking this person apart they will reach their goal. Without meaning to, they picture "Man" as an eternal truth, as something that stays the same in the middle of every whirlpool, as a sure measuring stick for all things. But everything the philosopher says about human beings is, at bottom, no more than a report about the people of a very limited stretch of time. A lack of sense for history is the inborn fault of all philosophers. Some of them even, without noticing, take the very latest shape of humanity, a shape that came about under the influence of certain religions, or even certain political events, as the fixed form they must start from. They don't want to learn that human beings have developed over time, and that our ability to know things has developed too. Meanwhile, some of them even let the whole world be spun out of this ability to know, like a thread from a spider. – Now, everything important in human development happened in prehistoric times, long before those four thousand years or so that we know something about. During these four thousand years, people may not have changed much more. But the philosopher sees "instincts" in the human being of today and assumes they belong to the unchangeable

facts about humans. So he thinks they can give us a key to understanding the world in general. The whole idea that everything has a built-in purpose rests on this: people talk about the human being of the last four thousand years as if he were eternal, as if everything in the world had, from the very beginning, been naturally heading toward him. But everything has come to be; there are no eternal facts, just as there are no absolute truths. – So from now on, philosophy that studies how things came to be is necessary, and with it the virtue of modesty.

3.

Valuing truths that don't look like much. – It is the mark of a more advanced culture to value the small, plain truths that were found by strict method more highly than the cheering and dazzling mistakes that come from ages and people given to belief in a world beyond and to art. At first, people sneer at the plain truths, as if the two things could not possibly be compared as equals. The plain truths stand there so modest, simple, sober, even seemingly discouraging. The dazzling mistakes stand there so beautiful, showy, intoxicating, maybe even blissful. But what is won with hard work, what is certain and lasting, and so still has consequences for all further knowledge, is the higher thing after all. To stick with it is manly, and it shows courage, simplicity and self-control. Little by little, not just single people but the whole of humanity will be lifted up to this manliness. This will happen once humanity finally gets used to valuing solid, lasting knowledge more highly, and has lost all belief in sudden inspiration and in truths being handed down by miracle. – Of course, the admirers of forms, who measure everything by what is beautiful and grand, will at first have good reasons to mock, as soon as valuing plain truths and the scientific spirit start to take over. But this is only for one of two reasons. Either their eyes have not yet opened to the

charm of the simplest form. Or the people raised in that scientific spirit are still far from being completely and deeply filled with it, so that they still copy old forms without thinking (and do it badly enough, the way someone does who no longer cares much about a thing). In the past, the mind was not busy with strict thinking; back then, its seriousness went into spinning out symbols and forms. That has changed. That seriousness about symbols has become a sign of a lower culture. Our arts themselves are becoming more and more intellectual, and our senses more and more spiritual. For example, people now judge what sounds pleasant to the ear quite differently from a hundred years ago. In the same way, the forms of our lives are also becoming more and more spiritual. To the eyes of earlier times they may look uglier. But that is only because those eyes cannot see how the realm of inner, spiritual beauty keeps getting deeper and wider, and how, for all of us, a clever, thoughtful look in someone's eyes can now count for more than the most beautiful body or the grandest building.

4.

Astrology and similar things. – It is likely that the things our religious, moral and artistic feelings are aimed at also belong only to the surface of things. Yet people like to believe that here, at least, they are touching the heart of the world. They fool themselves because those things make them so deeply happy and so deeply unhappy. So here they show the same pride as in astrology. Astrology thinks the starry sky turns around the fate of human beings. And the moral person assumes that whatever matters most to his heart must also be the true nature and heart of things.

5.

Misunderstanding dreams. – In the ages of rough, very early culture, people believed that in dreams they were getting to know a second, real world. Here is where all belief in a world beyond began. Without dreams, people would never have had a reason to split the world in two. The division into soul and body is also connected to the oldest way of understanding dreams. So is the idea that the soul has a ghostly body of its own, which means the origin of all belief in spirits, and probably also of belief in gods. "The dead person lives on, because he appears to the living in dreams": that is how people used to reason, for many thousands of years.

6.

The scientific spirit is strong in the parts, not in the whole. - The small, separate corners of science and scholarship are handled in a purely factual way. But the big, general fields of science and scholarship, when you look at them as a whole, put a question on our lips. It is not a very factual question, of course. The question is: what for? What use is it? Because people keep this question of usefulness in mind, they treat these fields as a whole in a less impersonal way than they treat their separate parts. And with philosophy, which sits at the very top of the whole pyramid of knowledge, the question of what knowledge is good for at all comes up without anyone meaning it to. Every philosophy, without realizing it, wants to give knowledge the highest possible usefulness. That is why all philosophies have so much high-flying belief in a world beyond, and why they shy away so much from the answers of physics, which seem unimportant. They want knowledge to seem as important for life as it possibly can. Here lies the conflict between the separate fields of science and scholarship on one side and philosophy on the other. Philosophy wants what art wants: to give life and action as much depth and meaning as possible.

In the separate fields, people are looking for knowledge and nothing else, whatever may come out of it. Up to now, there has never been a philosopher in whose hands philosophy did not turn into a defence of knowledge. On this point at least, every one of them is an optimist: they all believe that knowledge must be called the most useful thing of all. They are all bullied by logic, and logic, by its very nature, is optimism.

7.

The troublemaker in science and scholarship. Philosophy split off from science and scholarship when it asked this question: what kind of knowledge of the world and of life lets a person live most happily? This happened in the schools that followed Socrates. By looking at everything from the point of view of happiness, people cut off the blood supply to scientific research, as if tying off its veins. And they still do it today.

8.

Explaining nature by spirits. - Belief in a world beyond reads nature as if it were a book, and explains it, so to speak, by hidden spirits and secret meanings, the way the Church and its scholars once did with the Bible. It takes a great deal of good sense to apply to nature the same strict way of explaining that language scholars have now worked out for all books. Their aim is simply to understand what the text means to say, not to sniff out a double meaning, or even to assume one is there from the start. But even with books, the bad way of explaining has by no means been fully defeated. Even in the best educated circles, you still keep running into leftovers of explaining things as hidden symbols and mystical messages. And it is the same with nature, in fact much worse.

9.

A world beyond. - It is true: there could be a world beyond this one. It is hard to argue against the bare possibility of it. We see all things through a human head, and we cannot cut that head off. Still, the question remains: what would be left of the world if we had cut it off after all? This is a purely scientific problem, and not one that should worry people very much. But everything that has so far made ideas about a world beyond valuable, frightening, or delightful to people, everything that created those ideas, is passion, mistake, and fooling oneself. It was the very worst ways of gaining knowledge, not the very best, that taught people to believe in it. Once you have uncovered these methods as the foundation of all existing religions and beliefs in a world beyond, you have proven them wrong. That possibility is still left over, but you can do nothing at all with it. Much less should anyone let happiness, salvation, and life hang from the thin spider threads of such a possibility. - For the only thing you could say about a world beyond is that it is different: different in a way we cannot reach and cannot understand. It would be a thing described only by what it is not. - Even if the existence of such a world were proven as well as anything could be, one thing would still be certain: knowing about it would be the most pointless knowledge of all. It would be even more pointless than knowing the chemical makeup of water is to a sailor caught in a dangerous storm.

10.

Belief in a world beyond will be harmless in the future. - Religion, art, and morality will one day be described in how they came about so fully that we can explain them completely, without having to fall back on the idea that something from a world beyond stepped in, either at the start or along the way. Once that happens, the strongest interest in the purely theoretical problem of "the thing as it really is" and "how

things appear" will come to an end. Because however that problem turns out, with religion, art, and morality we do not touch "what the world really is in itself." We are in the realm of how we picture things, and no "hunch" can carry us further than that. Then people will calmly hand over the question of how our picture of the world can be so very different from what we work out the world really is. They will leave it to physiology, the study of how the body works, and to the history of how living things and ideas developed.

11.

Language as a supposed science. - Language matters for the growth of culture because in it, people set up a world of their own next to the other one. It was a place they thought was so solid that from there they could lift the rest of the world off its hinges and make themselves its master. For long stretches of time, people believed that the ideas and names of things were eternal truths. To that extent, they took on the pride that lifted them above the animals: they really thought that in language they held knowledge of the world. The one who shaped language was not modest enough to think he was only giving things labels. Instead, as he imagined, he was putting the highest knowledge about things into words. And in fact language is the first step in the effort toward science and scholarship. Here too, it is the belief that the truth has been found that the most powerful sources of strength have flowed from. Very late, only now, is it starting to dawn on people that by believing in language they have spread a huge mistake. Luckily, it is too late for this to undo the growth of reason, which rests on that belief. - Logic too rests on assumptions that nothing in the real world matches. For example, it assumes that things can be equal, and that the same thing stays exactly the same thing at different points in time. But logic came into being through the opposite belief: that such things really do exist in the real world.

It is the same with mathematics. Mathematics surely would never have come about if people had known from the start that in nature there is no perfectly straight line, no true circle, and no absolute measure of size.

12.

Dreams and culture. When we sleep, the brain function that suffers most is memory. It doesn't stop completely. But it is pushed back into an unfinished, imperfect state, the kind of state it may have been in for everyone, by day and while awake, in the earliest times of humankind. Memory in this state is random and muddled. It keeps mixing things up because of the slightest likeness between them. But peoples made up their myths with exactly the same randomness and muddle. And even today, travellers often notice how easily the so-called savage forgets things. They notice how, after a short effort to remember, his mind starts to wander and stagger back and forth, and how, simply out of tiredness, he comes out with lies and nonsense. Yet in our dreams, all of us are like this savage. We recognize things badly and wrongly treat different things as the same, and that is why we reason so badly in dreams. So when we picture a dream clearly afterwards, we are shocked at ourselves, because we carry so much foolishness inside us. Then there is the fact that everything we see in a dream feels perfectly clear, and this only works because we believe without question that it is real. This, too, reminds us of the states of earlier humankind, when hallucinations were extremely common and sometimes gripped whole communities, even whole peoples, at the same time. So, in sleep and in dreams, we go through the lessons of earlier humanity once again.

13.

The logic of dreams. While we sleep, our nervous system is constantly being stirred up by all sorts of causes inside the body. Almost all the organs are producing their fluids and are at work. The blood rushes wildly round its circuit. The way the sleeper is lying presses on some of his limbs. His blankets affect what he feels in many different ways. The stomach digests, and its movements disturb other organs. The intestines twist and turn. The position of the head puts the muscles into unusual positions. The feet have no shoes on and are not pressing their soles against the ground, and this gives a feeling that something is unusual, just as the different clothing on the whole body does. All of this changes from day to day and in how strong it is. And because it is out of the ordinary, it stirs up the whole system, right up into the workings of the brain. So the mind has a hundred reasons to be puzzled and to look for the causes of this stirring. A dream, then, is the mind searching for and picturing the causes of these stirred-up feelings, that is, the causes it imagines are behind them. For example, someone who has two straps tied around his feet may well dream that two snakes are coiling around them. At first this is a guess, then it becomes a belief, along with a picture and a made-up story to go with it. "These snakes must be the cause of this feeling that I, the sleeper, am having": that is how the sleeping mind judges. The recent past that the mind has worked out in this way is turned, by his excited imagination, into the present. In the same way, everyone knows from experience how quickly a dreamer weaves a loud sound that reaches him, like bells ringing or cannons firing, into his dream. In other words, he explains the sound afterwards, so that he thinks he first lives through the events that led up to it and only then hears the sound. But how is it that the dreaming mind always gets it so wrong, when the very same mind, while awake, is usually so sober, careful and doubtful about guesses? How is it that in a dream the first guess

that comes along to explain a feeling is enough for the mind to believe straight away that it is true? (For in dreams we believe in the dream as if it were reality, which means we treat our guess as completely proven.) My view is this: the way people still reason in dreams today is the way humankind reasoned even while awake for many thousands of years. The first cause that came to mind to explain anything that needed explaining was good enough and was taken as the truth. (According to travellers' reports, savages still do this today.) In dreams, this ancient piece of humanity keeps practising inside us, because it is the foundation on which higher reason grew, and on which it still grows in every person. Dreams carry us back into distant stages of human culture and give us a tool for understanding them better. Dream-thinking comes so easily to us now because, over huge stretches of human development, we were drilled so well in exactly this kind of fanciful, cheap explaining, based on the first idea that happens to pop into our heads. In this sense, dreaming is a rest for the brain, which during the day has to meet the stricter demands on thinking that a more advanced culture sets. We can even watch a related process while we are still awake, a kind of gateway or entrance hall to dreaming. When we close our eyes, the brain produces a lot of flashes of light and colours, probably as a kind of after-effect and echo of all the light that has poured into it during the day. Now our understanding, working together with our imagination, immediately turns this shapeless play of colours into definite figures, shapes, landscapes and lively groups. What is really going on here is, once again, a kind of reasoning backwards from the effect to the cause. The mind asks: where do these flashes and colours come from? And it assumes those figures and shapes as the causes. It takes them to be what produced the colours and lights, because during the day, with its eyes open, it is used to finding a cause for every colour and every flash of light. So here the imagination keeps pushing pictures in front of the mind, building them on what the eyes saw during the day. And dream ima-

gination does exactly the same thing. That is, the imagined cause is worked out from the effect and pictured to fit the effect. All of this happens incredibly fast. So, just like with a magician's tricks, our judgement can get confused, and things that happen one after another can seem to happen at the same time, or even in reverse order. From these processes we can tell how late sharper logical thinking, taking cause and effect seriously, developed in humans. After all, our reason and understanding still slip back without our wanting it into those primitive ways of reasoning, and we spend roughly half our lives in this state. The poet and the artist, too, give their moods and states of mind causes that are not the true ones at all. In this way they remind us of older humanity and can help us understand it.

14.

Sounding along. Every strong mood brings with it an echo of related feelings and moods, the way one string can make others vibrate along with it. Such moods stir up our memory, as it were. Something in us remembers and becomes aware of similar states and where they came from. In this way, quick, habitual links between feelings and thoughts are formed. In the end, when these follow one another as fast as lightning, they are no longer felt as mixtures of many parts, but as single wholes. That is the sense in which people talk about "the moral feeling" or "the religious feeling", as if each of these were one single thing. In truth, they are rivers fed by a hundred springs and streams. Here too, as so often, the fact that we have one word for something does not prove that the thing itself is one thing.

15.

No inside and outside in the world. Democritus took the ideas of "up" and "down" and applied them to endless space, where they make no sense. In the same way, philosophers in general have taken the idea of

"inside and outside" and applied it to the true nature of the world and to how things appear. They believe that deep feelings carry you deep into the inside of things, bringing you close to the heart of nature. But these feelings are only deep in one sense: along with them, almost without our noticing, certain complicated groups of thoughts are regularly stirred up, and we call those thoughts deep. A feeling is deep because we think the thought that comes with it is deep. But a deep thought can still be very far from the truth, as every thought about a world beyond is, for example. If you take away the bits of thought mixed into a deep feeling, what is left is simply a strong feeling. And a strong feeling proves nothing about knowledge except that the feeling itself exists. In the same way, a strong faith proves only that it is strong, not that what is believed is true.

16.

How things appear, and the thing as it really is. Philosophers usually stand in front of life and experience, in front of what they call the world of how things appear, as if it were a painting. They treat it as a picture that has been unrolled once and for all, always showing the same scene, fixed and unchanging. They think you have to interpret this scene correctly so that you can then draw a conclusion about the being that produced the painting. That being is the thing as it really is, which is usually seen as the full and sufficient reason behind the world of how things appear. Other, stricter logicians took a different view. They first defined the idea of the world beyond very sharply: it is something that depends on nothing, and so it also causes nothing. Then they denied that there is any connection at all between this thing that depends on nothing (the world beyond) and the world we know. So, they said, the thing as it really is does not show itself at all in how things appear, and we must refuse to draw any conclusion from the one to the other. But both sides have overlooked a possibil-

ity. That painting, which we humans now call life and experience, has come into being bit by bit. In fact, it is still very much in the middle of becoming. So it should not be treated as a fixed thing from which we could draw a conclusion about its maker (its sufficient reason), or even refuse to draw one. For thousands of years we have looked at the world with moral, artistic and religious demands, with blind liking, passion or fear. We have really indulged ourselves in the bad habits of illogical thinking. Because of this, the world has slowly become so wonderfully colourful, terrible, full of deep meaning and full of soul. It has gained colour, but we were the ones who painted it. The human mind made how things appear appear, and it carried its own basic mistakes into things. Late, very late, the mind stops to think about this. And now the world of experience and the thing as it really is seem so extremely different and separate to it that it refuses to draw any conclusion from the one to the other. Or else, in a strangely mysterious and spooky way, it asks us to give up our mind and our personal will, so that we can reach what is truly real by becoming truly real ourselves. Still others have collected all the typical features of our world of how things appear, that is, of the picture of the world that was spun out of mistakes of the mind and handed down to us. And instead of blaming the mind, they blamed the very nature of things as the cause of the world's actual, very unsettling character, and they preached that we should be saved from existence itself. Science and scholarship, in its steady and hard-working progress, will deal decisively with all these views. Its greatest triumph will one day be a history of how thinking came to be. Its result may come down to this statement: what we now call the world is the result of a great many mistakes and fantasies. These arose slowly over the whole development of living things, grew together into each other, and are now handed down to us as a treasure gathered from the whole past. A treasure, because the value of our being human rests on it. Strict science and scholarship can in fact free us only a little from this world

as we picture it, and that is not something to wish for anyway, since it cannot really break the power of age-old habits of feeling. But it can, very slowly and step by step, shed light on the history of how the world as we picture it came to be. And it can lift us, at least for moments, above the whole process. Then perhaps we will realise that the thing as it really is deserves a huge, roaring laugh, like the laughter of the gods in Homer. We will see that it seemed to be so much, even everything, and is really empty, that is, empty of meaning.

17.

Explanations that rely on a world beyond. A young person values explanations that rely on a world beyond, because they show him that things he found unpleasant or contemptible actually have a very deep meaning. And if he is unhappy with himself, that feeling gets lighter when he recognises the deepest riddle of the world, or the world's misery, in the very things he dislikes so much about himself. To feel less to blame, and at the same time to find things more interesting: that is the double gift he thinks he owes to belief in a world beyond. Later, of course, he starts to distrust this whole way of explaining things. Then perhaps he sees that the same effects can be reached just as well, and more scientifically, by another route. He sees that explanations from physics and history bring about the feeling of not being to blame at least as much. And he sees that his interest in life and its problems may be set on fire even more that way.

18.

Basic questions of belief in a world beyond. Some day someone will write the history of how thinking came to be. When that happens, the following sentence by an outstanding logician will be seen in a new light. He wrote: "The original, general law of the knowing mind is an inner need to understand every object as it is in itself, in its own

nature, as something that is the same as itself. That means as something that exists on its own, that at bottom always stays the same and never changes. In short, as a substance." But this law, which is called "original" here, also came into being over time. One day it will be shown how this habit slowly arises in simple living creatures. It will be shown how the dull, mole-like eyes of these creatures at first see nothing but the same thing over and over. Then, as the different stirrings of pleasure and pain become more noticeable, these creatures slowly begin to tell different substances apart. But each substance has only one feature, that is, only one way in which it relates to the creature. The first step of logic is the judgment. According to the best logicians, a judgment is, at its core, a belief. Underneath every belief lies a feeling of something pleasant or painful for the one who feels it. When two separate feelings come one after another and produce a new, third feeling, that is a judgment in its lowest form. At first, we living beings care about nothing in any thing except how it relates to us in terms of pleasure and pain. Between the moments when we become aware of this relation, that is, the moments of feeling, there are moments of rest, of not feeling. In those moments the world and every thing in it means nothing to us. We notice no change in it. It is the same today when someone who is deeply absorbed in something does not notice that a person is walking past. For a plant, usually all things are still and everlasting, and every thing is the same as itself. From the age of the simple creatures, humans have inherited the belief that there are things which are the same. Only experience shaped by the most advanced science and scholarship contradicts this idea. Perhaps the very first belief of all living things, from the very start, is even that the whole rest of the world is one single thing and does not move. At that early stage of logic, the idea of cause and effect is the furthest thing from the mind. Indeed, even now we basically think that all our feelings and actions are acts of free will. When a feeling being looks at itself, it takes every feeling and every change to be

something separate, that is, something that depends on nothing and is connected to nothing. It just rises up in us, with no link to what came before or what comes after. We are hungry, but at first we do not think that the body wants to keep itself alive. Instead, that feeling seems to push itself forward without any reason or purpose. It stands on its own and thinks it comes from nowhere, by choice. So: the belief in free will is an original mistake of all living things. It is as old as the first stirrings of logic in them. The belief in substances that depend on nothing, and in things that are the same, is also an original mistake of all living things, and just as old. But since belief in a world beyond has mainly been busy with substance and free will, we may call it the science that deals with humanity's basic mistakes, but treats them as if they were basic truths.

19.

Number. The laws of numbers were invented on the basis of a mistake that was there from the very beginning: the idea that there are several things that are the same. In fact, nothing is the same as anything else. Or at least the idea that there are things at all. In fact, there is no such thing as a "thing." Whenever we assume there are many of something, we always take for granted that there is something that shows up many times. But the mistake is already at work right here. Already here we make up beings and units that do not exist. Our sense of space and time is false, because if we test it carefully all the way through, it leads to logical contradictions. In everything science and scholarship establish, we always have to count with some false amounts. But because these amounts at least stay the same, like our sense of time and space, the results of science and scholarship still fit together with complete strictness and certainty. You can keep building on them. You can do this right up to that final point where the mistaken basic assumption, those constant errors,

clash with the results. One example is the theory of atoms. There we still feel forced to assume a "thing," or some material "base," that gets moved. And yet the whole scientific process has had exactly this goal: to break down everything thing-like, everything material, into movements. Even here our feelings still split the world into what moves and what is moved. We cannot get out of this circle, because the belief in things has been knotted into our nature since ancient times. Kant says: "The mind does not take its laws from nature, but lays them down for nature." This is completely true when it comes to the idea of nature that we are forced to connect with it. Here nature means the world as we picture it, that is, the world as a mistake. But this idea of nature is the sum of a great many mistakes of the mind. To a world that is not our picture of it, the laws of numbers do not apply at all. They are valid only in the human world.

20.

A few steps back. One very high level of education is reached when a person gets past superstitious and religious ideas and fears. For example, they no longer believe in sweet little angels or in original sin, and they have forgotten how to talk about the saving of souls. Once a person has reached this level of freedom, they still have to overcome belief in a world beyond, and that takes the greatest effort of clear thinking. But after that, a movement backwards is needed. The person must understand why such ideas were justified, both in history and in the human mind. They must see that humanity's greatest progress came from there. And they must see that without such a backward movement, we would rob ourselves of the best things humanity has achieved so far. When it comes to belief in a world beyond in philosophy, I now see more and more people who have reached the negative goal, namely that every positive belief in a world beyond is a mistake. But I still see few who climb a few steps

back down. You should certainly look out beyond the top step of the ladder, but you should not try to stand on it. The most enlightened people only get as far as freeing themselves from belief in a world beyond and looking back at it with a sense of being above it. Yet here, just as on a racetrack in ancient times, you need to turn around the far end of the track and come back.

21.

The likely victory of doubt. Let us accept the starting point of the doubter for a moment. Suppose there were no other world beyond this one, and all the explanations of the only world we know that are taken from belief in a world beyond were useless to us. How would we then look at people and things? It is possible to imagine this, and it is useful to do so, even if we were one day to reject the question of whether Kant and Schopenhauer proved something beyond this world in a scientific way. For judging by history, it is quite possible that people will one day, on the whole and in general, become doubters on this point. So the question is this: how will human society take shape under the influence of such an attitude? Perhaps proving any world beyond in a scientific way is already so hard that humanity will never be able to get rid of its distrust of such proof. And if people distrust belief in a world beyond, then on the whole the results are the same as if it had been directly proven wrong and people were no longer allowed to believe in it. The historical question about how humanity will live without belief in a world beyond stays the same in both cases.

22.

Not believing in the "monument more lasting than bronze." One big downside of people giving up their belief in a world beyond is this: each person looks too closely at their own short lifetime. They no

longer feel a strong push to build lasting institutions that are meant to stand for centuries. A person wants to pick the fruit themselves from the tree they plant. So they no longer want to plant the kind of trees that need steady care for a hundred years, the kind of trees meant to give shade to many generations, one after another. Why was it different before? Because belief in a world beyond makes people think they have found the final, solid foundation, the one on which all of humanity's future will have to settle and build. A single person helps save their own soul when, for example, they found a church or a monastery. They believe it will be counted in their favour and rewarded in the soul's eternal life afterwards. To them, it is work toward the soul's eternal salvation. Can science and scholarship also make people believe in its results like that? In fact, science needs doubt and distrust as its most loyal partners. Even so, over time, the number of truths that cannot be shaken, truths that survive every storm of doubt and every attempt to pull them apart, may grow so large (for example, in the rules of healthy living) that people decide, on that basis, to found "eternal" works. For now, though, the contrast is still too sharp between our restless, short-lived existence, like insects that live for a single day, and the slow, calm, long-breathed peace of the ages that believed in a world beyond. The two times are still too close together. Today a single person goes through too many changes, inside and out, to dare to settle in for good, even just for their own lifetime. A truly modern person who wants to build a house, for example, feels as if they were about to wall themselves up alive inside a tomb.

23.

The age of comparing. The less people are tied down by custom handed down to them, the more their inner reasons and motives keep moving and shifting. And so, in the same way, the more restless things become on the outside too: people flowing back and forth and

mixing together, and all their different goals sounding at once, like many voices singing different tunes. Who still feels a strict duty to tie themselves and their children to one place? Who, for that matter, is still strictly bound by anything at all? Just as all the different styles of art are now copied side by side, so are all the levels and kinds of morality, of customs, and of cultures. Such an age gets its meaning from this: in it, different ways of seeing the world, different customs and cultures, can be compared and lived through side by side. That was not possible before, when each culture ruled only in its own local area, just as every style of art was tied to one place and one time. Now a growing sense of beauty will finally decide among the many forms that are laid out for comparison. It will let most of them die out, namely all the ones that this sense of beauty rejects. In the same way, a choosing is now going on among the forms and habits of higher morality, and its only possible goal is the end of the lower kinds of morality. This is the age of comparing! That is its pride, but, fairly enough, it is also its suffering. Let us not be afraid of this suffering! Instead, let us understand the task this age gives us as grandly as we possibly can. Then the people who come after us will bless us for it. They will be people who know they have moved beyond both the closed-off, original cultures of single peoples and the culture of comparing. But they will look back on both kinds of culture with thanks, as precious antiques worthy of respect.

24.

Is progress possible? When a scholar of the old culture swears he will never again spend time with people who believe in progress, he is right. The old culture has left its greatness and goodness behind it. Knowing history forces you to admit that it can never become fresh again. You would need unbearable dullness, or equally unbearable dreamy enthusiasm, to deny this. But people can now decide, know-

ingly and on purpose, to develop further into a new culture, whereas before they developed without knowing it and by chance. They can now create better conditions for how people are born, fed, raised and taught. They can manage the whole earth economically, and they can weigh up people's strengths against each other and put them to use. This new, knowing culture kills off the old one, which, seen as a whole, lived an unaware life, like animals and plants. It also kills off the distrust of progress: progress is possible. What I mean is this: it is hasty and almost nonsense to believe that progress has to happen. But how could anyone deny that it is possible? On the other hand, progress in the spirit of the old culture, and along its path, cannot even be imagined. Even if romantic dreamers also use the word "progress" for their goals (for example, closed-off, original cultures of single peoples), they are still borrowing the picture of it from the past. In this area, their thinking and imagining have no originality at all.

25.

Private morality and world morality. People no longer believe that a God guides the fate of the world as a whole, and that, despite all the seeming twists and turns in humanity's path, he will still lead it to a glorious end. Since that belief has ended, people must set themselves goals that cover the whole earth. The older morality, especially Kant's, asks each person to do the kinds of actions they would want all people to do. That was a nice, innocent idea. It acted as if everyone simply knew which way of acting would make all of humanity do well, and so which actions are worth wanting at all. It is a theory like the one about free trade, which assumes that general harmony will just happen by itself, following built-in laws of getting better. Maybe, in the future, a broad view of what humanity needs will show that it is not at all desirable for all people to act the same way. Instead, for the sake of goals that cover the whole earth, whole sections of humanity

might have to be given special tasks, perhaps, in some cases, even evil ones. In any case, if humanity is not to destroy itself through this kind of knowing, overall management, something must be found first: a knowledge of the conditions of culture greater than anything we have had so far, to serve as a scientific measuring stick for goals that cover the whole earth. This is the enormous task waiting for the great minds of the next century.

26.

Going backward as a step forward. Now and then, minds appear that are harsh, forceful and able to sweep people along, but that are still behind the times. They call up a past stage of humanity one more time, as if by magic. Their appearance proves something: the new directions they fight against are not yet strong enough. Something is still missing in those new directions, or else they would stand up better against these people who conjure up the past. For example, Luther's Reformation shows that in his century, all the stirrings of freedom of mind were still unsure, delicate and young. Science and scholarship could not yet lift up their head. In fact, the whole Renaissance looks like a first spring that is almost buried again under snow. But in our own century too, Schopenhauer's belief in a world beyond proved that even now the scientific spirit is not yet strong enough. That is why the whole medieval Christian way of looking at the world and feeling about human beings could rise from the dead one more time in Schopenhauer's teaching, even though all the Christian doctrines had been destroyed long ago. A lot of science and scholarship echoes in his teaching, but it does not rule it. What rules it is the old, well-known "need for something beyond this world." One of the greatest and truly priceless benefits we get from Schopenhauer is this: for a while, he forces our feelings back into older, powerful ways of looking at the world and at people, ways we would otherwise not easily find a

path to. This is a huge gain for history and for fairness. I believe that nowadays hardly anyone could manage to be fair to Christianity and its Asian relatives without Schopenhauer's help. And being fair to them is especially impossible if you stand on the ground of the Christianity that still exists today. Only after this great success of fairness, only after we have corrected, on such an important point, the historical way of looking at things that the Age of Enlightenment brought with it, may we carry the flag of the Enlightenment forward again. That is the flag with three names on it: Petrarch, Erasmus, Voltaire. We have turned going backward into a step forward.

27.

A replacement for religion. People think they are saying something good about a philosophy when they present it as a replacement for religion for ordinary people. And it is true that in the household of the mind, we sometimes need ways of thinking that act as a bridge. Going straight from religion to a scientific way of seeing things is a violent, dangerous leap, something one should advise against. To that extent, people are right to recommend such a philosophy. But in the end we should also learn that the needs which religion used to satisfy, and which philosophy is now supposed to satisfy, do not stay the same forever. These needs themselves can be weakened and wiped out. Think, for example, of the Christian anguish of the soul, the sighing over how rotten one is inside, the worry about being saved. These are all ideas that come only from mistakes of reason. They do not deserve to be satisfied; they deserve to be destroyed. A philosophy can be useful in one of two ways: either it satisfies those needs too, or it gets rid of them. For they are learned needs, limited to a certain time, and they rest on assumptions that contradict the assumptions of science and scholarship. Here, to make the crossing, it is much better to use art, to lighten a mind that is overloaded with feelings. Art

keeps those ideas alive much less than a philosophy based on belief in a world beyond does. Starting from art, one can then move more easily into a philosophical science and scholarship that truly sets us free.

28.

Words with a bad name. Away with the words optimism and pessimism! They have been used so much that everyone is sick of them. The reason for using them grows weaker day by day. Only chatterboxes still need them so badly. For why on earth would anyone want to be an optimist, unless he has a God to defend? A God who must have created the best of all worlds, if he himself is goodness and perfection. But what thinking person still needs the idea of a God? On the other hand, there is also no reason at all to declare a pessimistic faith, unless you want to annoy God's lawyers, meaning the theologians or the philosophers who sound like theologians, and loudly claim the opposite: that evil rules, that there is more pain than pleasure, that the world is a botched job, how a wicked will to live appears. But who still cares about the theologians these days, apart from the theologians themselves? Leaving aside all theology and the fight against it, it is obvious that the world is neither good nor evil, let alone the best or the worst. These ideas "good" and "evil" make sense only when they refer to human beings. And maybe even there, the way they are usually used is not justified. In any case, we must give up both ways of looking at the world: the one that insults it and the one that glorifies it.

29.

Drunk on the scent of flowers. People think that the ship of humanity sinks deeper into the water the more it is loaded. They believe that the more deeply a person thinks, the more delicately he feels, the more highly he values himself, the further he moves away from the

other animals, the more he seems to be the genius among animals, the closer he will come to the real nature of the world and to knowledge of it. And he really does this through science and scholarship. But he thinks he does it even more through his religions and arts. These are indeed a flower of the world, but they are not at all closer to the root of the world than the stem is. In fact, they do not help us understand the nature of things any better at all, even though almost everyone believes they do. It was mistake that made human beings so deep, so delicate and so inventive that they could produce a flower like religions and arts. Pure knowledge could never have done that. Whoever revealed the true nature of the world to us would give all of us the most unpleasant disappointment. It is not the world as it really is, but the world as we picture it, that is, the world as a mistake, that is so full of meaning, so deep, so wonderful, carrying both happiness and unhappiness in its lap. This result leads to a philosophy that says no to the world in terms of logic. But such a philosophy can go together just as well with saying yes to the world in practice as with the opposite.

30.

Bad habits in drawing conclusions. These are the most common wrong conclusions people draw. First: a thing exists, so it has a right to exist. Here people reason from the fact that something can survive to the idea that it serves a purpose, and from serving a purpose to the idea that it is rightful. Next: an opinion makes people happy, so it is the true one; its effect is good, so it is itself good and true. Here people describe the effect as making happy, as good, in the sense of useful. Then they give the cause the same label, good, but now in the sense of logically valid. Turned around, these statements go like this: a thing cannot win through or last, so it is wrong; an opinion torments and upsets people, so it is false. The free thinker learns all too

often how faulty this way of reasoning is, and has to suffer from its results. So he is often tempted to draw the opposite conclusions, which of course are, in general, just as wrong: a thing cannot win through, so it is good; an opinion causes distress and unrest, so it is true.

31.

The illogical is necessary. - One of the things that can drive a thinker to despair is the knowledge that people need the illogical, and that a lot of good comes out of it. The illogical is stuck so firmly in our passions, in language, in art, in religion, and really in everything that makes life worth something, that you cannot pull it out without doing hopeless damage to all these beautiful things. Only far too naive people can believe that human nature could be turned into something purely logical. And even if we could get closer to that goal step by step, think how much would have to be lost along the way! Even the most reasonable person needs nature again from time to time, that is, needs his basic illogical way of standing toward everything.

32.

Being unfair is necessary. - Every judgement about the value of life has grown up in an illogical way, and so it is unfair. The judgement is impure for three reasons. First, the material we have to go on is very incomplete. Second, the way we add that material up into a total is flawed. And third, each single piece of the material is itself the result of impure knowledge, and it has to be that way. For example, no experience of another person, however close they are to us, can ever be complete enough to give us a logical right to sum them up as a whole. All our judgements are hasty, and they have to be. Finally, the measuring stick we use is our own self, and that is not something fixed and unchanging. We have moods and we swing back and forth. Yet we

would need to know ourselves as a fixed measure in order to judge fairly how anything stands in relation to us. Maybe all this leads to the conclusion that we should not judge at all. If only we could live without judging, without disliking and liking! But we can't, because every dislike is tied up with a judgement, and so is every liking. In human beings there is no such thing as an urge toward something or away from something without a feeling that we want what helps us and are avoiding what harms us. There is no urge without some kind of knowing judgement about the value of the goal. We are illogical, and therefore unfair, creatures from the very start, and we are able to know this. That is one of the greatest clashes in existence, and one of the hardest to ever resolve.

33.

The mistake about life is necessary for life. - Every belief that life has value and is worth something rests on impure thinking. It is only possible because the single person feels very little for the life and suffering of humanity as a whole. Even the rarer people who think beyond themselves at all do not look at this life as a whole. They only look at limited parts of it. Suppose you know how to focus mainly on the exceptions, by which I mean the highly gifted people and the pure souls. Suppose you treat their coming into being as the goal of the whole development of the world, and you enjoy what they do. Then you may well believe that life has value, but only because you are overlooking all the other people. In other words, you are thinking impurely. It is the same if you do look at all people, but you only count one kind of urge in them, the less selfish ones, and you excuse them for all their other urges. Then, once again, you can hope for something from humanity as a whole, and to that extent believe life has value. So in this case too, it comes from impure thinking. But whichever of these two ways you take, you are an exception among

people by doing so. Yet the great majority of people put up with life without much grumbling, and so they do believe that existence has value. But they manage this precisely because each of them wants only himself and stands up only for himself, and does not step outside himself the way those exceptions do. Everything beyond their own person is either invisible to them, or at most a faint shadow. So for the ordinary, everyday person, the value of life rests on this alone: he takes himself to be more important than the world. He suffers from a great lack of imagination, which means he cannot feel his way into other beings, and so he takes as little part as possible in their fate and their suffering. Whoever could truly share in it, on the other hand, would have to despair of the value of life. If he managed to take in and feel the awareness of all humanity inside himself, he would collapse, cursing existence. For humanity as a whole has no goals, and so a person who looks at the whole course of things cannot find comfort and support there, only despair. If, in everything he does, he keeps in view that humans have no goal in the end, then his own work starts to look to him like waste. But to feel yourself, as humanity and not just as one person, wasted in the same way that we see nature waste a single blossom, is a feeling above all feelings. - But who is capable of it? Surely only a poet. And poets always know how to comfort themselves.

34.

Something to calm us down. But doesn't this turn our philosophy into a tragedy? Doesn't the truth become an enemy of life, an enemy of what is better? There is a question that seems to weigh on our tongue, yet it doesn't want to be said out loud: can a person knowingly go on living inside what is untrue? Or, if a person has to do that, wouldn't death be better? After all, there is no longer any "you must." Morality, as far as it was a "you must," has been destroyed by our way

of looking at things, just as religion has. Knowledge can leave only pleasure and pain, usefulness and harm, as reasons for acting. But how will these reasons get along with our sense for truth? They too are mixed up with mistakes. That's because, as we said before, our likes and dislikes, and the very unfair ways we measure things, are what mainly decide our pleasure and pain. The whole of human life is sunk deep in untruth. A single person can't pull it up out of this well without coming to resent his own past from the very bottom of his heart. He can't do it without finding his present reasons for acting, like the wish for honour, to be nonsense. And he can't do it without meeting the passions that push us toward the future, and toward happiness in that future, with mockery and contempt. If that is true, would there be only one way of thinking left? A way that brings despair as its personal result, and a philosophy of destruction as its result in theory? I believe that what knowledge does to a person afterwards is decided by that person's temperament, by the kind of nature they have. I can picture the effect I just described, which is possible in some people. But I can just as easily picture a different effect. Thanks to it, a much simpler life could come about, one much freer from strong emotions than life is now. At first, the old reasons for wanting things fiercely would still have power, because of old habits passed down to us. But little by little, under the influence of knowledge, which cleans us out, they would grow weaker. In the end, a person would live among other people, and with himself, the way one lives in nature: without praise, without blame, without getting worked up. He would enjoy many things as if watching a play, things that until now he could only be afraid of. He would be rid of all the big, dramatic emphasis. He would no longer feel the sting, the pushing and prodding, of the thought that he is not just nature, or that he is more than nature. Of course, as I said, this would take a good temperament. It would take a steady, gentle, and at heart cheerful soul. It would take a mood that doesn't need to be on guard against tricks and sudden out-

bursts, and that shows nothing of a growling tone or bitter stubbornness when it speaks. Those are the well-known, annoying traits of old dogs and of people who have been kept on a chain for a long time. Instead, think of a person from whom the usual chains of life have fallen away so completely that he goes on living only to understand things better and better. Such a person must be able to give up many things, in fact almost everything that other people value, and do it without envy or resentment. For him, the most desirable state must be enough: that free, fearless floating above people, customs, laws, and the usual ways things are valued. He is happy to share the joy of this state with others. Perhaps he has nothing else to share. And that, of course, means one more thing he goes without, one more thing he gives up. But if people still want more from him, he will shake his head kindly and point to his brother, the free man of action. And he may not hide a little bit of mockery as he does it. Because that brother's "freedom" is a rather special matter of its own.

Part Two

On the History of Moral Feelings

35.

The advantages of watching how people think and feel. People in earlier centuries believed this, and in fact they knew it: that thinking about what is Human, All Too Human, or, to use the more learned term, "psychological observation", is one of the ways we can make the weight of life lighter. They knew that practising this skill gives you a calm, quick mind in difficult situations, and something to entertain you when you are surrounded by boring people. They even knew that you can pick wise sayings, like fruit, from the thorniest and most unpleasant stretches of your own life, and feel a little better for it. So why has our own century forgotten this? At least in Germany, and really all over Europe, there are many signs that people have become poor at observing human nature. This does not show so much in novels, short stories and works of philosophy, because those are written by exceptional people. It shows more in the way people judge public events and public figures. But above all, the skill of taking people apart in your mind and then adding up the pieces is missing in social life, among people of every class. There, people talk a great deal about other people, but not at all about what a human being is. Why do we let slip the richest and most harmless thing there is to talk about? Why does nobody even read the great masters of the short, sharp saying about human nature anymore? To say it without any exaggeration: it is rare to find an educated person in Europe who has read La Rochefoucauld and the writers who share his kind of mind and art. And it is much rarer still to find someone who knows them and does not speak badly of them. Even this unusual reader will probably enjoy

them much less than the form of these artists ought to let him. That is because even the sharpest mind cannot properly value the art of polishing sayings, like grinding a gem, unless he has been trained in it himself and has tried to compete in it. Without this kind of hands-on lesson, people think this creating and shaping is easier than it really is. They do not feel sharply enough what makes a saying succeed and what makes it charming. So readers of sayings today get only a fairly small pleasure out of them, barely a mouthful of enjoyment. They are like ordinary people looking at cameos, those small carved gems: they praise them because they cannot love them, and they are quick to admire, but even quicker to walk away.

36.

An objection. Or could there be a case against the claim that observing human nature is one of the things that makes life more charming, heals it, and makes it easier? Could people have become so convinced of the unpleasant results of this skill that they now steer young people away from it on purpose? It is true that a certain blind faith in the goodness of human nature, a deep-rooted dislike of taking human actions apart, and a kind of shyness about seeing the soul naked may really be better for a person's overall happiness than sharp insight into human nature, which only helps in single cases. And perhaps believing in goodness, in good people and good deeds, and in a great deal of goodwill in the world that is not about oneself, has actually made people better, because it made them less suspicious. When people copy the heroes in Plutarch's histories with enthusiasm, and are disgusted by the idea of digging, full of doubt, into why those heroes acted as they did, then this does not help the truth, but it does help the well-being of human society. Mistakes about human nature, and a general dullness in this area, push humanity forward. Knowledge of the truth, on the other hand, might gain more from the stir-

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ring power of a bold idea like the one La Rochefoucauld put at the front of the first edition of his book of moral sayings and maxims. In French it says: "What the world calls virtue is usually just a ghost made up by our passions, which we give a respectable name so that we can do whatever we want without being punished." La Rochefoucauld and those other French masters of examining the soul are like sharp-eyed marksmen who hit the bull's-eye again and again. Recently a German has joined them too: the author of the book "Psychological Observations". But the bull's-eye they hit is the black centre of human nature, its dark side. Their skill is amazing. But in the end, someone watching who is guided not by the scientific spirit but by love of people will curse an art that seems to plant a habit of belittling and suspecting others in people's souls.

37.

All the same. However the case for and the case against may add up, the present state of one particular field of science and scholarship has made it necessary to bring the close study of morals back to life. Humanity cannot be spared the cruel sight of the psychological dissecting table, with its knives and pincers. This is ordered by that field of science and scholarship which asks where the so-called moral feelings come from and how they developed, and which, as it moves forward, has to raise and solve the tangled problems of how society works. The older philosophy did not know about these social problems at all, and it always avoided looking into the origin and history of moral feelings, using weak excuses. We can now see very clearly what the results of this were. It has been shown in many examples how the mistakes of the greatest philosophers usually start from a false explanation of certain human actions and feelings. It has been shown how a false system of ethics gets built on a mistaken analysis, for example of the so-called selfless actions. Then, to support this

false ethics, religion and a mess of myths are called in to help. And finally the shadows of these gloomy ghosts fall into physics too, and into the whole way people look at the world. If it is certain that shallow observation of human nature has laid the most dangerous traps for human judgement and reasoning, and keeps laying new ones, then what is needed now is patient, lasting work that never gets tired of piling stone on stone, pebble on pebble. What is needed is a self-controlled kind of courage, so that one is not ashamed of such humble work and stands up to anyone who looks down on it. It is true that countless single remarks about what is human and all too human were first discovered and spoken in social circles that were used to sacrificing everything, not to scientific knowledge, but to a witty desire to please. And the scent of that old home of the moral saying, a very tempting scent, has clung to the whole type of writing in a way that can hardly be washed off. Because of this, the scientific person can't help showing some distrust of this type of writing and of how serious it is. But it is enough to point to the results. Already it is starting to show what very serious findings are growing in the soil of psychological observation. What, after all, is the main conclusion reached by one of the boldest and coolest thinkers, the author of the book "On the Origin of Moral Feelings", thanks to his deep, cutting analysis of human actions? He says: "The moral human being is no closer to the higher, invisible world beyond our senses than the physical human being is." This statement has been made hard and sharp by the hammer blows of historical knowledge. Perhaps one day, at some point in the future, it may serve as the axe laid at the root of people's need for something beyond this world. Whether that will be more of a blessing than a curse for the well-being of everyone, who could say? But in any case it is a statement with the most serious consequences, both fruitful and frightening at the same time. It looks out at the world with the two faces that all great pieces of knowledge have.

38.

In what way it is useful. - So, whether studying the human mind brings people more good or more harm is something we can leave open. But one thing is certain: it is necessary, because science and scholarship cannot do without it. Science and scholarship, though, do not care about final goals, any more than nature does. Nature sometimes produces things that serve a purpose perfectly, without ever having meant to. In the same way, real science and scholarship, which copy nature in the form of ideas, will sometimes, and in fact often, help people and make their lives better and reach useful results. But it, too, does this without ever having meant to. Now, if someone feels a wintry chill when a way of thinking like this blows over them, maybe they simply have too little fire inside. But let them look around. They will notice illnesses where ice packs are needed, and people who are so "kneaded together" out of heat and spirit that they can hardly find air anywhere cold and sharp enough for them. What is more, think of how people and nations who are far too serious need some light-hearted silliness, and how others who are far too excitable and restless sometimes need heavy, pressing burdens to stay healthy. In the same way, shouldn't we, the more thoughtful people of an age that is clearly catching fire more and more, grab every means there is to put out flames and cool things down? That way we could at least stay as steady, harmless and balanced as we still are. And perhaps one day we might then be useful to this age as a mirror, helping it to look at itself and think about what it is doing. -

39.

The fairy tale of freedom beyond this world. - The feelings that make us hold someone responsible, the so-called moral feelings, have a history that goes through the following main stages. At first, people call single actions good or evil without thinking at all about the

reasons behind them. They judge them only by their results, whether those results are useful or harmful. But soon people forget where these labels came from. They start to imagine that the actions themselves, apart from their results, simply have the quality of being "good" or "evil" built into them. This is the same mistake our language makes when it calls the stone itself hard and the tree itself green: it takes what is really an effect and treats it as the cause. Next, people place the goodness or evil inside the reasons behind actions, and they see the deeds themselves as morally unclear, as able to go either way. Then they go further. They no longer give the label good or evil to the single reason, but to the whole nature of a person, out of which the reason grows the way a plant grows out of the soil. So, step by step, people make a person responsible first for the results of what they do, then for their actions, then for their reasons, and finally for their very nature. In the end, though, people discover that even this nature cannot be held responsible. That is because it is completely the necessary result of what came before, and it has grown together out of the pieces and influences of past and present things. This means a person cannot be held responsible for anything at all: not for their nature, not for their reasons, not for their actions, and not for the results of their actions. With this, we arrive at the knowledge that the history of moral feelings is the history of a mistake, the mistake of responsibility. And that mistake rests on another one: the mistake of free will. - Schopenhauer reasoned the other way. He said: because certain actions are followed by bad feelings (a "sense of guilt"), there must be such a thing as responsibility. For there would be no reason for these bad feelings if it were not only true that all human action happens by necessity, which it really does, as this philosopher also saw, but also true that a person gets their whole nature by that same necessity. And that second part is what Schopenhauer denies. From the fact that these bad feelings exist, Schopenhauer believes he can prove a kind of freedom that a person must somehow have had. Not freedom in their

actions, but freedom in their nature: the freedom to be this way or that way, not to act this way or that way. In his view, out of being, which is the area of freedom and responsibility, comes doing, which is the area of strict cause and effect, necessity, and not being to blame. These bad feelings, he says, seem to be about what we do, and to that extent they are mistaken. But really they are about what we are, and what we are is the act of a free will, the deepest cause of why an individual exists at all. A person becomes what they want to become; their wanting comes before their existence. - Here a false conclusion is drawn. From the fact that the bad feelings exist, Schopenhauer concludes that they are justified and that it makes sense to have them. And starting from this false conclusion, he arrives at his fantastic idea of so-called freedom beyond this world. But the bad feeling after a deed does not have to make sense at all. In fact it certainly does not, because it rests on the mistaken assumption that the deed did not have to happen the way it did. So: people feel regret and a guilty conscience because they think they are free, not because they really are free. - Besides, this bad feeling is something people can train themselves out of. Many people do not feel it at all about actions that make many other people feel it. It is something that changes a great deal, tied to how custom and culture develop. And maybe it has only existed for a fairly short stretch of world history. - No one is responsible for their deeds, and no one is responsible for their nature. To judge someone is the same as being unfair. This also holds when an individual judges themselves. This statement is as clear as sunlight, and yet everyone here would rather go back into the shadows and into untruth, out of fear of what would follow.

40.

The beyond-animal. - The beast inside us wants to be lied to. Morality is a necessary lie, so that this beast does not tear us apart. Without

the mistakes that lie in the basic assumptions of morality, humans would have stayed animals. But as things are, humans have taken themselves to be something higher and have placed stricter laws on themselves. That is why they hate the levels of life that have stayed closer to being animals. This explains why, in the past, slaves were looked down on as non-humans, as mere things.

41.

Character that never changes. - It is not strictly true that a person's character can never change. This popular saying really only means this: during a person's short life, the influences acting on them usually cannot scratch deep enough to wipe out the writing that many thousands of years have pressed into them. But imagine a person who lived eighty thousand years. In them you would find a character that could change completely, so that a whole crowd of different individuals would gradually develop out of that one person. Because human life is so short, we are tempted into making many mistaken claims about what human beings are like.

42.

How we rank good things, and morality. Once people have agreed on a ranking of values, which depends on whether a lower, higher or highest kind of selfishness wants one thing or another, that ranking decides what counts as moral or immoral. Choosing a lower good, like pleasure for the body, over a good people value more, like health, is seen as immoral. So is choosing an easy, comfortable life over freedom. But the ranking of values is not fixed and the same at all times. If someone prefers revenge to fairness, then by the standards of an earlier culture he is moral, but by today's standards he is immoral. So "immoral" means that a person does not yet feel, or does not feel strongly enough, the higher, finer, more spiritual motives that each

new culture has added. It describes someone who has fallen behind, but only by a matter of degree. The ranking of values itself is not set up or changed for moral reasons. But once it has been set in a given time, it is used to decide whether an action is moral or immoral.

43.

Cruel people as left behind. We should see the people who are cruel today as leftover stages of earlier cultures. Think of humanity as a mountain: here, for once, the deeper layers of rock, which are usually hidden, lie out in the open. These are people who have been left behind. Through all sorts of chance events as traits were passed down from parent to child, their brains have not developed in such a delicate and many-sided way. They show us what all of us once were, and they frighten us. But they are no more to blame than a piece of granite is to blame for being granite. Our own brains must also contain grooves and folds that match that way of thinking, just as, people say, the shape of some human organs still carries reminders of the time when our ancestors were fish. But these grooves and folds are no longer the riverbed along which the stream of our feelings now flows.

44.

Gratitude and revenge. Here is the reason why a powerful person is grateful. By doing him a favour, the person who helped him has, in a way, trespassed on the powerful man's territory and pushed his way into it. Now, as payback, the powerful man trespasses on the helper's territory in turn, through the act of being grateful. It is a milder form of revenge. If he did not have the satisfaction of showing gratitude, the powerful man would have shown himself to be powerless, and from then on he would be seen that way. That is why every society of the good, which originally meant the powerful, places gratitude among its very first duties.

The writer Swift once tossed off the remark that people are grateful in exactly the same measure as they hold on to revenge.

45.

The two early histories of good and evil. The idea of good and evil has two separate early histories. The first is in the minds of the ruling tribes and classes. Anyone who has the power to pay back, good with good and harm with harm, and who really does pay back, meaning he is both grateful and vengeful, is called good. Anyone who is powerless and cannot pay back counts as bad. As a good person, you belong to "the good", a community with a shared sense of belonging, because every single member is tied to the others by this sense of paying back. As a bad person, you belong to "the bad", a crowd of conquered, powerless people who have no shared sense of belonging. The good are a class; the bad are a mass, like dust. For a long time, good and bad mean the same as noble and low, master and slave. On the other hand, the enemy is not seen as evil, because he can pay back. In Homer's poems, the Trojan and the Greek are both good. The one who counts as bad is not the one who harms us, but the one who is worthy of contempt. In the community of the good, goodness is inherited; it is impossible for a bad person to grow out of such good soil. If, despite this, one of the good does something unworthy of the good, people look for excuses. For example, they blame a god, saying the god struck the good man with blindness and madness. The second history is in the minds of the oppressed and powerless. Here every other person, whether noble or low, is seen as hostile, ruthless, greedy for gain, cruel and sly. "Evil" is the word that describes what a human being is, and in fact what any living being is whose existence is assumed, for example a god. "Human" and "godlike" mean the same as "devilish" and "evil". Signs of kindness, willingness to help and pity are taken fearfully as tricks, as the lead-up to a terrible ending, as

ways to dull your senses and fool you. In short, they are seen as a more refined kind of wickedness. When individuals think like this, a community can hardly form at all, or at most only in its crudest form. So wherever this view of good and evil rules, the individuals, their tribes and their peoples are close to being wiped out. Our present-day morality grew up on the soil of the ruling tribes and classes.

46.

Pity stronger than suffering. There are cases where pity is stronger than the actual suffering. For example, it hurts us more when one of our friends is guilty of something shameful than when we do it ourselves. For one thing, we believe in how pure his character is more than he does. For another, our love for him, probably because of this very belief, is stronger than his love for himself. It is true that his selfishness suffers more than ours does, since he has to bear the bad results of what he did more heavily. Even so, the selfless part in us is hit harder by his guilt than the selfless part in him. And the word "selfless" should never be taken strictly here; it is only a handy way of speaking.

47.

Hypochondria. There are people who, out of sympathy and worry for someone else, become hypochondriacs, constantly anxious about illness. The kind of pity that comes from this is nothing other than a sickness. In the same way there is a Christian hypochondria. It strikes those lonely, religiously stirred people who keep picturing the suffering and death of Christ before their eyes.

48.

Saving kindness. Kindness and love are the most healing herbs and powers in how people deal with one another. They are such precious finds that you might well wish people would use these soothing medicines as sparingly and carefully as possible. But that is impossible. Managing kindness thriftily is the dream of the boldest dreamers of perfect worlds.

49.

Goodwill. Science and scholarship should pay more attention to small things that happen countless times, and are therefore very powerful, than to big things that are rare. Goodwill belongs among these small things. By this I mean those friendly signals in our dealings with each other: the smile in someone's eyes, the handshake, that feeling of ease and comfort that usually wraps around almost everything people do. Every teacher and every official adds this extra touch to what their duty requires. It is humanity constantly at work, like the waves of its light, in which everything grows. Especially in the closest circle, within the family, life only grows green and blossoms because of this goodwill. Good nature, friendliness and a polite heart are streams that never stop flowing from the selfless urge. They have done much more to build culture than the far more famous forms of that urge, which we call pity, mercy and self-sacrifice. But people tend to look down on them, and in fact there is not really much that is selfless about them. Even so, all these tiny doses add up to something huge; their combined power is one of the strongest powers there is. In the same way, there is much more happiness in the world than gloomy eyes can see, as long as you count properly and do not forget all those moments of ease and comfort that fill every day of every human life, even the hardest one.

50.

Wanting to be pitied. - In the most remarkable passage of his self-portrait, first printed in 1658, La Rochefoucauld is surely right when he warns everyone who has good sense against pity. He advises leaving pity to ordinary common people. They need strong feelings, because reason does not guide them, and only strong feelings will push them far enough to help someone who is suffering and to step in firmly when disaster strikes. Pity, in his view, and in Plato's too, weakens the soul. Of course, he says, you should show pity, but be careful not to actually feel it. For unhappy people are simply so foolish that, to them, being shown pity is the greatest good in the world. - Perhaps we can warn even more strongly against feeling pity if we see this need of unhappy people in a different way. La Rochefoucauld seems to treat it as foolishness, as a lack of brains, as a kind of mental disorder that misfortune brings with it. But we can understand it as something quite different and more worrying. Just watch children who cry and scream so that they will be pitied, and who therefore wait for the moment when their state will catch someone's eye. Spend time with sick people and with people who are low in spirits, and ask yourself this: isn't all that eloquent complaining and whimpering, all that showing off of misery, really aimed at hurting the people around them? The pity those people then show is a comfort to the weak and suffering, because it tells them that, for all their weakness, they still have at least one power left: the power to cause pain. The unhappy person gets a kind of pleasure from this feeling of being on top, which the show of pity makes him aware of. His imagination swells. He is still important enough to cause the world pain. So the thirst for pity is a thirst to enjoy oneself, and at the expense of other people. It shows a human being in all the ruthlessness of his own dear self. But it does not show his "foolishness", as La Rochefoucauld thinks. - In social conversation, three quarters of all questions are asked, and three

quarters of all answers are given, in order to hurt the other person just a little. That is why so many people are so hungry for company: it gives them a feeling of their own strength. Spite works in countless tiny doses like these, and in that form it is a powerful stimulant that keeps life lively. In the same way, goodwill, spread through the human world in the same small doses, is the cure that is always on hand. - But will there be many honest people who admit that it is fun to cause pain? Who admit that we quite often amuse ourselves, and amuse ourselves well, by insulting other people, at least in our thoughts, and by firing the small shot of petty spite at them, like pellets from a shotgun? Most people are too dishonest, and a few people are too good, to know anything about this shameful thing. So these people may go on denying that Prosper Mérimée is right when he says, in French: "Know also that there is nothing more common than doing harm for the pleasure of doing it."

51.

How seeming turns into being. - In the end, an actor cannot stop thinking about the impression he makes and about the whole stage effect, even in the deepest pain, for example even at his own child's funeral. He will weep over his own pain and the way he shows it, as if he were his own audience. The hypocrite who always plays one and the same role stops being a hypocrite in the end. Take priests, for example. As young men they are usually hypocrites, knowingly or not. But in the end they become natural, and then they truly are priests, without any pretending at all. Or if the father does not get that far, then perhaps the son does, who uses the head start his father gave him and inherits his habits. If someone wants to seem like something for a very long time and very stubbornly, in the end he finds it hard to be anything else. Almost everyone's career, even an artist's, begins with pretending: with copying from the outside, with imitating

whatever makes an impression. The person who always wears the mask of a friendly face must in the end gain control over kind moods, because without them a friendly look cannot be forced. And in the end those kind moods gain control over him in turn: he really is kind.

52.

Where honesty comes in when people deceive. All great deceivers have one thing happen to them that is worth noticing, and it is the source of their power. In the very act of deceiving, amid all the preparations, the spooky tone of voice, the facial expressions, the gestures, in the middle of the impressive stage they have set up, they are suddenly seized by belief in themselves. It is this belief that then speaks to the people around them in such a miraculous and overpowering way. The founders of religions differ from those great deceivers in one way: they never come out of this state of fooling themselves. Or, very rarely, they have those clearer moments when doubt overwhelms them. But usually they comfort themselves by blaming these clearer moments on the evil enemy, the devil. Self-deception has to be there for both kinds of people to have a grand effect. For people believe in the truth of whatever they can see is strongly believed.

53.

So-called steps toward the truth. One of the common errors in thinking goes like this: because someone is truthful and sincere with us, he must be telling the truth. That is how the child believes what its parents judge, and how the Christian believes what the founder of the church claimed. In the same way, people do not want to admit that everything humans defended in earlier centuries, at the cost of their happiness and their lives, was nothing but mistakes. Perhaps they say those beliefs were steps toward the truth. But deep down what they mean is this: if someone honestly believed in something, fought for

that belief and died for it, it would be far too unfair if what drove him was really only a mistake. Such a thing seems to go against eternal justice. That is why the hearts of sensitive people keep overruling their heads and declaring the rule: there simply must be a necessary link between moral actions and intellectual insights. Sadly, it is not so, because there is no eternal justice.

54.

Lying. Why do people, most of the time, tell the truth in everyday life? Certainly not because a god has forbidden lying. Instead, first, because it is easier. A lie demands invention, pretending, and a good memory. (That is why Swift says that whoever tells a lie rarely notices what a heavy load he is taking on, because to keep up one lie he has to invent twenty more.) Second, because in simple situations it pays to say straight out: I want this, I did that, and so on. In other words, because the path of force and authority is safer than the path of trickery. But once a child has been brought up in a complicated home situation, it handles lying just as naturally and, without thinking, always says whatever serves its own interest. A feeling for truth, a dislike of lying in itself, is completely foreign to it and out of its reach, and so it lies in total innocence.

55.

Suspecting morality because of the faith behind it. No power can hold its ground if only hypocrites stand for it. The Catholic Church may have ever so many "worldly" parts, but its strength rests on those priestly types, still many even today, who make their lives hard and full of deep meaning. Their gaze and their worn-out bodies speak of sleepless nights of prayer, of fasting, of burning prayer, maybe even of whipping themselves. These people shake others up and frighten them. What if it were necessary to live like that? That is the dreadful

question that the sight of them puts on people's tongues. By spreading this doubt, they keep laying down a new pillar for their power. Even open-minded people do not dare to stand up to someone so selfless with a hard sense of truth and say: "You who have been deceived, do not deceive others!" The only thing that separates them from him is a difference in understanding, not at all a difference in goodness or badness. But what we do not like, we usually also treat unfairly. So people talk about the cunning and the wicked tricks of the Jesuits, but they overlook how much self-control each single Jesuit forces on himself. They also overlook that the easier way of living preached in the Jesuit handbooks is not meant to benefit the Jesuits themselves at all, but ordinary church members. Indeed, we may ask whether we enlightened people, with exactly the same tactics and organisation, would be just as good tools, just as admirable in mastering ourselves, in never tiring, and in devotion.

56.

Knowledge wins over the idea of deep-rooted evil. Anyone who wants to become wise gains a great deal from having held, for a while, the idea that humans are thoroughly evil and corrupt. That idea is false, just like its opposite. But for whole stretches of history it ruled, and its roots have spread all the way into us and our world. To understand ourselves, we have to understand it. But then, to climb higher, we have to climb over it. We then recognise that there are no sins in the sense of a world beyond. But in the same sense there are no virtues either. We see that this whole area of moral ideas is always shifting, and that there are higher and lower ideas of good and evil, of moral and immoral. Someone who does not want much more from things than knowledge of them easily finds peace in his soul. He will go wrong at most out of ignorance, but hardly out of greed (or, as the world calls it, he will hardly sin). He will no longer want to condemn

his desires as wicked and root them out. Instead, his one goal, which rules him completely, to know things as well as he can at all times, will make him calm and cool and will tame all the wildness in his nature. What is more, he has got rid of a whole crowd of tormenting ideas. He no longer feels anything at the words punishment in hell, sinfulness, being unable to do good. He sees in them only fading shadow pictures left over from false ways of looking at the world and at life.

57.

Morality as a person splitting himself into parts. A good author who really cares about his subject wishes that someone would come along and wipe him out, so to speak, by presenting the same subject more clearly and answering every question in it completely. The girl in love wishes she could prove how devoted and faithful her love is by staying true when her beloved is unfaithful. The soldier wishes to fall on the battlefield for his victorious country, because when his country wins, his highest wish wins too. The mother gives her child what she denies herself: sleep, the best food, and sometimes her health and her money. But are all of these selfless states? Are these moral deeds miracles because, as Schopenhauer put it, they are "impossible and yet real"? Isn't it clear that in all these cases a person loves something of his own, a thought, a longing, something he has created, more than some other part of himself? So he splits his own being and sacrifices one part to the other. Is it really any different when a stubborn person says: "I would rather be shot down than step one pace out of that man's way"? In all these cases there is a leaning toward something, a wish, an urge, a longing. Giving in to it, with all that follows, is certainly not "selfless". In morality, a person treats himself not as an individual, something that cannot be divided, but as a dividual, something split into parts.

58.

What you can promise. You can promise actions, but you cannot promise feelings, because feelings come on their own, whether we want them or not. Someone who promises another person to love them forever, or to hate them forever, or to always be loyal to them, is promising something that is not in his power. But he can promise certain actions. These actions usually come from love, hate or loyalty, but they can also come from other reasons, because there are many paths and many reasons that lead to the same action. So the promise to love someone forever really means this: "As long as I love you, I will show you loving actions. If I stop loving you, you will still keep getting those same actions from me, only for other reasons." That way, the people around them go on believing that the love has not changed and is still the same as before. So when someone promises never-ending love without fooling himself, what he is really promising is that the love will go on looking as if it is there.

59.

Intelligence and morals. You need a good memory to be able to keep the promises you have made. You need a strong imagination to be able to feel pity. That is how closely morals are tied to a good mind.

60.

Wanting revenge, and taking revenge. To have a thought of revenge and to carry it out is like catching a violent fever, but one that passes. To have a thought of revenge without the strength and courage to carry it out is like carrying around a long-lasting illness, a poisoning of body and soul. The kind of morals that looks only at intentions judges both cases as equal. Most people, though, judge the first case

as worse, because of the bad results that an act of revenge might bring with it. Both of these judgments are short-sighted.

61.

Being able to wait. Being able to wait is so hard that the greatest poets have not been too proud to make not being able to wait the theme of their works. Shakespeare did this in Othello, and Sophocles did it in Ajax. In Ajax's case, if he had only let his feelings cool down for one more day, killing himself would no longer have seemed necessary to him, as the words of the oracle suggest. He would probably have played a trick on the terrible whispers of his wounded vanity and said to himself: "Who hasn't, in a situation like mine, mistaken a sheep for a hero? Is it really such a monstrous thing? No, on the contrary, it is just something ordinary and human." Ajax could have comforted himself in this way. Passion does not want to wait. What is tragic in the lives of great men often does not lie in their struggle against their times or against the meanness of the people around them. It lies in the fact that they are unable to put off their work for a year or two. They cannot wait. In every duel, the friends giving advice have to find out one thing: whether the people involved are still able to wait. If they are not, then a duel makes sense, because each of the two says to himself: "Either I go on living, and then that man must die right now, or the other way round." In such a case, waiting would mean suffering even longer from the horrible torture of wounded honour, while facing the person who wounded it. And that can be more suffering than life itself is worth.

62.

Wallowing in revenge. Crude people who feel insulted tend to rate the insult as high as they possibly can. They describe what caused it in

hugely exaggerated words, just so they can fully wallow in the feelings of hatred and revenge that have now been stirred up.

63.

The value of putting others down. Quite a few people, maybe even most people, absolutely need to run down and shrink in their minds everyone they know. They do this to keep up their self-respect and a certain ability to get things done. But since small-minded people are in the majority, and since a great deal depends on whether they keep that ability or lose it, then...

64.

The hothead. You should watch out for someone who flares up at you, just as you would watch out for someone who once tried to kill you. The only reason we are still alive is that he lacks the power to kill. If looks were enough, we would have been finished long ago. Silencing someone by showing your physical wildness and making them afraid is a piece of rough, primitive culture. In the same way, the cold look that upper-class people give their servants is a leftover from the old class divisions between one person and another, a piece of rough ancient times. Women, who are the keepers of old ways, have held on to this leftover even more faithfully.

65.

Where honesty can lead. There was once a man who had the bad habit of now and then speaking quite honestly about the reasons why he did things. His reasons were just as good and just as bad as everyone else's. At first he offended people, then he made them suspicious. Little by little he was shunned outright and cast out of society. In the end, the law remembered this wicked creature, at times when it

would normally have looked the other way or closed its eyes. His failure to keep quiet about the secret everyone shares, and his reckless urge to see what nobody wants to see, which is oneself, brought him to prison and an early death.

66.

Punishable, but never punished. Our crime against criminals is that we treat them like scoundrels.

67.

The holy simple-mindedness of virtue. Every virtue has special rights. One of them, for example, is the right to bring its own little bundle of wood to the fire where a condemned person is being burned.

68.

Morality and success. It is not only the people watching an act who often judge whether it was moral or immoral by whether it succeeded. No, the person who did it does the same. This is because our reasons and intentions are seldom clear and simple enough. Sometimes even our memory seems to get clouded by how the act turned out, so that we give our own act false reasons, or treat unimportant reasons as the important ones. Success often gives an act the full, honest shine of a good conscience. Failure casts the shadow of guilt over even the most worthy action. This explains the well-known method of the politician, who thinks: "Just give me success. With it I will win all the honest souls over to my side, and I will also make myself honest in my own eyes." In a similar way, success is supposed to stand in for better reasons. Even today, many educated people think that Christianity's victory over Greek philosophy proves that Christianity is more true. But in this case, all that happened is that the cruder and more violent

thing beat the more thoughtful and delicate thing. You can see how things really stand with the question of which is more true from this: as science and scholarship woke up, they connected, point by point, with the philosophy of Epicurus, but they rejected Christianity, point by point.

69.

Love and fairness. Why do people overrate love at the expense of fairness, and say the most beautiful things about it, as if it were a much higher being than fairness? Isn't love obviously more stupid than fairness? Of course it is, but that is exactly why it is so much more pleasant for everyone. Love is stupid, and it owns a horn overflowing with gifts. From it, love hands out its presents to everyone, even to people who do not deserve them, and even to people who do not thank it. Love does not take sides, just like the rain. As both the Bible and experience tell us, the rain soaks not only the unjust, but sometimes the just as well, right down to the skin.

70.

Executions. Why does every execution offend us more than a murder does? It is the coldness of the judges, the careful, painful preparations, and the understanding that here a human being is being used as a tool to frighten other people. Because it is not the guilt that gets punished, even if there were such a thing as guilt. The guilt lies with teachers, parents, surroundings, with us, and not with the murderer. By that I mean the circumstances that led him to do it.

71.

Hope. Pandora brought the jar full of evils and opened it. It was the gods' gift to human beings. From the outside it looked like a lovely,

tempting present, and it was called the "jar of good luck." Then all the evils flew out of it, like living creatures with wings. From that moment on they have roamed about, harming people day and night. Only one single evil had not yet slipped out of the jar. Then, because Zeus wanted it so, Pandora slammed the lid shut, and so that one stayed inside. Now people keep this jar of good luck in their homes forever, and they think it holds some wonderful treasure. It is there for them to use, and they reach for it whenever they feel like it. They do not know that the jar Pandora brought was the jar of evils. They take the evil that stayed behind to be the greatest piece of good luck. That evil is hope. You see, Zeus wanted human beings, however much the other evils tortured them, not to throw their lives away, but to keep on letting themselves be tortured again and again. That is why he gives people hope. In truth, hope is the worst of all evils, because it makes human suffering last longer.

72.

No one knows how hot their moral feelings can get. Certain shocking sights and experiences decide whether our passions grow red-hot and steer our whole life, or not. It depends on whether we have lived through such things, for example seeing a father wrongly sentenced, killed or tortured, or having an unfaithful wife, or suffering a cruel attack by an enemy. Nobody knows where circumstances, pity or outrage might drive him. He does not know how hot he is able to burn. Miserable little situations make people miserable and small. Usually it is not the kind of experiences we have, but how many and how big they are, that decides whether a person turns out low or high, in good and in evil.

73.

The martyr who did not want to be one. In a political party there was a man who was too timid and cowardly ever to disagree with his comrades. They used him for every job, and they could get anything out of him, because he was more afraid of his companions thinking badly of him than he was of death. He was a pitiful, weak soul. They saw this, and because of exactly these qualities they turned him into a hero, and in the end even into a martyr. Inside, the coward always said no, but with his lips he always said yes. He said yes even on the scaffold, as he died for his party's views. The reason was that one of his old comrades stood next to him and bullied him so much with words and looks that he really did face death in the most dignified way. Ever since, he has been celebrated as a martyr and a man of great character.

74.

An everyday rule of thumb. You will rarely be wrong if you trace extreme actions back to vanity, ordinary actions back to habit, and petty actions back to fear.

75.

Misunderstanding virtue. Someone who has come to know bad behaviour together with pleasure, like a person who spent his youth chasing enjoyment, imagines that virtue must come together with pain. On the other hand, someone who has been badly tormented by his passions and vices longs for virtue as peace and happiness for the soul. That is why two virtuous people may not understand each other at all.

76.

The self-denier. People say you should make a virtue out of necessity. The self-denier turns this around: he makes a necessity, a hardship, out of virtue.

77.

Honour passed on from the person to the cause. People everywhere honour acts of love and self-sacrifice for the sake of others, wherever they show up. Because of this, people value more highly the things that are loved in that way or that someone sacrifices himself for, even though those things may not be worth much in themselves. A brave army convinces people that the cause it fights for is right.

78.

Ambition as a stand-in for moral feeling. People who have no ambition cannot do without moral feeling. Ambitious people get by without it, with almost the same success. That is why sons from modest families who turn away from ambition usually go downhill fast and become complete scoundrels once they lose their moral feeling.

79.

Vanity makes us rich. How poor the human mind would be without vanity! But because of it, the mind is like a well-stocked warehouse that keeps filling up again and draws in all kinds of buyers. They can find almost anything there and have anything, as long as they bring the right currency, which is admiration.

80.

The old man and death. Leaving aside what religion demands, we may well ask this. An old man feels his strength fading. Why should it be more honourable for him to wait for his slow wearing-out and falling apart, rather than to set himself an end with full awareness? In this case, killing oneself is a completely natural and obvious act. As a victory of reason, it ought fairly to inspire respect. And it did inspire respect in those times when the leading Greek philosophers and the bravest Roman patriots usually died by their own hand. By contrast, the craving to keep stretching out one's life from day to day, nervously consulting doctors and living in the most fussy, careful way, without the strength to get any closer to the real goal of life, is much less worthy of respect. Religions are full of excuses for avoiding the demand to end one's own life. In this way they win the favour of those who are in love with life.

81.

The mistakes of the one who suffers and the one who does the harm. - When a rich man takes something that belongs to a poor man (for example, when a prince takes a common man's sweetheart), the poor man makes a mistake. He thinks the rich man must be truly wicked to take from him the little he has. But the rich man does not feel the value of one single possession nearly so deeply, because he is used to having many. So he cannot put himself in the poor man's place, and he does not do nearly as much wrong as the poor man believes. Each of them has a false picture of the other. The wrongdoing of the powerful, which makes people angrier than anything else in history, is not nearly as great as it seems. Simply the feeling, handed down from parents to children, of being a higher kind of being with higher claims makes a person rather cold and leaves the conscience calm. In fact, all of us, when the gap between ourselves and another creature is very

large, stop feeling that we are doing any wrong at all. We kill a mosquito, for example, without the slightest guilt. So it is no sign of wickedness in Xerxes, whom even all the Greeks describe as remarkably noble, when he took a son from his father and had him cut to pieces, because the father had shown a fearful, gloomy distrust of the whole military campaign. In this case the single person is got rid of like an annoying insect. He stands too low to be allowed to stir up troubling feelings in a ruler of the world for very long. Indeed, no cruel person is as cruel as the person he mistreats believes. Imagining pain is not the same as suffering it. The same goes for the unfair judge, and for the journalist who misleads public opinion with small dishonest tricks. In all these cases, the cause and the effect are surrounded by completely different sets of feelings and thoughts. Yet without meaning to, we assume that the one who does the harm and the one who suffers it think and feel in the same way. And based on that assumption, we measure the guilt of the one by the pain of the other.

82.

The skin of the soul. - The bones, the pieces of flesh, the guts and the blood vessels are wrapped in a skin that makes a human being bearable to look at. In the same way, the stirrings and passions of the soul are wrapped up in vanity. Vanity is the skin of the soul.

83.

Virtue's sleep. - When virtue has had a good sleep, it will get up fresher.

84.

How delicate shame is. - People are not ashamed of thinking something dirty. But they are ashamed when they imagine that others think them capable of such dirty thoughts.

85.

Real spite is rare. - Most people are far too busy with themselves to be spiteful.

86.

What tips the scales. - We praise or we blame, depending on which of the two gives us more chance to show off how good our judgement is.

87.

Luke 18:14, corrected. - Whoever makes himself low wants to be lifted up.

88.

Stopping suicide. - There is a right by which we may take a person's life, but there is no right by which we may take away a person's dying. That is nothing but cruelty.

89.

Vanity. - We care about what other people think of us, first because a good opinion is useful to us, and second because we want to make them happy: children want to please their parents, pupils their teachers, and kind-hearted people want to please everyone else in general. Only when someone cares about other people's good opinion apart from any advantage, and apart from wanting to give them pleasure, do

we call it vanity. In that case the person wants to give pleasure to himself, but at the cost of the people around him. Either he tricks them into a false opinion of him, or he even aims at such a high degree of "good opinion" that it must become painful to everyone else, because it makes them envious. Usually a person wants other people's opinion to prove and confirm, in his own eyes, the opinion he already has of himself. But the powerful habit of obeying authority, a habit as old as humanity itself, also leads many people to rest even their belief in themselves on authority. That is, they first have to receive it from the hands of others. They trust other people's judgement more than their own. - In the vain person, interest in himself, the wish to enjoy himself, gets so strong that he tricks others into a false, far too high valuation of him, and then he still relies on what those others say. So he creates the mistake himself and then believes it. - We must therefore admit that vain people do not so much want to please others as to please themselves. And they go so far as to neglect their own advantage in doing so. For they often care about turning the people around them against them, making them unfriendly, hostile and envious, and so harmful to them, just to have the joy of themselves, the pleasure of enjoying themselves.

90.

The limit of loving people. - Anyone who has declared that someone else is a fool or a bad sort gets annoyed when that person finally shows he is not.

91.

Tearful morality. - How much pleasure morality gives us! Just think what a sea of pleasant tears has already flowed while people listened to stories of noble, generous deeds! - This charm of life would disap-

pear if the belief that people are completely not to blame for what they do were to take over.

92.

Where fairness comes from. - Fairness, or justice, starts among people who are about equally powerful. Thucydides understood this correctly, in the terrible conversation between the messengers from Athens and the messengers from Melos. Where no one clearly has the upper hand, and a fight would only mean both sides harming each other without anyone winning, the idea comes up of reaching an agreement and bargaining over what each side wants. Trading is the original nature of fairness. Each one satisfies the other, because each gets what he values more than the other does. You give each person what he wants, as something that now belongs to him, and in return you receive what you wanted. So fairness is paying back and exchanging, on the condition that both sides have about the same amount of power. That is why revenge originally belongs to the area of fairness: it is an exchange. Gratitude is the same. - Fairness naturally goes back to the point of view of sensible self-preservation, that is, to the selfishness of this thought: "Why should I harm myself for nothing and maybe still not reach my goal?" - So much for where fairness comes from. Over time, people, as is the habit of the human mind, forgot the original purpose of so-called just and fair actions. And above all, for thousands of years children have been taught to admire and copy such actions. Because of this, it gradually came to look as if a fair action were a selfless one. And it is on this false appearance that the high value we place on such actions rests. On top of that, this value, like all values, keeps on growing. For something highly valued is pursued with sacrifice, copied, and multiplied. And it grows because each person adds the value of the effort and eagerness he put in to the value of the thing itself. - How little moral the world would

look without forgetfulness! A poet might say that God placed forgetfulness, like a doorkeeper lying at the threshold, at the entrance to the temple of human dignity.

93.

On the rights of the weaker side. When someone gives in to a stronger power on certain terms, a city under siege, for example, there is something they can offer in return. They can destroy themselves, burn the city down, and so cause the stronger side a great loss. Because of this, a kind of balance comes about here, and on the basis of that balance, rights can be agreed on. The enemy gains something by keeping the city in one piece. In this sense, there are also rights between slaves and masters. That is, there are exactly as many rights as the slave is useful and important to the master who owns him. At the start, a person's rights go only as far as he seems valuable, necessary, impossible to lose, impossible to defeat, and so on, in the eyes of someone else. Seen this way, the weaker one still has rights, but fewer of them. That is where the famous Latin saying comes from: "Each person has exactly as much right as he has power." Or, to put it more exactly: "as much power as people believe he has."

94.

The three stages of morality so far. The first sign that an animal has become human is when its actions are no longer aimed at feeling good right now, but at lasting well-being. In other words, the human becomes useful and starts acting with a purpose in mind. That is where reason first breaks out and starts to rule freely. A still higher stage is reached when he acts according to the principle of honour. Through honour he fits himself into a group and submits to feelings that everyone shares. That lifts him high above the stage where he was guided only by what was useful to himself personally. He respects

others and wants to be respected. That means he understands that what is good for him depends on what he thinks of others and what others think of him. Finally, at the highest stage of morality so far, he acts by his own measure of things and people. He decides for himself and for others what is honourable and what is useful. He has become the one who makes the rules for what people think, following an idea of the useful and the honourable that keeps developing higher and higher. Knowledge makes him able to put the most useful thing first. That means putting what is useful for everyone over a long time ahead of what is useful just for himself. It also means putting honour and respect that last and count for everyone ahead of praise that only lasts a moment. He lives and acts as a single person who stands for the whole group.

95.

The morality of the mature individual. Until now, people have seen being impersonal, not acting for oneself, as the true mark of a moral action. And it has been shown that, at the beginning, people praised and honoured all impersonal actions because they were thinking of what was useful for everyone. But maybe a big change in these views is coming. More and more, people now see that it is exactly when we care for ourselves as personally as possible that we are also most useful to everyone else. So isn't it precisely strictly personal action that fits today's idea of morality, the idea that morality means being useful to all? To make yourself into a whole, complete person, and to keep that person's highest good in view in everything you do: that gets us further than all those feelings of pity and all those actions done for the sake of others. It's true that all of us still suffer from paying far too little attention to the personal side of ourselves. Let's admit it: that side is badly developed. Instead, our minds have been forcibly pulled away from it and offered up as a sacrifice to the state,

to science and scholarship, and to people who need help, as if the personal side were something bad that had to be sacrificed. We still want to work for our fellow human beings now, but only as far as we find our own highest advantage in that work. No more and no less. Everything depends on what a person understands as his own advantage. It is exactly the immature, undeveloped, crude individual who will understand it in the crudest way.

96.

Custom and moral. To be moral, to follow custom, to be ethical, means to obey a law or a custom handed down that was set up long ago. Whether you submit to it with effort or gladly makes no difference here. It is enough that you do it. People call someone "good" when he does what custom demands as if it came naturally to him, after a long line of inheritance, so easily and gladly, whatever that custom happens to be. For example, he takes revenge when taking revenge counts as good custom, as it did among the early Greeks. He is called good because he is good "for" something. But as customs changed, goodwill, pity, and things like that were always felt to be good "for" something, to be useful. So today it is mainly the kind, helpful person whom people call "good". Being evil means being "not moral", going against custom, resisting the custom handed down, no matter how sensible or stupid that custom may be. Yet in the moral laws of every age, harming your neighbour has been felt above all to be harmful. So now, when we hear the word "evil", we mostly think of harming your neighbour on purpose. The basic opposite that led people to tell moral from immoral, and good from evil, is not "selfish" against "selfless". It is being tied to a custom handed down, or a law, against breaking free of it. How the custom handed down came about doesn't matter here. In any case, it did not come about with any thought of good and evil, or from some built-in absolute command

inside us. Above all, it came about to keep a community or a people alive. Every superstitious habit that started because people misread some chance event forces a custom handed down on everyone, and following it counts as moral. Breaking away from it is dangerous, you see, and even more harmful for the group than for the single person. That is because the gods punish the crime, and any trespass on their rights, by striking the whole community, and the single person only as part of it. Now, every custom handed down becomes more and more worthy of respect the further back its beginning lies and the more that beginning is forgotten. The respect paid to it piles up from one generation to the next. In the end, the custom becomes holy and fills people with awe. And so, in any case, the morality of reverence for what is old is a much older morality than the one that demands selfless actions.

97.

The pleasure in custom. An important kind of pleasure, and so an important source of morality, comes from habit. We do what we are used to more easily and better, and so we like doing it more. We feel pleasure in it. And we know from experience that what we are used to has proved itself, so it is useful. A custom that people can live with has been shown to be healthy and helpful, unlike all new attempts that haven't been tested yet. So custom is where the pleasant and the useful come together. On top of that, it means you don't have to think. As soon as a person is able to use force, he uses it to push through his customs and bring them in, because for him they are tried and tested wisdom about how to live. In the same way, a community of individuals forces each single member to follow the same custom. Here is where the faulty reasoning comes in. People think: because we feel good with a custom, or at least because it helps us stay alive, this custom must be necessary. It is seen as the only way anyone can feel

good. The good feeling of being alive seems to grow out of that custom alone. This view of the habitual as a condition for staying alive is carried right down to the tiniest details of the custom. Among less developed peoples and cultures, people understand very little about what really causes what. So they watch with superstitious fear to make sure that everything keeps going the same way. Even where the custom is heavy, harsh, and a burden, it is kept because it seems so extremely useful. People don't know that the same level of well-being can exist with other customs, and that even higher levels can be reached. But they do notice that all customs, even the harshest, become more pleasant and gentler over time. And they notice that even the strictest way of life can become a habit, and so become a pleasure.

98.

Pleasure and the social instinct. - A person gets pleasure from inside himself. But from his dealings with other people, he gains a whole new kind of pleasure on top of that. In this way he makes the whole area of pleasure much bigger. Maybe he got some of this from the animals, which clearly feel pleasure when they play together, especially mothers with their young. Then think of sexual relationships, which make almost every female seem interesting to almost every male when it comes to pleasure, and the other way around too. In general, the pleasure that comes from human relationships makes people better. Shared joy, pleasure enjoyed together, makes the pleasure stronger. It gives each person a sense of safety, makes him kinder, and breaks down distrust and envy. That is because you feel good yourself and you see the other person feeling good in the same way. When people show pleasure in the same way, it wakes up the imagination of feeling along with each other, the feeling of being something alike. Shared suffering does the same thing, and so do the same storms, the

same dangers, the same enemies. The very oldest alliance is probably built on this. Its point is to get rid of, and fight off together, some pain or harm that threatens, for the good of each single person. And that is how the social instinct grows out of pleasure.

99.

What is innocent about so-called evil acts. - All "evil" acts are driven by the urge to survive, or, to be more exact, by the individual's aim to get pleasure and avoid pain. Being driven that way, they are not evil. "Causing pain just for its own sake" does not exist, except in the heads of philosophers. And neither does "giving pleasure just for its own sake", which is pity in the sense Schopenhauer meant. In the time before there was any state, if we were hungry and running toward a tree, we would kill any creature, ape or human, that tried to grab a fruit from that tree before us. We would still do the same to an animal today, if we were travelling through wild, unfriendly country. - The evil acts that make us most angry today rest on a mistake. The mistake is believing that the other person who does them to us has free will, so that it was up to him whether or not to do this bad thing to us. This belief that he could have chosen otherwise is what stirs up hatred, the wish for revenge, spite, and the whole darkening of our imagination. We are much less angry with an animal, because we see it as not to blame. Hurting someone not to survive, but as paying back, comes from a false judgment, and so it too is innocent. In the time before the state, a single person might treat other creatures harshly and cruelly to scare them off, to make sure of his own survival by giving such frightening proofs of his power. That is how the violent, powerful man acts, the first founder of a state, who forces the weaker ones under him. He has the right to do so, just as the state still takes that right for itself today. Or rather: there is no right that can stop it. The ground for any morality can only be prepared once a

bigger individual, or a group that acts like one individual, for example society or the state, forces single people under its control. That means pulling them out of their isolation and fitting them into a group. Force comes before morality. In fact, for a while, morality itself is still force, which people give in to so they can avoid pain. Later it becomes custom, later still free obedience, and in the end almost an instinct. Then, like everything we have long been used to and that feels natural, it is tied to pleasure, and now it is called virtue.

100.

Shame. - Shame exists wherever there is a "mystery". But a mystery is a religious idea, and in the older times of human culture it covered a lot of ground. Everywhere there were fenced-off areas that divine law did not let people enter, except under certain conditions. At first this was meant quite literally, as places. Certain spots were not to be stepped on by the feet of people who had not been let into the secret, and near those spots such people felt shivers and fear. This feeling was often carried over to other things. One example is sexual relationships. They were seen as a privilege and a holy inner room, a sanctuary, belonging to older, more grown-up people, and they were supposed to be kept out of sight of the young, for the young people's own good. People imagined that many gods were busy protecting these relationships and keeping them holy, and that the gods stood guard in the marriage bedroom. (That is why in Turkish this room is called harem, meaning "sanctuary". It is named with the same word that is used for the forecourts of mosques.) In the same way, kingship, as a centre that power and splendour shine out from, is to the people under it a mystery full of secrecy and shame. Many after-effects of this can still be felt today, even among peoples who are otherwise not shy or bashful at all. Likewise, the whole world of inner states, the so-called "soul", is still a mystery today for everyone who is not a philo-

sopher. That is because for an endless length of time people believed the soul came from God and was worthy of dealing with God. So the soul is a holy inner room, a sanctuary, and it stirs up shame.

101.

Do not judge. - When we look at earlier times, we must be careful not to slip into unfair name-calling. The unfairness of slavery, and the cruelty of forcing people and whole nations under someone's rule, cannot be measured by our standards. That is because back then the instinct for fairness had not yet developed as far. Who has the right to blame Calvin of Geneva for burning the doctor Servetus? It was an act that followed logically from his firm beliefs. In the same way, the Inquisition was fully in its rights. It is just that the ruling views of the time were wrong, and they led to a result that seems harsh to us, because those views have become strange to us. Besides, what is burning one single person compared with eternal punishment in hell for almost everyone! And yet that idea ruled the whole world back then. And even though it was far more terrible, it did not really harm people's idea of God. Today, too, political rebels and splinter groups are treated harshly and cruelly. But because we have learned to believe that the state is necessary, we do not feel the cruelty here as strongly as we do back there, where we reject the views behind it. The cruelty to animals shown by children and Italians comes from a lack of understanding. Animals have been pushed too far below humans, mainly because it suited the teaching of the Church. - Also, many terrible and inhuman things in history, which you would hardly want to believe, become less shocking when you think about this: the person who gives the order and the person who carries it out are different people. The first does not see what happens, so he does not get the strong picture of it in his imagination. The second is obeying a superior and feels he is not to blame. Most princes and army leaders easily seem

cruel and harsh, simply because they lack imagination, without really being cruel. - Selfishness is not evil, because our idea of our "neighbour" is very weak in us. That word comes from Christianity and does not match the truth. Toward our neighbour we feel almost as free and not to blame as we do toward a plant or a stone. That another person suffers is something we have to learn. And we can never learn it completely.

102.

"People always act well." We don't accuse nature of being immoral when it sends us a thunderstorm and soaks us. So why do we call a person who harms us immoral? Because we assume that the person has a free will that acts as it pleases, while in nature we assume everything happens by necessity. But this distinction is a mistake. And there is more: we don't call even deliberate harm immoral in every situation. For example, we kill a mosquito on purpose without a second thought, just because we don't like its buzzing. We punish a criminal on purpose and make him suffer, in order to protect ourselves and society. In the first case it is the single person who causes suffering on purpose, to keep himself safe or even just to spare himself some discomfort. In the second case it is the state. Every moral code accepts deliberate harm in self-defence, which means when it is a matter of keeping oneself alive! But these two points of view are enough to explain all the evil things people do to other people: a person wants pleasure for himself, or wants to keep pain away. In one sense or another, it is always about keeping oneself alive and well. Socrates and Plato are right: whatever a person does, he always does what is good. That means he does what seems good, or useful, to him, depending on how intelligent he is and how much good sense he has at that moment.

103.

What is harmless about spite. Spite does not aim at another person's suffering for its own sake. It aims at our own enjoyment, for example the feeling of revenge, or a stronger thrill in our nerves. Even simple teasing shows how much fun it is to use our power on someone else and to reach the pleasant feeling of being on top. So is the immoral part having pleasure that comes from other people's pain? Is enjoying someone else's bad luck devilish, as Schopenhauer says? Well, out in nature we give ourselves pleasure by breaking branches, prying loose stones, and fighting wild animals, and we do it to become aware of our own strength. Is it really the knowledge that another person is suffering because of us that is supposed to make the very same thing immoral, when otherwise we don't feel to blame for it at all? But if we didn't know this, we wouldn't get the pleasure of feeling superior either. That feeling can only show itself through the other person's suffering, as in teasing, for example. Pleasure in oneself is, in itself, neither good nor evil. So where would the rule come from that says that, to enjoy yourself, you must not cause pain to others? It can only come from the point of view of usefulness, that is, from thinking about the consequences, about the pain we might suffer if the harmed person, or the state acting in his place, makes us expect punishment and revenge. Only this can have been the original reason for holding back from such actions. Pity, too, does not aim at the other person's pleasure, just as, as we said, spite does not aim at the other person's pain for its own sake. For pity contains at least two, perhaps more, kinds of personal pleasure, and so it is a way of enjoying oneself. First, there is the pleasure of the emotion itself, which is the kind of pity we feel watching a tragedy on stage. Second, when it drives us to act, there is the pleasure of satisfaction in using our power. Besides, if a suffering person is very close to us, then by doing kind, pitying things we take a pain off ourselves. Apart from a few philosophers,

people have always placed pity fairly low in the order of moral feelings, and they were right to do so.

104.

Self-defence. If you accept self-defence as moral at all, then you must also accept almost every form of so-called immoral selfishness. People hurt others, rob, or kill to keep themselves alive or to protect themselves, to stop something bad from happening to them personally. People lie when trickery and pretending are the right way to keep themselves safe. Harming someone on purpose, when our existence or our safety, meaning the keeping of our well-being, is at stake, is admitted to be moral. The state itself does harm from this same point of view when it hands out punishments. Of course, harm done by accident can't be immoral, because there chance is in charge. So is there a kind of deliberate harm where our existence, or the keeping of our well-being, is not at stake? Is there harm done out of pure spite, for example in cruelty? If you don't know how much an action hurts, then it is not an act of spite. That is why a child is not spiteful or evil towards an animal: it explores it and breaks it the way it does with its toy. But do we ever fully know how much an action hurts someone else? As far as our own nervous system reaches, we protect ourselves from pain. If it reached further, right into the people around us, we would never hurt anyone, except in cases where we also do it to ourselves, such as when we cut ourselves to heal, or tire ourselves out and work hard for the sake of our health. We work out by comparison that something hurts someone, and through memory and strong imagination we may even feel sick ourselves. But what a difference always remains between a toothache and the pain, the pity, that we feel when we see someone else's toothache! So: when someone does harm out of so-called spite, he certainly doesn't know how much pain he is causing. But in so far as there is pleasure in the act, such as the

feeling of one's own power or of one's own strong excitement, the act is done to keep the person's well-being. So it falls under a similar point of view as self-defence and the necessary lie. Without pleasure there is no life; the fight for pleasure is the fight for life. Whether a person fights this fight in a way people call good, or in a way they call evil, is decided by how much intelligence he has and what kind it is.

105.

Fairness that rewards. Whoever has fully understood the teaching that no one is ever to blame for anything can no longer count so-called punishing and rewarding fairness as fairness at all, if fairness means giving each person what he deserves. For the person who is punished does not deserve the punishment. He is only being used as a tool to scare people off certain actions in the future. In the same way, the person who is rewarded does not deserve the reward, since he could not have acted any differently from the way he did. So the reward only makes sense as encouragement, for him and for others, to give them a reason for future actions. We cheer on the runner who is still on the track, not the one who has already crossed the finish line. Neither punishment nor reward is something that truly belongs to a person as his due. They are given to him for practical reasons, and he has no fair claim to them. We must say "the wise man does not reward because something good has been done," just as people have said "the wise man does not punish because something bad has been done, but so that bad things will not be done." If punishment and reward were done away with, the strongest motives that push people away from certain actions and towards others would disappear. What is useful for humanity demands that they continue. And since punishment and reward, blame and praise, act most strongly on vanity, the same usefulness also demands that vanity continue.

106.

At the waterfall. When we look at a waterfall, we think we see free will and choice in the countless bends, twists and breaks of the waves. But everything there is necessary. Every movement could be worked out with math. It is the same with human actions. If we knew everything, we would be able to work out every single action ahead of time. The same goes for every step forward in knowledge, every mistake, every act of cruelty. Of course, the person who acts is caught up in the illusion that he is choosing freely. Imagine that the wheel of the world stood still for one moment, and that there was a mind that knew everything and could calculate everything, ready to use this pause. Such a mind could go on telling the future of every living being, far into the most distant times. It could mark out every track along which that wheel will still roll. The person's mistaken view of himself, his belief that his will is free, is also part of this machine that can be calculated.

107.

Not being to blame, and innocence. Here is the bitterest drop that a person seeking knowledge has to swallow: human beings are completely not to blame for what they do and for what they are. This is especially bitter if he was used to seeing responsibility and duty as the badge of honour that made him truly human, like a noble's certificate of rank. Because of this, all his judgments, all the honours he gave, all his dislikes have lost their value and turned out to be false. His deepest feeling, the feeling he had for someone who suffered patiently or for a hero, was aimed at a mistake. He may no longer praise or blame, because it makes no sense to praise or blame nature and necessity. He loves a good work of art but does not praise it, because it cannot help being what it is. He stands in front of a plant in the same way. And that is how he must stand in front of people's actions, and

in front of his own. He can admire strength, beauty and richness in them, but he must not find any merit in them. A chemical process is not a merit. The struggle between the elements is not a merit. The suffering of a sick person who longs to get better is not a merit. And just as little are those inner battles and moments of crisis in which we are pulled back and forth by different motives, until we finally choose the strongest one, as people say. In truth, though, it goes on until the strongest motive chooses for us. But all these motives, however grand the names we give them, have grown from the same roots in which we believe the evil poisons live. Between good and evil actions there is no difference in kind, only, at most, a difference in degree. Good actions are evil actions in a refined-down form. Evil actions are good actions that have become coarser and more stupid. The individual has one single desire: to enjoy himself, along with the fear of losing that enjoyment. This desire gets satisfied in every case, however a person acts, as he can, which means as he must. It may be through acts of vanity, revenge, pleasure, usefulness, cruelty or cunning. Or it may be through acts of sacrifice, of pity, of knowledge. How well a person can judge decides where this desire will pull him. Every society and every single person always has in mind a ranking of values, a ranking of what is good to have, and uses it to decide his own actions and to judge the actions of others. But this measuring stick keeps changing. Many actions are called evil when they are only stupid, because the level of intelligence that chose them was very low. In fact, in a certain sense all actions are still stupid even today. That is because the highest level of human intelligence that can be reached now will surely be outdone one day. And then, looking back, all our actions and judgments will seem just as narrow and hasty as the actions and judgments of backward, wild peoples seem to us now. To understand all this can cause deep pain. But after it comes a comfort: such pains are the pains of birth. The butterfly wants to break through its cocoon. It tugs at it, it tears it apart. Then the unfamiliar light dazzles and

confuses it, the realm of freedom. In people who are able to feel that sadness, and how few they will be, the first test is made: can humanity change from a moral humanity into a wise humanity? The sun of a new gospel, a new good news, throws its first ray onto the highest peaks in the souls of those few individuals. There the mists gather thicker than ever, and the brightest light and the gloomiest dusk lie right next to each other. Everything is necessity. That is what the new knowledge says. And this knowledge itself is necessity too. Everything is innocence. And knowledge is the path to seeing this innocence. Suppose pleasure, selfishness and vanity are needed to produce moral behaviour and its highest flower, the sense for truth and for fairness in knowledge. Suppose mistakes and the wild wanderings of the imagination were the only means by which humanity could slowly lift itself up to this level of seeing itself clearly and setting itself free. If so, who would dare to look down on those means? Who would dare to be sad when he catches sight of the goal those paths lead to? Everything in the field of morals has come into being over time. It is changeable and unsteady. Everything is flowing, that is true. But everything is also flowing in one stream, toward one goal. The habit we inherited, of valuing, loving and hating in the wrong way, may still go on ruling inside us. But under the influence of growing knowledge it will become weaker. A new habit will slowly take root in us, in the same soil: the habit of understanding, of not loving, of not hating, of seeing the whole picture from above. In thousands of years it may become strong enough to give humanity the power to produce the wise, innocent person, aware of his innocence, just as regularly as it now produces the unwise, unfair person who feels guilty. That guilty person is not the opposite of the wise one. He is the necessary step before him.

Chapter Three

The Religious Life

108.

The two ways to fight against trouble. When something bad happens to us, there are two ways we can get past it. One way is to remove its cause. The other way is to change the effect it has on our feelings: that is, to reinterpret the bad thing as something good, whose usefulness may only become clear later on. Religion and art (and also philosophy that believes in a world beyond) try to work on changing our feelings. Partly they do this by changing how we judge what happens to us (for example, with the help of the saying: "God punishes those he loves"). Partly they do it by awakening a kind of pleasure in pain, and in strong emotion in general (and this is where the art of tragedy starts from). The more someone tends to reinterpret things and explain them away, the less he will look at the causes of the trouble and get rid of them. Quick relief and numbing, like what people use for a toothache, is enough for him even when the suffering is more serious. The more the power of religions and of every art of numbing shrinks, the more seriously people set their sights on really getting rid of their troubles. Of course, this turns out badly for the writers of tragedies, because there is less and less material for tragedy, since the realm of cruel, unbeatable fate keeps getting smaller. But it turns out even worse for the priests, because until now they have made their living by numbing human troubles.

109.

Sorrow is knowledge. How much we would like to swap the false claims of the priests for truths that would be just as healing, calming and comforting as those mistakes! The priests claim that there is a God who wants us to do good, who watches and witnesses every action, every moment and every thought, who loves us, and who wants what is best for us in every misfortune. How gladly we would trade all that for comforting truths! But there are no such truths. At most, philosophy can offer in their place other things that only look true, things from a belief in a world beyond, which deep down are also untrue. Now here is the tragedy. If you carry the strict method of seeking truth in your heart and in your head, you cannot believe those teachings of religion and of belief in a world beyond. And yet, through the way humanity has developed, you have become so delicate, so sensitive and so full of suffering that you need the very highest kind of cures and comforts. And so the danger arises that a person may bleed to death from the truth he has come to know. Byron puts this in verses that will never die:

"Sorrow is knowledge: they who know the most must mourn the deepest o'er the fatal truth, the tree of knowledge is not that of life." In plain words: sorrow is knowledge; those who know the most must grieve the most over the deadly truth that the tree of knowledge is not the tree of life.

Against worries like these, no remedy helps better than calling up the solemn light-heartedness of the Roman poet Horace, at least for the worst hours of the soul, those times when it feels as dark as an eclipse of the sun. And then, along with him, we can say to ourselves:

"Why do you wear out your mind, which is too small for the plans of eternity? Why not lie down beneath this tall plane tree, or under this pine tree, and rest?"

But one thing is certain: light-heartedness, or gloom of any degree, is better than a romantic going back, a deserting of one's post like a soldier running from the flag, a drawing closer to Christianity in any form. For, with knowledge as it stands today, you simply cannot get involved with Christianity anymore without hopelessly dirtying your intellectual conscience, your honesty of mind, and giving it up in front of yourself and others. Those pains may be painful enough. But no one can become a leader and teacher of humanity without pain. And woe to anyone who tried to do that while no longer having that clean conscience!

110.

The truth in religion. – During the Age of Enlightenment, people did not do justice to how important religion was. There is no doubt about that. But it is just as certain that, in the backlash against the Enlightenment that came afterward, people went a good way past fairness in the other direction. They treated religions with love, even with a kind of infatuation. For example, they credited religions with a deeper understanding of the world, in fact the deepest understanding of all. According to them, science and scholarship only had to strip off the clothing of religious doctrine, and then it would hold the "truth" in a form free of myths. So religions, as all the enemies of the Enlightenment claimed, were supposed to speak "in a symbolic sense". They were said to put things in picture form so that ordinary people could understand them, and in this way to express an ancient wisdom that was wisdom itself. The proof, they said, was that all true science and scholarship of modern times had always led toward this wisdom, not away from it. So, they claimed, the oldest wise people of humanity and all the later ones were in harmony, and even saw things exactly the same way. Any progress in knowledge, if you wanted to call it that, was not about what was known, but only about how it was put

into words. This whole view of religion and of science and scholarship is mistaken through and through. Nobody would dare to stand up for it today if Schopenhauer's powerful way with words had not defended it. His was a loud, ringing eloquence, and yet it took a whole generation before it reached its listeners. It is certainly true that you can learn a great deal about Christianity and other religions from Schopenhauer's religious and moral way of explaining people and the world. But it is just as certain that he was wrong about how much religion is worth when it comes to knowledge. On this point he was a far too obedient pupil of the scholars and teachers of his time. All of them worshipped Romanticism and had turned their backs on the spirit of the Enlightenment. If he had been born into our own time, he could never have talked about religion having a "symbolic sense". Instead, he would have honoured the truth, as he usually did, with words like these: "No religion has ever contained a single truth, neither directly nor indirectly, neither as a doctrine nor as a parable." For every religion was born out of fear and need. It crept into existence by way of reason taking wrong turns. Maybe at some point, when it was being threatened by science and scholarship, a religion smuggled some philosophical teaching into its system by lying, so that people would later find it there. But that is a theologian's trick, from a time when a religion already doubts itself. These tricks of theology were, of course, used very early on in Christianity, because it was the religion of a learned age that was soaked through with philosophy. Such tricks led to that superstition about religion's "symbolic sense". But something else contributed even more. That was the habit of philosophers, especially the half-and-half kind, meaning the poet-philosophers and the artists who like to philosophize. They tend to treat all the feelings they find inside themselves as the basic nature of human beings in general. And so they also let their own religious feelings have a big influence on how they built up the ideas of their systems. Philosophers often did their thinking under the weight of

religious habits handed down by custom, or at least under the age-old inherited power of that "need for something beyond this world". Because of this, they arrived at teachings that really did look very much like Jewish, Christian or Indian religious beliefs. They looked alike in the way children usually look like their mothers. Only in this case the fathers were not clear about who the mother was, as sometimes happens. Instead, in their innocent amazement, they made up tales about a family resemblance between all religion and all science and scholarship. In fact, between religion and real science and scholarship there is no kinship, no friendship, and not even hostility. They live on different stars. Picture a philosophy whose final views trail off into the dark with a glowing religious tail, like a comet. Any philosophy like that makes everything it presents as science and scholarship suspicious in itself. Most likely all of it is religion too, just dressed up as science and scholarship. – By the way: suppose all peoples agreed about certain religious things, for example that a God exists. That, by the way, is not actually the case on this point. Even then, this would only be an argument against those claims, for example against the existence of a God. When all peoples, or all human beings in general, agree on something, it is fair to assume that it is a piece of foolishness. On the other hand, there is no agreement of all the wise at all, about any single thing, with one exception. That exception is the one that Goethe's verse talks about:

"All the wisest people of every age smile and nod and join in to agree:
It is foolish to wait for fools to get better! You children of good sense, go ahead and make fools of the fools, just as they deserve!"

Said without verse and rhyme, and applied to our case: what all wise people agree on is that whatever all peoples agree on is a piece of foolishness.

111.

Where religious worship comes from. If we go back in our minds to the times when religious life was at its strongest, we find a basic firm belief that we no longer share. Because we no longer share it, the doors to religious life are shut to us once and for all. This belief is about nature and how people dealt with it. In those times, people know nothing yet about laws of nature. Nothing on earth or in the sky has to happen in a certain way. A season, sunshine, or rain might come, or it might not. There is no idea at all of natural cause and effect. When people row, it is not the rowing that moves the boat. Rowing is only a magic ritual that forces a demon to move the boat. Every illness, and even death itself, is the result of magic at work. Getting sick and dying never happen naturally. The whole idea of things "taking their natural course" is missing. It only begins to appear, like the first light of dawn, among the early Greeks, which means at a very late stage of human history, in their idea of Moira, the power of fate that sits enthroned even above the gods. When someone shoots with a bow, there is still always some hand and force at work that has nothing to do with reason. If springs suddenly dry up, people first think of demons under the ground and their nasty tricks. When a person suddenly collapses, it must be the arrow of a god, striking without being seen. In India, according to Lubbock, a carpenter usually makes offerings to his hammer, his axe, and his other tools. A Brahmin, a priest, treats the pen he writes with in the same way. So does a soldier with the weapons he uses in battle, a bricklayer with his trowel, and a farm worker with his plough. In the minds of religious people, the whole of nature is a total of actions by beings who are aware and who want things. It is a huge tangle of whims. When it comes to anything outside ourselves, we are not allowed to conclude that something will be like this or that, or must happen in this or that way. The thing that is more or less certain and

predictable is us. Human beings are the rule; nature is the lack of rules. This sentence holds the basic firm belief that rules over rough, early cultures, the ones that gave birth to religion. We people of today feel exactly the opposite. The richer a person feels inside today, the more voices there are within him, like many instruments playing at once, the more powerfully he is struck by the steady evenness of nature. Like Goethe, all of us see nature as the great means of calming the modern soul. We listen to the ticking of the biggest clock of all, nature, with a longing for rest, for feeling at home and growing still. It is as if we could drink this steadiness into ourselves and only then begin to enjoy being who we are. In the past it was the other way round. If we think back to the rough, early stages of peoples, or look closely at the people we call savages today, we find that they are shaped very strongly by law and by custom handed down. The individual is tied to it almost like a machine and moves with the regularity of a pendulum. To such a person, nature, which he does not understand, which is terrible and full of mystery, must seem like the realm of freedom, of whim, of higher power. It must even seem like a level of existence above the human, like a god. Now every single person in such times and conditions feels how his life, his happiness, the happiness of his family and his state, and the success of everything he undertakes, all depend on these whims of nature. Some natural events have to happen at the right time, and others have to stay away at the right time. How can one have any influence on these frightening unknown powers? How can one tie down the realm of freedom? That is what he asks himself, and he searches anxiously: Is there really no way to make those powers just as regular, through custom handed down and through law, as you yourself are regular? The thinking of people who believe in magic and miracles aims at forcing a law onto nature. In short, religious worship is the result of this thinking. The problem these people set themselves is very closely related to this one: How can the weaker tribe still lay down laws for the stronger

one, steer it, and guide its actions in how it treats the weaker tribe? The first thing people will think of is the most harmless kind of pressure: the pressure you have on someone once you have won their liking. So through begging and prayers, through bowing down, through promising regular payments and gifts, and through flattering praise, it is also possible to put pressure on the powers of nature, by getting them to like you. Love ties others down, and is tied down itself. Next, people can make agreements, in which both sides promise to behave in certain ways, hand over pledges as security, and swap oaths. But much more important is a more violent kind of pressure, through magic and spells. Just as a person, with the help of a sorcerer, can still harm a stronger enemy and keep him afraid, and just as a love spell works from far away, the weaker person believes he can also steer the more powerful spirits of nature. The main tool of all magic is getting hold of something that belongs to someone: hair, nails, a bit of food from his table, even his picture or his name. With such equipment you can then cast spells. The basic assumption is this: everything spiritual has something bodily that goes with it. With the help of that bodily thing you can tie down the spirit, harm it, or destroy it. The bodily thing is the handle by which you can grab hold of the spiritual. Now, just as a person steers another person, he also steers some spirit of nature, because that spirit also has its bodily part by which it can be grabbed. Take a tree, and compare it with the seed it grew from. These two side by side are a puzzle, and they seem to prove that one and the same spirit has taken on a body in both forms, once small and once big. A stone that suddenly rolls is a body in which a spirit is at work. If a huge rock lies on a lonely heath, and it seems impossible that human strength could have brought it there, then the stone must have moved there by itself. That means it must have a spirit living in it. Everything that has a body can be reached by magic, and so can the spirits of nature. If a god is actually tied to his statue, then you can use very direct force against him, for example by refusing him the

food of offerings, by whipping him, by putting him in chains, and so on. To force back the favour of their god, the poor people in China tie ropes around the statue of the god who has let them down, pull it down, and drag it through the streets through heaps of mud and dung. "You dog of a spirit," they say, "we let you live in a splendid temple, we covered you nicely in gold, we fed you well, we brought you offerings, and still you are so ungrateful." Similar violent measures against statues of saints and of the Mother of God, when they would not do their duty during plagues or droughts, still happened in Catholic countries during this century. All these magical connections to nature have brought countless rituals into being. And finally, when the confusion of rituals has become too great, people try to put them in order and arrange them into a system. They do this so that a matching sequence of procedures will, they believe, guarantee that the whole course of nature goes well, especially the great cycle of the year. The point of religious worship is to steer nature and put a spell on it for human benefit, in other words, to stamp a set of laws onto nature that it does not have in the first place. Today, by contrast, people want to understand the laws of nature in order to fit in with them. In short, religious worship rests on ideas of magic between one person and another, and the sorcerer is older than the priest. But it also rests on other, nobler ideas. It takes for granted that people can feel for one another, and that there is such a thing as goodwill, gratitude, listening to those who ask for help, agreements between enemies, handing over pledges, and the right to have one's property protected. Even at very low levels of culture, a human being does not stand before nature as a helpless slave. He is not necessarily its servant with no will of his own. At the Greek stage of religion, especially in how people related to the Olympian gods, we can even picture two classes living together: one more noble and more powerful, and one less noble. But both somehow belong together by their origin

and are of one kind. They do not need to be ashamed in front of each other. That is what is noble about Greek religion.

112.

On seeing certain old tools used for sacrifices. - We can see how some feelings get lost over time. One example is the way clowning, and even dirty jokes, used to be mixed with religious feeling. We no longer have a feel for how such a mix could even be possible. We only understand, as a fact of history, that it once existed: at the festivals of Demeter and Dionysus, and in the Christian Easter plays and mystery plays. But we too still know the grand and noble paired with the silly and crude, and things like that. We still know the touching melted together with the ridiculous. And perhaps a later age will no longer understand that either.

113.

Christianity as something ancient. - On a Sunday morning, when we hear the old church bells humming, we ask ourselves: can this really be true? All this is for a Jew who was nailed to a cross two thousand years ago, and who said he was the Son of God. There is no proof for such a claim. - In our times, the Christian religion is surely an ancient thing, sticking out into the present from a far-off past. And the fact that people believe that claim, while they are otherwise so strict about testing claims, may be the very oldest piece of this inheritance. Think of it: a god who has children with a mortal woman. A wise man who tells people to stop working, to stop holding courts, and instead to watch for the signs that the world is about to end. A kind of fairness that accepts an innocent person as a sacrifice in place of the guilty. Someone who tells his followers to drink his blood. Prayers asking for miracles to step in. Sins committed against a god, and paid for by a god. Fear of an afterlife, with death as the gate to it. The shape of the

cross used as a symbol in an age that no longer knows what the cross was for, or how shameful a death on it was. How eerily all this blows over us, like a cold breath from the grave of an ancient past! Would anyone believe that such things are still believed?

114.

What is un-Greek in Christianity. - The Greeks did not see the gods of Homer above them as masters, with themselves below as servants, the way the Jews did. They saw, so to speak, only a mirror image of the finest examples of their own class. So their gods were an ideal, not the opposite of what they themselves were. Gods and humans felt related to each other. They had shared interests, a kind of alliance. People think highly of themselves when they give themselves gods like these. They place themselves in a relationship like that of lower nobles to higher nobles. The peoples of ancient Italy, by contrast, had a real peasant religion, full of constant fear of wicked, moody rulers and tormenting spirits. And wherever the Olympian gods faded into the background, Greek life also became darker and more fearful. - Christianity, on the other hand, crushed and broke people completely. It sank them down, as if into deep mud. Then, into this feeling of being utterly worthless and lost, it suddenly let the bright light of God's mercy shine. The person, taken by surprise and dazed by grace, let out a cry of joy and believed for a moment that he carried all of heaven inside himself. All the psychological inventions of Christianity work toward this sick excess of feeling, and toward the deep damage to head and heart that it requires. Christianity wants to destroy, to break, to stun, to make people drunk with feeling. There is only one thing it does not want: moderation, a sense of measure. And that is why, in the deepest sense, it is barbaric, Asian, lacking in nobility, and un-Greek.

115.

Being religious because it pays. - There are sober, hard-working people for whom religion is like a border of finer humanity sewn onto their clothes. They do very well to stay religious; it makes them look better. - Everyone who does not know how to handle some kind of weapon, counting the mouth and the pen as weapons, ends up acting like a servant, bowing and obeying. For such people the Christian religion is very useful, because in it this servant-like behaviour takes on the look of a Christian virtue and is made to look amazingly beautiful. - People who find their daily lives too empty and dull easily become religious. That is understandable and can be forgiven. But they have no right to demand religion from those whose daily lives do not flow by empty and dull.

116.

The everyday Christian. - Suppose Christianity were right with its teachings: about a God who takes revenge, about everyone being sinful, about God choosing whom he will save, and about the danger of being damned forever. Then it would be a sign of feeble-mindedness and weak character not to become a priest, an apostle, or a hermit, and to work, in fear and trembling, only on saving one's own soul. It would be mad to lose sight of the eternal gain like this, just for the sake of comfort in this short life. So, assuming that people believe at all, the everyday Christian is a pitiful figure. He is a person who really cannot count to three. And besides, precisely because his mind is so unfit to judge, he would not deserve to be punished as harshly as Christianity promises.

117.

On the cleverness of Christianity. - Christianity uses a clever trick. It teaches so loudly that human beings in general are completely unworthy, sinful and contemptible, that it is no longer possible to look down on one's fellow humans. "He may sin however he likes, but he is still not really different from me. I am the one who is unworthy and contemptible in every way," the Christian says to himself. But even this feeling has lost its sharpest sting, because the Christian does not believe that he personally is contemptible. He is wicked simply as a human being in general, and he calms himself a little with the thought: we are all of one kind.

118.

A change of people. - As soon as a religion is in power, its enemies are all the very people who would have been its first followers.

119.

The fate of Christianity. - Christianity came into being to lighten the heart. But now it would first have to weigh the heart down, so that it could lighten it afterwards. So it will die out.

120.

The proof by pleasure. - A pleasant opinion is accepted as true. This is the proof by pleasure (or, as the Church calls it, the proof by power). All religions are very proud of it, when they ought to be ashamed of it. If faith did not make people happy, it would not be believed. So how little it must be worth!

121.

A dangerous game. - Anyone who today makes room in himself for religious feeling again must then also let it grow; he has no choice. Then his nature slowly changes. It starts to prefer whatever is attached to or close to the religious element. The whole range of his judgments and feelings becomes clouded over, with religious shadows passing across it. Feeling cannot stand still. So be careful.

122.

The blind students. - As long as someone knows very well both the strength and the weakness of his teaching, his kind of art, or his religion, its power is still small. The student and apostle who has no eye for the weakness of the teaching, the religion and so on, because he is dazzled by the master's prestige and by his devotion to him, usually has more power than the master himself, for that very reason. The influence of a man and his work has never yet grown great without blind students. Helping a piece of knowledge to win often just means this: pairing it so closely with stupidity that the sheer weight of the stupidity forces a win for the knowledge as well.

123.

Tearing down the churches. - There is not enough religion in the world even to destroy the religions.

124.

Humans are without sin. - Once you have understood "how sin came into the world", you feel much lighter. It came through mistakes of reason. Because of these mistakes, people see each other, and each person even sees himself, as much darker and more evil than they really are. When you grasp this, your whole feeling about life gets

much easier. At times people and the world even seem to shine with a kind of glow of innocence, and that makes you feel good deep down. In the middle of nature, the human being is always simply the child, the child in its purest form. Now and then this child may have a heavy, frightening dream. But when it opens its eyes, it always finds itself back in paradise.

125.

Artists are not religious. - Homer feels so at home among his gods, and as a poet he enjoys them so much, that he must surely have been deeply unreligious. The common people's faith handed him a poor, crude, and partly gruesome set of superstitions. He handled all of it as freely as a sculptor handles his clay. In other words, he had the same easy, unworried freedom that Aeschylus and Aristophanes had. In more recent times, this same freedom marked out the great artists of the Renaissance, and also Shakespeare and Goethe.

126.

The art and power of getting the meaning wrong. - All the visions, terrors, times of exhaustion, and moments of rapture that the saint goes through are well-known states of illness. But because of deep-rooted mistakes about religion and the mind, the saint explains them in a completely different way: not as illnesses at all. - In the same way, the "daimonion" of Socrates, the inner voice he said warned him, may have been an ear problem. He simply explained it differently from how we would today, because of the moral way of thinking that ruled his mind. It is no different with the madness and the wild speech of the prophets and the priests who gave oracles. In every case it was the level of knowledge, imagination, ambition, and morality in the heads and hearts of the people explaining these things that made so much out of them. One of the greatest effects of the people we call geniuses

and saints is this: they force others to explain them, and those explainers misunderstand them, and that misunderstanding turns out to be a blessing for humanity.

127.

Worshipping madness. People noticed that being stirred up often made the mind clearer and brought good ideas. So they thought that the strongest kind of excitement would bring them the very best ideas and flashes of insight. And so they honored the madman as a wise man, as someone who could speak like an oracle and tell the future. But this rests on a false conclusion.

128.

What science and scholarship promise. Modern science and scholarship have this goal: as little pain as possible, and as long a life as possible. So it offers a kind of everlasting happiness too. But it is a very modest one, of course, compared with what religions promise.

129.

Forbidden generosity. There is not enough love and kindness in the world for us to be allowed to give any of it away to beings that are only imagined.

130.

How religious worship lives on in our feelings. The Catholic Church, and all the ancient forms of worship before it, had full command of every means that can put people into unusual moods. These means pull a person away from coldly counting what is useful to them, and away from pure, reasoned thinking. Think of a church trembling with deep tones of music. Think of the low, steady, held-back chanting of a

group of priests, whose tension spreads to the community without anyone meaning it to, so that the people listen almost fearfully, as if a miracle were just about to happen. Think of the feeling the building gives off: as the home of a god, it stretches up into something vague and endless, and makes people afraid that the god might be stirring in every dark corner. Who would want to bring such experiences back to people, once nobody believes any longer in the ideas behind them? And yet the results of all this are not lost. The inner world of moods that are lofty, moved, full of hunches, deeply sorry for sin, and blissful with hope was planted in people mainly through worship. Whatever of these moods now exists in the soul was raised and made big back then, when worship was sprouting, growing and blooming.

131.

Religious after-pains. However much we believe we have weaned ourselves off religion, we have not done it so fully that we no longer feel joy when we meet religious feelings and moods that have no ideas attached to them, for example in music. And when a philosophy shows us that hopes of a world beyond are justified, and that we can gain from them a deep peace of soul, and when it speaks, for example, of "the whole sure Gospel in the gaze of Raphael's Madonnas," then we welcome such words and arguments with a specially warm heart. Here the philosopher has an easier time proving his point: what he wants to give matches a heart that is glad to take it. From this we can see that the less careful free thinkers really only object to the dogmas, the fixed teachings of the church. But they know the magic of religious feeling very well, and it hurts them to let go of that feeling just because of the teachings. Scientific philosophy must be very much on guard not to smuggle in mistakes because of that need. And it is a need that came into being over time, and so it can also pass away. Even logicians talk about "hunches" of the truth in morals and in art,

for example the hunch "that the true nature of things is one." That should really be forbidden to them. Between truths that have been carefully worked out and such things that are only "sensed by a hunch," there remains a gap that cannot be bridged: the first come from the mind, the second come from need. Hunger does not prove that there is food to satisfy it, but it does wish for food. To "have a hunch" does not mean to know, to any degree, that something exists. It means to think it possible, because we wish for it or fear it. A "hunch" does not carry us a single step into the land of certainty. We automatically believe that the parts of a philosophy with a religious color to them are better proven than the other parts. But really it is the other way round. We just have an inner wish that it might be so, that whatever makes us blissful might also be true. This wish tempts us to buy bad reasons as if they were good ones.

132.

On the Christian need to be saved. If we think carefully, it must be possible to explain what goes on in the soul of a Christian, the thing called the need to be saved, in a way that is free of myth: that is, in a purely psychological way. Up to now, of course, psychological explanations of religious states and experiences have had a somewhat bad name. That is because a theology that calls itself "free" has been busy in this field, and not to much good. From the very start, as the spirit of its founder, Schleiermacher, would lead us to expect, it aimed at keeping the Christian religion alive and keeping Christian theologians in existence. Through the psychological study of religious "facts," these theologians were meant to gain a new place to drop anchor, and above all a new job. Not put off by such forerunners, we dare to offer the following explanation of this event in the soul. A person is aware of having done certain things that rank low in the usual ranking of values for actions. In fact, he finds in himself a leaning toward such

actions, and this leaning seems to him almost as unchangeable as his whole nature. How gladly he would try his hand at that other kind of actions, the kind that everyone agrees are the highest and best! How gladly he would feel himself full of the good conscience that is supposed to come from a selfless way of thinking! But sadly it stays just a wish. His unhappiness at not being able to live up to it is added to all the other kinds of unhappiness he already feels, whether about his lot in life in general or about the results of those actions called evil. So a deep gloom arises, and he looks around for a doctor who could remove it, along with all its causes. This state would not feel so bitter if the person simply compared himself, openly and calmly, with other people. Then he would have no reason to be especially unhappy with himself. He would only be carrying his share of the common burden of human dissatisfaction and imperfection. But instead he compares himself with a being that is capable only of those actions called selfless, and that lives in a constant awareness of a selfless way of thinking: he compares himself with God. Because he looks into this bright mirror, his own nature seems to him so murky, so strangely twisted. Then, too, the thought of this same being frightens him, because in his imagination it hovers before him as a judge who punishes. In all kinds of experiences, small and large, he believes he can see its anger and its threats. He even believes he can already feel in advance the whip-strokes of this judge and executioner. Who will help him in this danger? For when he thinks of a punishment that lasts for endless time, this danger becomes more horrible than any other terror he could imagine.

133.

Before we look at where this state of mind leads next, let us at least admit something to ourselves. A person does not fall into this state because of his "guilt" and "sin." He falls into it because of a series of

mistakes in his reasoning. It was the mirror's fault that his own nature looked so dark and hateful to him. And that mirror was something he made himself: the very imperfect work of human imagination and human judgment. First of all, a being that could only do purely selfless actions would be even more of a fairy tale than the phoenix, the magic bird of legend. You clearly cannot even picture such a being, if only because the whole idea of a "selfless action" blows away like dust when you examine it closely. No person has ever done anything purely for others, without any personal reason at all. In fact, how could he do anything that had no connection to himself, that is, without some inner push to do it? And that push would have to come from some personal need. How could the self act without the self? On the other hand, a God who is nothing but love, as people sometimes suppose, would not be able to do a single selfless action either. Here we should remember a thought from the writer Lichtenberg, even though he was talking about something on a lower level: "We cannot possibly feel for others, as people like to say; we only feel for ourselves. That sounds harsh, but it is not, as long as it is properly understood. We do not love our father, or our mother, or our wife, or our child. We love the pleasant feelings they give us." Or, as La Rochefoucauld puts it in French: "If you think you love the woman you love for her own sake, you are badly fooled." Why are acts of love valued more highly than other acts? Not because of what they are, but because they are useful. On this, see the studies already mentioned earlier, "On the Origin of Moral Feelings." Now suppose a person wished to be love itself, just like that God: to do and want everything for others and nothing for himself. The second part is impossible for a start, because he has to do a great deal for himself before he can do anything at all for the sake of others. Next, it assumes that the other person is selfish enough to accept those sacrifices, that life lived for him, again and again. So the people of love and self-sacrifice actually have a stake in keeping alive the loveless, selfish people who are

unable to sacrifice anything. And the highest morality, in order to exist at all, would literally have to force immorality to exist. Of course, by doing that it would cancel itself out. Next point. The idea of a God troubles and humbles people for as long as they believe in it. But given what science and scholarship comparing different peoples now know, there can no longer be any doubt about how this idea came about. And once you understand how it came about, the belief falls away. A Christian who compares his own nature with God is in the same position as Don Quixote, who thinks too little of his own bravery because his head is full of the amazing deeds of the heroes in the old knight stories. In both cases the measuring stick belongs to the land of fairy tales. But if the idea of God goes away, then so does the feeling of "sin" as a crime against God's commands, as a stain on a creature that belongs to God. What is probably left after that is a kind of unease that is closely tied to, and related to, the fear of punishment by earthly fairness, that is, the courts, or the fear of being looked down on by other people. Still, the sharpest sting in the feeling of guilt, the pain of a bad conscience, is broken off once you see this: through your actions you may well have gone against custom handed down by humans, against human laws and rules, but you have not put the "eternal salvation of your soul" or its relationship with God at risk. And if, in the end, a person also manages to reach the philosophical firm belief that all actions are completely necessary and that we are not to blame for them at all, and if he takes this in so deeply that it becomes part of his flesh and blood, then even that leftover bit of bad conscience disappears.

134.

So, as we said, the Christian has fallen into a feeling of despising himself because of a few mistakes, that is, because of a false, unscientific way of explaining his actions and feelings. If that is so, he

must notice with the greatest surprise that this state of contempt, of bad conscience, of pain in general, does not last. Now and then hours come when all of it has been blown away from his soul, and he feels free and brave again. What has really happened is this: his pleasure in himself, his good feeling about his own strength, has won the victory, helped along by the fact that every deep emotion has to grow weaker over time. The person loves himself again, and he feels it. But this very love, this new respect for himself, seems unbelievable to him. All he can see in it is a shining gift of grace pouring down on him from above, which he has done nothing to deserve. Earlier, he thought he saw warnings, threats, punishments and every kind of sign of God's anger in everything that happened. Now he reads God's kindness into his experiences. This event seems loving to him. That one seems like a helpful hint pointing the way. A third one, and above all his whole joyful mood, seems like proof that God is merciful. Earlier, when he was in a gloomy mood, he mainly misread his actions. Now he mainly misreads his experiences. He takes his comforted mood to be the work of a power outside himself. The love with which he is really loving himself looks to him like God's love. What he calls grace, and the first taste of being saved, is in truth him pardoning himself and saving himself.

135.

So: a certain false way of understanding the mind, a certain kind of fantasy in how a person explains his motives and experiences, is what has to be there first for someone to become a Christian and to feel the need to be saved. Once you see through this wrong turn of reason and imagination, you stop being a Christian.

136.

On Christian self-denial and holiness. Some thinkers have tried very hard to present those rare moral cases we usually call self-denial and holiness as a kind of miracle, something so special that even holding up the lamp of a sensible explanation to its face would be almost a crime, an insult to something sacred. But the temptation to commit this crime is just as strong. At all times, a powerful drive in nature has pushed people to protest against these things in general. And science and scholarship, since, as was said earlier, it imitates nature, allows itself at least to object to the claim that these things cannot be explained, or even cannot be approached at all. Admittedly, it has not succeeded so far. These things are still unexplained, much to the delight of those admirers of moral miracles we mentioned. Because, speaking generally, this is the demand in the souls of all religious people and all believers in a world beyond (and of artists too, if they are also thinkers): what has not been explained must be completely unexplainable, and what is unexplainable must be completely unnatural, supernatural, miraculous. The scientific person, on the other hand, sees this demand as the "evil principle." When you look at self-denial and holiness, the first and most general likely idea you come to is this: their nature is complicated. Because almost everywhere, in the physical world as well as the moral one, people have successfully traced what seemed miraculous back to something complicated, something that depends on many different causes. So let us dare to do this: first pick out the separate drives in the soul of the saints and the self-deniers one at a time, and then, at the end, picture how they grow together and tangle into one another.

137.

There is a kind of stubborn defiance against yourself, and some forms of self-denial are among its most refined-down forms. Some people

have such a strong need to use their power and to rule over something that, when they have nothing else to rule, or because they have always failed at it elsewhere, they finally hit on the idea of bullying certain parts of their own selves, as if these were slices or levels of who they are. That is why some thinkers openly stand up for views that clearly will not help their reputation or make it better. Some practically call down other people's contempt on their own heads, when they could easily have stayed respected just by keeping quiet. Others take back opinions they held before, and they are not afraid of being called inconsistent from then on. In fact, they go looking for it. They act like reckless riders who like their horse best only once it has gone wild, is covered in sweat, and has been scared out of its wits. In the same way, a person climbs the highest mountains on dangerous paths just to laugh scornfully at his own fear and his shaking knees. In the same way, the philosopher openly backs ideas of self-denial, humility and holiness, and in their bright light his own picture of himself looks as ugly as it possibly can. This breaking of oneself, this mocking of one's own nature, this "scorning to be scorned," which religions have made so much of, is really a very high degree of vanity. The whole moral teaching of the Sermon on the Mount belongs here. A person takes real, almost physical pleasure in forcing himself with exaggerated demands, and then afterwards worshipping, as a god, this bossy, demanding something inside his own soul. In every moral teaching of self-denial, a person worships one part of himself as God, and to do that he needs to turn the rest of himself into a devil.

138.

Everybody knows that a person is not equally moral at every hour of the day. Suppose we judge how moral someone is by whether they can make a great decision to sacrifice and give themselves up. (When this giving up oneself lasts and becomes a habit, it is called holiness.)

Judged that way, a person is most moral when gripped by strong feeling. That heightened excitement hands him completely new reasons for acting, things he would perhaps not even think himself capable of when he is sober and cool, as he usually is. Why is that? Probably because everything great and deeply exciting lies close together. Once a person has been wound up to an extraordinary pitch, he can just as easily decide on a terrible revenge as on a terrible crushing of his own wish for revenge. Under the influence of that powerful emotion, what he wants, in any case, is something great, mighty and enormous. And if he happens to notice that sacrificing himself satisfies him just as much as sacrificing someone else, or even more, then he chooses that. So what he really cares about is only letting his emotion out. To ease the tension inside him, he might even gather up his enemies' spears and bury them in his own chest. It took a long time of getting used to it before humanity was taught that there is something great in giving up oneself, and not only in revenge. A god who sacrifices himself was the strongest and most powerful symbol of this kind of greatness. This giving up oneself looks like the defeat of the hardest enemy of all, the sudden mastering of a strong feeling. That is why it counts as the very peak of what is moral. In truth, though, it is just one idea being swapped for another, while the feelings stay at the same height, like a flood tide that stays at the same level. People who have calmed down and are resting from that strong feeling no longer understand how moral those moments were. But everyone who lived through those moments with them admires them, and this admiration keeps that sense of morality alive. Their pride comforts them when the strong feeling fades, and with it their understanding of what they did. So here is the point: at bottom, even these acts of giving up oneself are not moral, because they are not done strictly with other people in mind. Instead, the other person only gives the highly wound-up mind a chance to relieve itself, by means of that giving up.

139.

In some ways the self-denier also tries to make life easy for himself. Usually he does this by putting himself completely under someone else's will, or under a huge set of laws and rituals. For example, a Brahmin, a Hindu priest, leaves absolutely nothing to his own choice and lets a holy rule decide what he does every single minute. This kind of obedience is a powerful way to become master over yourself. You are kept busy, so you are not bored, and yet nothing in it stirs up your own will or your passions. After the deed is done, there is no feeling of responsibility, and so no torment of regret either. You have given up your own will once and for all, and that is easier than giving it up just now and then. In the same way, it is easier to give up a desire completely than to enjoy it in moderation. If we think about how a man stands toward the state today, we find the same thing there too: total obedience is more comfortable than partial obedience. So the saint makes his life easier by giving up his whole personality like this. And people are fooling themselves when they admire this as the greatest heroic act of morality. In any case, it is harder to stand up for your own personality without wavering and without confusion than to free yourself from it in the way I have described. On top of that, it takes much more intelligence and thought.

140.

In many actions that are harder to explain, I have found signs of that pleasure in emotion for its own sake. So I would also like to see something similar in the self-contempt that is one of the marks of holiness, and in acts of self-torture too, such as starving, whipping oneself, twisting one's limbs out of joint, and pretending to be mad. I see these as a way such people fight against the general tiredness of their will to live, that is, the tiredness of their nerves. They use the most painful stimulants and cruelties so that, at least for a while, they can

rise up out of the dullness and boredom they so often sink into. They sink into it because of their great mental laziness and because of that obedience to someone else's will that I described.

141.

The most common way the self-denier and the saint make life bearable and even entertaining is to wage war now and then, and to swing back and forth between winning and losing. For that he needs an enemy, and he finds one in what people call the "enemy within". Above all, he makes use of his own leaning toward vanity, toward wanting honor and power, and then his bodily desires. These let him see his life as one long battle, and himself as a battlefield where good and evil spirits wrestle, sometimes one side winning, sometimes the other. It is well known that sexual fantasies are calmed, even almost silenced, when a person has a regular sex life. The other way round, they break loose and run wild when a person holds back completely or lives in a disorderly way. The fantasies of many Christian saints were unusually dirty. But because of the theory that these desires were real demons raging inside them, they did not feel too responsible for them. We owe it to this feeling that their own accounts of themselves are so honest, and teach us so much. It was in their interest to keep this fight going to some degree all the time, because, as was said, the fight was what kept their dull, empty lives entertaining. But for the fight to seem important enough to win lasting interest and admiration from people who were not saints, the body's desires had to be condemned and branded more and more as evil. In fact, the danger of being damned forever was tied so tightly to these things that, most likely, for whole ages Christians had children with a guilty conscience. This surely did great harm to humanity. And yet here the truth is turned completely upside down, which is a particularly unfitting position for the truth to be in. It is true that Christianity had said that every

human being is conceived and born in sin. And in the unbearably over-the-top Christianity of the Spanish playwright Calderón, this idea had been knotted and twisted together even further, so that he dared to state the most warped paradox there is, in his famous line:

the greatest guilt of a human being is that he was born.

In all pessimistic religions, the act of making a child is felt to be bad in itself. But this feeling is by no means shared by all humans. Not even all pessimists agree about it. The ancient Greek thinker Empedocles, for example, knows nothing at all about anything shameful, devilish or sinful in matters of love and sex. Instead, across the great meadow of misery, as he sees the world, he finds one single thing that brings healing and hope: Aphrodite, the goddess of love. For him she is a promise that strife will not rule forever, but will one day hand over its royal staff to a gentler spirit. The Christian pessimists who actually lived out their beliefs, as was said, had an interest in keeping a different opinion in power. In the loneliness and mental desert of their lives they needed an enemy that was always alive. And it had to be an enemy everyone recognized, so that by fighting and overpowering it they could again and again present themselves to ordinary people as half-incomprehensible, superhuman beings. When this enemy finally ran away for good, because of how they lived and how they had wrecked their health, they at once knew how to see their inner selves filled with new demons. The rising and sinking of the scales, with pride on one side and humility on the other, kept their brooding minds just as busy as the swing between desire and inner calm. Back then, the study of the mind was used not only to cast suspicion on everything human, but to insult it, whip it and crucify it. People wanted to find themselves as bad and evil as possible. They went looking for fear about the salvation of their souls, and for despair about their own strength. Anything natural that a person attaches the idea of badness and sin to (as people are still used to doing

with sex, for example) troubles the imagination and darkens it. It gives a person a shy, fearful look, makes him quarrel with himself, and leaves him unsure and without trust. Even his dreams take on a taste of a tortured conscience. And yet this suffering over what is natural has no basis at all in the reality of things. It is only the result of opinions about things. It is easy to see how people become worse by calling what is natural and unavoidable bad, and then always feeling it to be bad. This is the trick used by religion, and by those believers in a world beyond who want humans to be evil and sinful by nature: they make a person suspicious of nature, and in that way they make him bad himself. Because then he learns to feel himself as bad, since he cannot take off the clothing of nature. Gradually, after a long life lived in the natural world, he feels weighed down by such a load of sins that supernatural powers are needed to lift it. And with that, the need to be saved, which we have already talked about, steps onto the stage. This need matches no real sinfulness at all, only an imagined one. Go through the individual moral rules in the founding writings of Christianity, and you will find everywhere that the demands are stretched too far, so that a person cannot meet them. The aim is not that he should become more moral, but that he should feel as sinful as possible. If this feeling had not been pleasant to people, why would they have invented such an idea and clung to it for so long? In the ancient world an enormous amount of mental strength and inventiveness was spent on increasing the joy of life through festive religious celebrations. In the same way, in the Christian age an enormous amount of mind was sacrificed to a different goal: a person was supposed to feel sinful in every possible way, and through this to be stirred up, brought to life, filled with spirit at all. To stir up, to bring to life, to fill with spirit, at any price: isn't that the slogan of a worn-out, overripe, over-refined age? People had gone around the whole circle of natural feelings a hundred times, and the soul had grown tired of them. Then the saint and the self-denier invented a new kind

of thrill for living. They placed themselves before everyone's eyes, not really for many to copy, but as a horrifying and yet thrilling show. This show was performed at the border between this world and the world beyond, where at that time everyone believed they could see, now flashes of heavenly light, now eerie tongues of flame flaring up from the depths. The saint's eye was fixed on how terribly important this short life on earth was in every way, and on how near the final judgment was, which would decide about endless new stretches of life to come. This burning, scorched eye, set in a half-destroyed body, made the people of the ancient world tremble to their very depths. To look at it, to look away shuddering, to feel the pull of the show again, to give in to it, to feast on it until the soul shook with burning heat and feverish chills: that was the last pleasure the ancient world invented, after it had grown numb even to watching fights between animals and between humans.

142.

To sum up what has been said: the state of mind that the saint, or the person on the way to becoming a saint, enjoys is made up of parts that all of us know quite well. The only difference is that, when they come from ideas other than religious ones, they take on a different colouring. Then people usually blame them just as strongly as they admire them, even worship them, when they come dressed up in religion and in talk about the deepest meaning of life. At least, that is how it was in earlier times. Sometimes the saint shows a stubborn defiance against himself. This is a close relative of the hunger for power, and it gives even the loneliest person a feeling of power. Sometimes his swollen feelings jump from wanting to let his passions run wild to wanting to make them crash to the ground like wild horses, crushed under the heavy weight of a proud soul. Sometimes he wants all the disturbing, tormenting, exciting feelings to stop completely. He

wants a kind of sleep while awake, a lasting rest in the lap of a dull laziness, like that of an animal or a plant. Sometimes he goes looking for a fight and starts one inside himself, because boredom is holding its yawning face up to him. He whips his worship of himself with contempt for himself and with cruelty. He enjoys the wild riot of his desires, the sharp pain of sin, and even the idea of being lost and damned. He knows how to set a trap for one of his strong feelings, for example the most extreme hunger for power, so that it flips over into the most extreme humiliation, and his stirred-up soul is torn apart at every seam by this contrast. And finally: when he even craves visions, or conversations with the dead or with divine beings, what he really wants, deep down, is a rare kind of sensual pleasure. But it may be the one pleasure in which all the others are tied together in a single knot. Novalis, one of the experts on holiness, both from his own experience and by instinct, once let out the whole secret with innocent delight. He said: "It is strange enough that the link between sensual pleasure, religion and cruelty has not long ago made people notice how closely related they are and how they all pull in the same direction."

143.

What gives the saint his importance in world history is not what he really is, but what he means in the eyes of people who are not saints. People were wrong about him. They misread his states of mind, and they set him as far apart from themselves as they could, as something that could not be compared to anything else, something strange and more than human. That is how he gained the amazing power that let him rule the imagination of whole peoples and whole ages. He did not know himself. He read the handwriting of his own moods, leanings and actions using a way of interpreting that was just as overdone and artificial as the so-called spiritual reading of the Bible, which looks for

hidden meanings behind every line. The twisted and sick side of his nature stayed hidden, both from his own eyes and from the eyes of those who watched him. That side was a mix of a poor mind, bad knowledge, ruined health and overworked nerves. He was not an especially good person, and even less an especially wise one. But he stood for something that was supposed to go beyond human measure in goodness and wisdom. Believing in him supported the belief in the divine and the miraculous, in a religious meaning behind all of life, and in a coming Last Day of Judgement. In the evening glow of a sun that seemed to be setting on the end of the world, shining over the Christian peoples, the shadowy figure of the saint grew enormous. In fact, it grew so tall that even in our own time, which no longer believes in God, there are still plenty of thinkers who believe in the saint.

144.

It goes without saying that this sketch of the saint, which is drawn from the average of the whole type, can be set against other sketches that might leave a more pleasant feeling. Some single exceptions stand out from that type, either through great gentleness and kindness towards people, or through the charm of unusual energy and drive. Others are extremely attractive because certain false beliefs pour streams of light over their whole being. This is the case, for example, with the famous founder of Christianity. He believed he was the only Son of God, and so he felt free of sin. So, through an imagined idea, which we should not judge too harshly, since the whole ancient world was swarming with sons of gods, he reached the same goal: the feeling of being completely without sin and of completely not being to blame. Today, thanks to science and scholarship, anyone can gain that same feeling. I have also left out the Indian saints. They stand at a halfway point between the Christian saint and the Greek

philosopher, and so they are not a pure type. Among the Buddhists, knowledge, science and scholarship, as far as such a thing existed, and rising above other people through the strict logical training and schooling of one's thinking, were demanded as signs of holiness. In the Christian world, those very same qualities are rejected and condemned as heresy, as signs of being unholy.

Part Four

From the Souls of Artists and Writers

145.

The perfect thing is not supposed to have been made step by step. - Whenever we see something perfect, we usually don't ask how it came to be. Instead, we simply enjoy what is in front of us, as if it had risen out of the ground at the stroke of a magic wand. Probably we are still under the lingering effect of a very ancient feeling that comes from old myths. We still almost feel this way, for example, in a Greek temple like the one at Paestum: as if one morning a god had playfully built his home out of those enormous heavy blocks. At other times we feel as if a soul had suddenly been magically put inside a stone and now wanted to speak through it. The artist knows that his work only has its full effect when it makes people believe it was made up on the spot, that it appeared suddenly, like a miracle. So he probably helps this illusion along. He brings into his art certain things that belong to the very start of creating: excited restlessness, a disorder that grabs around blindly, and a dreaming that seems to be listening for something. He uses these as tricks, to put the soul of the viewer or listener in such a mood that it believes the perfect thing simply leapt into being. - The science and scholarship of art, of course, has to contradict this illusion as firmly as possible. It has to point out the faulty reasoning and the spoiled habits of the mind that make the mind run straight into the artist's net.

146.

The artist's sense of truth. - When it comes to recognising truths, the artist has weaker morals than the thinker. He absolutely refuses to let anyone take away from him the dazzling, deep-sounding explanations of life, and he fights against plain, sober methods and results. On the surface he seems to be fighting for the higher dignity and importance of human beings. In truth, he does not want to give up the ideas that work best for his art: the fantastic, the mythical, the uncertain, the extreme, the feeling for symbols, the overrating of the individual person, and the belief that there is something miraculous in genius. So he thinks it more important that his way of creating should carry on than that people should devote themselves, in the scientific way, to the truth in every form, however plain that truth may look.

147.

Art as a calling-up of the dead. - Along the way, art also has the job of preserving things, and even of putting a little colour back into ideas that have died out or faded. When art does this job, it ties a ribbon around different ages and makes their spirits come back. True, what comes about this way is only a fake kind of life, like the ghostly life above graves, or like when people we loved who have died come back to us in dreams. But at least for a few moments the old feeling stirs once more, and the heart beats to a rhythm that had otherwise been forgotten. Now, because art is useful to everyone in this way, we have to forgive the artist himself if he is not in the front ranks of the Enlightenment and of humanity's steady growing-up into adulthood. All his life he has stayed a child or a young man. He has been held back at the point where his urge to make art first took hold of him. And it is generally agreed that the feelings of the earliest stages of life are closer to the feelings of earlier ages than to those of the present

century. Without meaning to, he takes on the task of making humanity more childlike. This is his glory, and also his limit.

148.

Poets as people who make life easier. - Poets, too, want to make human life easier, and to do this they do one of two things. Either they turn our eyes away from the tiring, painful present, or they give the present new colours by making a light shine onto it from the past. To be able to do this, they themselves must in many ways be beings who face backwards. So they can be used as bridges to very distant times and ideas, to religions and cultures that are dying or already dead. In fact they are always, and necessarily, latecomers who live off what came before. Admittedly, there are some bad things to say about their ways of making life easier. They only calm and heal for a while, only for the moment. They even keep people from working on really improving their situation. They do this by taking away the very passion of dissatisfied people, the passion that pushes them to act, and by letting it out in a way that only soothes the pain without curing its cause.

149.

The slow arrow of beauty. - The noblest kind of beauty is not the kind that sweeps us away all at once, or that attacks us in a stormy, intoxicating way; that kind easily ends up making us feel sick. The noblest beauty is the kind that slowly seeps in. We carry it around with us almost without noticing, and once in a while we meet it again in a dream. But in the end, after it has lain quietly and modestly on our heart for a long time, it takes complete hold of us, filling our eyes with tears and our heart with longing. - What do we long for when we look at beauty? We long to be beautiful ourselves: we imagine that a lot of happiness must come with it. - But that is a mistake.

150.

Art gains a soul. - Art raises its head where religions grow weak. It takes over a great many feelings and moods that religion created, holds them close to its heart, and so becomes deeper and more soulful itself. Now it is able to pass on a sense of being lifted up and filled with excitement, which it could not do before. The wealth of religious feeling has grown into a river, and it keeps bursting out and wanting to conquer new lands. But the growing Enlightenment has shaken the teachings of religion and filled people with deep distrust. So this feeling, pushed out of religion by the Enlightenment, throws itself into art. In some cases it also throws itself into political life, and even straight into science and scholarship. Wherever you notice a higher, darker colouring in human efforts, you can guess that something still clings to them: a shiver of fear of ghosts, the smell of incense, the shadows of churches.

151.

How rhythm in verse makes things more beautiful. - The regular beat of verse lays a thin veil over reality. It makes the speech somewhat artificial and the thinking somewhat unclear. Through the shadow it throws on a thought, it sometimes hides it and sometimes makes it stand out. Just as shadow is needed to make something beautiful, so something 'dim' is needed to make something clear. - Art makes the sight of life bearable by laying over it the veil of unclear thinking.

152.

The art of the ugly soul. - We set far too narrow limits on art if we demand that only an orderly soul, one in moral balance, may express itself in it. In painting and sculpture, and in music and poetry too, there is an art of the ugly soul as well as an art of the beautiful soul.

And the most powerful effects of art, breaking souls, moving stones, and making animals human, have perhaps been achieved best of all by that art of the ugly soul.

153.

Art makes the thinker's heart heavy. - You can see how strong the need for something beyond this world is, and how hard nature makes it for us to say goodbye to it even at the very end, from the following. Even in the free thinker, after he has thrown off all belief in a world beyond, the greatest effects of art can easily make a string inside him vibrate along with them, the string of belief in a world beyond, which has long been silent and was even torn. For example, at a certain passage of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, he may feel as if he is floating above the earth in a dome full of stars, with the dream of living forever in his heart. All the stars seem to twinkle around him, and the earth seems to sink lower and lower. - When he becomes aware of this state, he probably feels a deep stab in his heart, and he sighs for someone who could bring back to him the lost loved one, whether you call her religion or belief in a world beyond. In such moments his character as a thinker is put to the test.

154.

Playing with life. - The Greeks had feelings that were far too passionate and minds that were far too sharp. Homer's way of imagining things was light and carefree, almost careless, and that was needed to calm those feelings and that sharp mind, and to switch them off for a while. When their reason speaks, life looks so harsh and cruel! They do not fool themselves, but they deliberately wrap life in lies, playing around it. The poet Simonides advised his people to take life as a game. They knew seriousness all too well, because for them it meant pain. (After all, human misery is the very subject the gods love to

hear songs about.) And they knew that only through art itself can misery turn into something to enjoy. But as a punishment for understanding this, they were so tormented by the urge to make up stories that in everyday life they found it hard to keep away from lies and tricks. All poet-folk love lying like this, and on top of that they feel innocent while doing it. The neighbouring peoples probably found this enough to drive them to despair at times.

155.

Believing in sudden inspiration. - Artists have a reason to want people to believe in sudden flashes of insight, what is called sudden inspiration. They want it to seem as if the idea for a work of art, a poem, or the main thought of a philosophy shines down from heaven like a ray of grace. In truth, the imagination of a good artist or thinker is producing things all the time: good things, average things and bad things. But his judgement, which is extremely sharp and well trained, throws things out, picks things out, and joins things together. We can now see this in Beethoven's notebooks: he put together his most wonderful melodies little by little, choosing them, so to speak, out of many attempts. Someone who sorts less strictly and is happy to let his memory copy things freely may, in some cases, become a great improviser. But artistic improvising ranks low compared with an artistic idea that has been chosen seriously and with great effort. All the great ones were great workers. They never tired, not only of inventing, but also of throwing away, sifting, reshaping and putting in order.

156.

Sudden inspiration once more. - Sometimes the power to create builds up for a while, like water behind a dam, and something blocks it from flowing out. Then at last it bursts out so suddenly that it looks like direct sudden inspiration, with no inner work beforehand, in

other words like a miracle. This is the well-known illusion, and, as already said, all artists care a little too much about keeping it alive. The capital has simply been piling up, like money saved over time; it did not fall from heaven all at once. By the way, there are also other areas where this kind of seeming inspiration happens, for example in kindness, in virtue, and in vice.

157.

The sufferings of the genius and what they are worth. - The artistic genius wants to give people joy. But if he stands at a very high level, he can easily find that there is no one to enjoy what he offers. He serves food, but nobody wants it. In some cases this gives him a dramatic, heavy feeling that is both laughable and touching. After all, deep down he has no right to force people to enjoy themselves. His pipe plays, but nobody wants to dance: can that be tragic? - Perhaps it can. In the end, to make up for this lack, he gets more pleasure from creating than other people get from any other kind of activity. We feel his sufferings as bigger than they are, because his complaining voice is louder and he is better with words. And sometimes his sufferings really are very great, but only because his ambition and his envy are so great. The genius of knowledge, like Kepler and Spinoza, is usually not so greedy, and makes no such fuss about his sufferings and hardships, which are actually greater. He can count more safely on future generations and turn his back on the present. An artist who does that, on the other hand, is always playing a desperate game that must make his heart ache. In very rare cases, when the genius of skill, the genius of knowledge and the moral genius all melt together in the same person, another kind of pain is added to the ones already mentioned. These pains must be seen as the strangest exceptions in the world. They are feelings that go beyond the self and above the self, feelings directed towards a whole people, towards humanity, towards all of

culture, towards everything that lives and suffers. These feelings get their worth by being linked with knowledge that is especially difficult and far removed from ordinary life. (Pity by itself is worth little.) - But what measure, what precise gold scale is there to test whether such feelings are genuine? Isn't it almost a duty to be suspicious of everyone who talks about having feelings of this kind?

158.

The doom that comes with greatness. - Every great appearance is followed by decline, especially in the field of art. The example of a great person tempts vainer people to copy him on the surface or to try to outdo him. On top of that, all great talents carry something fatal in them: they crush many weaker powers and seeds of talent, and they turn the world around them into a kind of desert. The luckiest situation in the growth of an art is when several geniuses keep one another within limits. In this struggle, the weaker and more delicate natures are usually allowed some air and light as well.

159.

Art is dangerous for the artist. - When art takes powerful hold of a person, it pulls him back towards the views of those times when art was at its strongest. It then works to make him go backwards. The artist comes to worship sudden bursts of excitement more and more. He believes in gods and demons, sees a soul in everything in nature, hates science and scholarship, and his moods keep changing, like the people of ancient times. He wants to overturn all conditions that are not good for art, and he wants this with the violence and unfairness of a child. Now, the artist is already a being who lags behind, because he stays stuck at play, which belongs to youth and childhood. On top of that, he is gradually shaped back into the ways of other, earlier times. So in the end a fierce conflict arises between him and the people of

his own age and time, and his life ends in gloom. This is just how, according to the stories told by the ancients, Homer and Aeschylus spent their last years and died in deep sadness.

160.

People who are made up. People say that a playwright, or any artist, really creates characters. But that is a lovely illusion and an exaggeration. The fact that people believe it, and that the belief has spread, is one of art's victories, a victory it never aimed for, a sort of extra bonus. In truth, we don't understand much about a real, living person. When we say someone has this or that kind of character, we are making a very shallow generalization. The poet fits this very imperfect way we relate to people. He makes sketches of people that are just as shallow as our knowledge of people is. Only in that sense does he "create." There is a lot of trickery in these characters that artists make up. They are not real, flesh-and-blood products of nature at all. Like people in a painting, they are a little too thin, and they don't hold up when you look at them up close. Some people go even further and say that a real, ordinary person often contradicts himself, while the character made by the playwright is the perfect model that nature had in mind. That is completely wrong. A real person is something that had to be exactly the way he is, every part of him, even in those so-called contradictions. We just don't always see why it had to be so. The made-up person, the phantom, is meant to seem like someone who had to be exactly that way. But he only seems that way to people who understand even real people in a crude, unnatural, simplified way. For them, a couple of strong traits, repeated often, with a lot of light on them and a lot of shadow and half-darkness around them, are completely enough. So they are quick to treat the phantom as a real person who had to be the way he is, because with real people they are used to taking a phantom, an outline, a random shorthand, as if it

were the whole person. And to say that the painter and the sculptor express the "idea" of a human being is pure fantasy and a trick of the senses. Anyone who says such a thing is being bullied by the eye. The eye sees only the surface of the human body, the skin. But the inside of the body belongs to the idea just as much. The visual arts try to make character show on the skin. The arts of language use words for the same purpose: they picture character in sound. Art starts from the fact that people naturally don't know what goes on inside them, in body and in character. Art is not made for scientists and philosophers.

161.

Thinking too highly of ourselves when we believe in artists and philosophers. We all think that if a work of art, or an artist, grips us and shakes us, that proves it is good. But first it would have to be proven that our own judgment and feeling are good, and that has not been proven. In the world of painting and sculpture, who has gripped and delighted people more than Bernini? Who had a stronger effect than that public speaker after Demosthenes who brought in the showy "Asian" style and made it rule for two hundred years? Ruling over whole centuries proves nothing about whether a style is good or will stay valid. So we should not be too sure of our trust in any artist. That trust is not just a belief that our feelings are honest. It is also a belief that our judgment cannot be wrong. Yet our judgment, or our feeling, or both, may be too coarse or too delicate, too worked up or too crude. In the same way, the comfort and deep happiness that a philosophy or a religion gives prove nothing about whether it is true. It's just like a madman who is happy because of his fixed obsession: his happiness proves nothing about whether the obsession makes sense.

162.

Worshipping genius out of vanity. We think well of ourselves. And yet we don't expect at all that we could ever sketch out a painting like Raphael's, or write a scene like one in a Shakespeare play. So we tell ourselves that the ability to do it must be enormously wonderful, an extremely rare accident, or, if we still have religious feelings, a gift of grace from above. In this way our vanity, our love of ourselves, encourages the worship of genius. A genius only stops hurting our pride when we picture him as very far away from us, as a miracle. Even Goethe, who was free of envy, called Shakespeare his star in the farthest heights. Here we might remember the line: "The stars, one does not long for them." In other words, you don't envy what is out of reach. But leave aside these whispers of our vanity. Then the work of a genius does not look basically different from the work of an inventor of machines, a scholar of astronomy or history, or a master of military tactics. All these activities make sense once you picture people whose thinking is busy in one direction. They use everything as material. They are always eagerly watching their own inner life and the lives of others. They see models and sparks of ideas everywhere. They never get tired of combining the means they have. A genius does nothing more than this: first it learns to lay stones, then to build; it is always looking for material and always shaping it. Every human activity is amazingly complicated, not just the work of a genius. But none of it is a "miracle." So where does the belief come from that only artists, speakers and philosophers can be geniuses? That only they have "intuition"? By saying that, people give them a kind of magic eyeglass that lets them look straight into the "true nature" of things! Clearly, people only talk about genius where the effects of a great mind are most pleasant to them, and where they also don't want to feel envy. Calling someone "divine" means "here we don't need to compete." Besides that, everything finished and perfect is admired, and everything still

in the making is underrated. Now, nobody can watch how an artist's work came to be. That is the artist's advantage. Wherever people can see something being made, they cool down a little. The finished art of presenting things pushes away every thought about how it came to be. It rules over us as a perfection that is simply there. That is why artists who present things are the ones mainly seen as geniuses, and not people of science and scholarship. In truth, this overrating and that underrating are just childishness on the part of our reason.

163.

Taking the craft seriously. - Don't talk to me about gifts, about talents people are born with! We can name great men of every kind who had very little natural gift. But they became great, they became "geniuses" (as people say), through qualities that nobody likes to mention if he knows he lacks them. All of them had that solid seriousness of a good craftsman, who first learns to make each part perfectly before he dares to make a large whole. They gave themselves time for this, because they enjoyed doing the small, minor things well more than they enjoyed the effect of a dazzling whole. Take one example: it is easy to give the recipe for how someone can become a good writer of short stories. But following it takes qualities that people tend to overlook when they say, "I don't have enough talent." Just make a hundred or more drafts of short stories, none longer than two pages, but so clear that every word in them is needed. Write down little true stories every day, until you learn to find their sharpest, most powerful form. Never tire of collecting and describing types of people and characters. Above all, tell stories as often as you can, and listen to others tell them, with a sharp eye and ear for the effect they have on the other people in the room. Travel the way a landscape painter or a costume sketcher travels. Copy out from the different fields of science and scholarship everything that makes an artistic effect when it is de-

scribed well. And finally, think about why people do what they do, don't turn down any hint that teaches you about this, and be a collector of such things day and night. Let some ten years go by in this many-sided practice. Then whatever is made in the workshop may also go out into the daylight of the street. - But what do most people do? They don't start with the part, they start with the whole. Maybe once they get lucky and grab something good, they attract attention, and from then on they grab worse and worse things, for good, natural reasons. - Sometimes, when someone lacks the good sense and character to shape his artistic life according to such a plan, fate and hardship take their place. They lead the future master step by step through everything his craft demands.

164.

The danger and the benefit of worshipping genius. - People believe in great, superior, creative minds. This belief doesn't have to, but very often still does, come bundled with a fully or half religious superstition: that such minds come from somewhere beyond the human, and that they have certain miraculous powers which let them reach their knowledge in a completely different way from other people. People like to say these minds can look straight into the true nature of the world, as if through a hole in the cloak of how things appear. And people believe that, thanks to this miraculous gift of a seer, these minds can tell us something final and decisive about humans and the world, without the hard work and strictness of science and scholarship. As long as miracles in the field of knowledge still find believers, we may perhaps admit that the believers themselves get some use out of it. By placing themselves completely under the great minds, they give their own minds the best discipline and training during the time they are still growing. On the other hand, it is at least questionable whether the superstition about genius, about its special rights and

special powers, is any use to the genius himself, if it takes root in him. In any case it is a dangerous sign when a person is seized by that shiver of awe at himself, whether it is the famous shiver of the Caesars or the genius's shiver we are talking about here. It is dangerous when the smoke of sacrifice, which by rights is offered only to a god, gets into the genius's head, so that he begins to sway and to think of himself as something more than human. The slow results are these: the feeling of not being to blame and of having exceptional rights; the belief that just spending time with others is a gift of grace to them; a mad rage at any attempt to compare him with others, or even to rate him lower, or to point out where his work has failed. Because he stops criticizing himself, in the end his wings lose one strong flight feather after another. That superstition eats away at the roots of his strength, and may even turn him into a fake once his strength has left him. So for great minds themselves it is probably more useful to come to understand their power and where it comes from. That means grasping which purely human qualities have flowed together in them, and which lucky circumstances were added. First, lasting energy, a firm turning toward particular goals, and great personal courage. Second, the luck of an upbringing that gave them the best teachers, role models and methods early on. Of course, if their goal is to make the greatest possible impact, then being unclear about themselves, along with that extra helping of half-madness, has always achieved a lot. Because in every age, what people have admired and envied in them is exactly that power by which they take away other people's will and sweep them along into the wild belief that supernatural guides were walking ahead of them. Yes, it lifts people up and fills them with enthusiasm to believe that someone has supernatural powers. In that sense madness, as Plato says, has brought the greatest blessings to humankind. - In a few rare cases this bit of madness may also have been the means that held together such a nature, one that overflowed in every direction. In the lives of single

people, too, false beliefs often have the value of medicines that are poisons in themselves. But in every "genius" who believes he is divine, the poison finally shows itself, more and more as the "genius" grows old. Remember Napoleon, for example. His being certainly grew into that powerful unity, which lifts him above all modern people, exactly through his belief in himself and his lucky star, and through the contempt for people that came from it. But in the end this same belief turned into an almost insane fatalism, a belief that everything was fixed by destiny. It robbed him of his quick and sharp sight and became the cause of his downfall.

165.

Genius and emptiness. - It is exactly the original artists, the ones who draw everything from within themselves, who can sometimes produce something completely empty and stale. Meanwhile the more dependent kinds, the so-called talents, are full of memories of all sorts of good things, and even when they are weak they still turn out something decent. But when the original ones are abandoned by themselves, memory gives them no help: they become empty.

166.

The audience. When ordinary people go to see a tragedy, all they really want is to be deeply moved, so that for once they can have a good cry. An artist watching the new tragedy, on the other hand, enjoys the clever technical ideas and tricks: how the material is handled and laid out, and the fresh twist given to old themes and old ideas. His way of looking at the work is the way of someone who appreciates art, the way of someone who makes it. The first way, which cares only about the story itself, is the way of ordinary people. As for the person in between, there is nothing to say about him. He is

neither one of the ordinary crowd nor an artist, and he does not know what he wants. So his enjoyment is vague and small, too.

167.

How artists train their audience. Unless the same theme is handled a hundred times over by different masters, the audience never learns to get past simply being interested in the story. But in the end, it will grasp and enjoy even the fine shades, the delicate new ideas in how that theme is treated. That happens once the audience has long known the theme from many versions, and no longer feels the thrill of something new or the tension of not knowing what comes next.

168.

The artist and his followers must keep pace. The move from one stage of style to the next has to be slow enough that not only the artists, but also the listeners and viewers, can come along and know exactly what is going on. Otherwise a huge gap suddenly opens up. On one side is the artist, making his works on some faraway peak. On the other side is the audience, which can no longer climb up to that height and finally, in a bad mood, goes back down again. For when the artist stops lifting his audience up, it quickly sinks. In fact, the higher a genius has carried it, the deeper and more dangerously it falls. It is like the eagle that carries a tortoise up into the clouds, and then the tortoise slips from its claws and falls to its doom.

169.

Where comedy comes from. Think about this. For many hundreds of thousands of years, human beings were animals that were extremely open to fear. Anything sudden or unexpected meant they had to be ready to fight, perhaps ready to die. Even later, when people lived

together in societies, all safety depended on what was expected, on custom handed down, in how people thought and how they acted. Knowing all that, we should not be surprised by what happens when something sudden and unexpected, in words or in deeds, bursts in without bringing any danger or harm. Then a person goes wild with relief and flips into the opposite of fear. The creature that was trembling and curled up in terror springs up and stretches out wide. The person laughs. This switch from a moment of fear to a short burst of high spirits is what we call comedy. In tragedy, it is the other way round: a person passes quickly from great, lasting high spirits into great fear. But among mortals, great and lasting high spirits are much rarer than reasons to be afraid. So there is much more comedy than tragedy in the world. We laugh far more often than we are deeply shaken.

170.

Artists' ambition. The Greek artists, the writers of tragedy for example, wrote in order to win. You cannot imagine their art at all without contests. The good kind of strife that the poet Hesiod spoke of, that is, ambition, gave wings to their genius. Now, above all, this ambition demanded that their work be as excellent as possible in their own eyes, by their own idea of excellence. They paid no attention to the popular taste of the day or to what people in general thought made a work of art excellent. And so Aeschylus and Euripides went without success for a long time, until at last they had trained up critics who judged their work by the same standards the poets themselves used. So first they strive to beat their rivals by their own judgement, in front of their own inner court; they really want to be better. Then they ask the outside world to agree with that judgement and confirm it. Seeking honour here means "making yourself superior, and wishing that people can see it openly too." If the first part is

missing and you still want the second, that is called vanity. If the second part is missing and you do not miss it, that is called pride.

171.

What is necessary in a work of art. People who talk so much about how everything in a work of art is necessary are exaggerating. If they are artists, they do it to make art look more glorious. If they are not artists, they do it out of ignorance. The forms of a work of art, the things that let its ideas speak, in other words its way of talking, always have some looseness in them, just like any kind of language. A sculptor can add or leave out many small details. So can a performer, whether an actor or, in music, a star soloist or a conductor. These many little touches and polishings please him today and not tomorrow. They are there more for the artist's sake than for the art's sake. For presenting the main idea demands strictness and self-control from him, so now and then he too needs some sweets and toys, so that he does not turn grumpy.

172.

Making people forget the master. A pianist performing a great composer's work will have played best when he made us forget the composer, and when it seemed as if he were telling a story from his own life, or living through something right now. Of course, if he himself is nobody special, everyone will curse him for chattering on about his own life. So he has to know how to win over the listener's imagination. And that, in turn, explains all the weaknesses and silly antics of "star performers."

173.

Correcting fate. In the lives of great artists there are cruel accidents. They force a painter, for example, to leave his most important picture as nothing more than a quick sketch of an idea. Or they forced Beethoven, for example, in several of his great sonatas (such as the big one in B-flat major), to leave us only a poor piano version of what was really a symphony. Here an artist who comes later should try to correct the lives of the great ones after the fact. Someone could do this, for example, who was a master of every effect an orchestra can make, and who woke up for us that symphony which only seems dead, trapped inside the piano.

174.

Making things smaller. Some things, events, or people cannot stand being shown on a small scale. You cannot shrink the famous Laocoön statue group down into a little knick-knack for a shelf; it needs to be big. But it is much rarer for something that is small by nature to stand being blown up. That is why biographers will always have an easier time making a great man look small than making a small man look great.

175.

The senses in today's art. Artists today often get their sums wrong when they try to make their works appeal to the senses. That is because their viewers or listeners no longer have their senses fully working. So, quite against what the artist intended, the work puts them into a kind of "holy" feeling, which is a close relative of boredom. Their sensual feeling perhaps starts just where the artist's stops. So at most, the two meet at a single point.

176.

Shakespeare as a moralist. Shakespeare thought a great deal about the passions, and because of his own temperament he probably understood many of them from very close up. (Writers of plays are, in general, rather wicked people.) But unlike the essayist Montaigne, he could not talk about them directly. Instead, he put his observations about the passions into the mouths of the passionate characters themselves. That goes against nature, but it makes his plays so full of thought that all other plays seem empty next to them, and this can easily make people turn against those other plays. The wise sayings in Schiller's plays are really stage sayings, and as such they work very powerfully, even though they are almost always built on ideas that are wrong or unimportant. Shakespeare's sayings, on the other hand, do credit to his model Montaigne. They hold truly serious thoughts in a polished form. But for that very reason, they are too distant and too subtle for a theatre audience to notice, so they have no effect.

177.

Making yourself heard well. - It is not enough to know how to play well. You also have to know how to make yourself heard well. Even in the hands of the greatest master, a violin only gives off a thin chirp if the room is too big. In a room like that, you could mistake the master for any clumsy beginner.

178.

The unfinished as the thing that works. - Think of figures carved in relief on a wall. They grip our imagination so strongly because they seem to be in the middle of stepping out of the wall, and then suddenly stop, held back by something. In the same way, presenting a thought, or even a whole philosophy, in an unfinished, relief-like way

sometimes works better than explaining it completely. More of the work is left to the person looking at it. He gets stirred up to carry on shaping what stands out before him in such strong light and shadow. He wants to think it through to the end, and to get past, by himself, the very obstacle that had so far kept it from stepping out completely.

179.

Against the original ones. - When art dresses itself in the most worn-out material, that is when you can best recognize it as art.

180.

Group mind. - A good writer has not only his own mind, but the minds of his friends as well.

181.

Two ways of being misjudged. - The bad luck of sharp and clear writers is that people take them for shallow, and so they do not make any effort with them. The good luck of unclear writers is that the reader struggles hard with them, and then gives them the credit for the pleasure he feels at his own hard work.

182.

How people relate to science and scholarship. - People who only start to warm up to a field of science and scholarship once they have made discoveries in it themselves have no real interest in it at all.

183.

The key. - Sometimes an important person puts great value on one single thought, while unimportant people laugh and mock him for it.

For him, that thought is a key to hidden treasure rooms. For them, it is nothing more than a piece of old iron.

184.

Untranslatable. - The part of a book that cannot be translated is neither the best part nor the worst part of it.

185.

The author's paradoxes. - The so-called paradoxes of an author, the strange-sounding claims that offend a reader, are often not in the author's book at all. They are in the reader's head.

186.

Wit. - The wittiest authors bring out the smile you can barely notice.

187.

The contrast. - Setting two opposites sharply against each other is the narrow gate through which a mistake most likes to sneak its way into being taken for the truth.

188.

Thinkers as writers. - Most thinkers write badly, because they tell us not only their thoughts, but also the whole process of thinking those thoughts.

189.

Thoughts in a poem. - The poet brings his thoughts along in a grand parade, riding in the carriage of rhythm. Usually he does this because those thoughts cannot walk on their own two feet.

190.

A sin against the reader's mind. - Sometimes an author hides his talent just to put himself on the same level as the reader. When he does this, he commits the one deadly sin the reader will never forgive him for, that is, if the reader notices any of it. Otherwise, you may say every bad thing you like about a person. But in the way you say it, you have to know how to build his vanity back up again.

191.

The limit of honesty. - Even the most honest writer lets slip one word too many when he wants to round off a sentence nicely.

192.

The best author. - The best author will be the one who is ashamed to become a writer.

193.

A harsh law against writers. - A writer should be looked at as a criminal who only very rarely deserves to be found not guilty or to be pardoned. That would be a way to stop books from getting out of hand and multiplying so much.

194.

The jesters of modern culture. - The jesters at the royal courts of the Middle Ages match our newspaper columnists of today. They are the same kind of people: half-sensible, witty, over the top, silly. Sometimes they are there only to soften a serious, heavy mood with clever ideas and chatter, and to drown out with their shouting the too-heavy, solemn ringing of the bells that comes with great events. In the past

they served princes and nobles. Now they serve political parties. Indeed, in the loyalty and discipline people show to their party, a good deal of the old obedience that the people once showed their prince still lives on. But the whole modern class of literary people is very close to the columnists. They are the "jesters of modern culture", and we judge them more kindly if we treat them as not fully responsible for what they do. To see writing as your life's career should, in all fairness, count as a kind of madness.

195.

Following the Greeks. - Right now, something stands badly in the way of knowledge. For a hundred years, feelings have been exaggerated, and so all words have become foggy and puffed up. A higher stage of culture puts itself under the rule of knowledge, though not under its tyranny. Such a culture needs feelings to sober up a great deal, and it needs every word to be packed tight with meaning. The Greeks in the age of Demosthenes went ahead of us in this. Everything written today is marked by being overstrained. Even when modern writing is simple, the words in it are still felt in too wild and extreme a way. Only this can help: strict careful thought, saying things briefly, coolness, plainness, even pushed on purpose right down to the limit, in general holding back your feelings and keeping quiet. - By the way, this cold way of writing and feeling is now very attractive, simply because it is the opposite of what people are used to. And of course that brings a new danger. For sharp cold excites the senses just as much as great heat does.

196.

Good storytellers, bad explainers. - Good storytellers often show an amazing sureness and consistency about human nature, as far as this can show itself in what their characters do. But this stands in an

almost laughable contrast to how unskilled they are when they think about human nature directly. So their level of culture seems wonderfully high in one moment, and sadly low in the next. It happens far too often that they clearly explain their own heroes, and what those heroes do, in the wrong way. There is no doubt about this, however unlikely it sounds. Perhaps the greatest piano player has thought very little about the technical side of playing, and about the special strengths, weaknesses, uses and trainability of each finger, a sort of "moral code of the fingers". And perhaps he makes crude mistakes when he talks about such things.

197.

Writings by people we know, and their readers. - We read the writings of people we know, friends and enemies alike, twice over at the same time. All the while, one part of our knowledge whispers alongside: "This is from him. It is a sign of his inner nature, of what he has lived through, of his talent." And at the same time, another kind of knowledge tries to work out what the work itself is worth, how highly it deserves to be judged apart from the person who wrote it, and how much it adds to what we know. These two ways of reading and weighing things get in each other's way, as you would expect. A conversation with a friend, too, will only bear good fruit in knowledge when both people finally think only about the subject itself and forget that they are friends.

198.

Sacrifices of rhythm. - Good writers change the rhythm of many a sentence just because they do not believe ordinary readers are able to grasp the beat the sentence followed in its first version. So they make it easier for them by choosing more familiar rhythms instead. - This concern for how poorly today's readers handle rhythm has already

drawn many a sigh, because a lot has already been sacrificed to it. - Might good musicians have the same experience?

199.

The unfinished as a way to stir up art. - Something incomplete often works better than something complete, especially in a speech of praise. For that purpose you need exactly the kind of incompleteness that teases, something not quite reasonable. It makes the listener imagine there is a whole sea in front of him, and like a fog it hides the opposite shore, meaning it hides the limits of the person or thing being praised. If you mention someone's well-known good points and go on about them at length and in detail, this always makes people suspect that those are his only good points. The person who praises completely puts himself above the person he praises. He seems to look down on him and see all of him at once. That is why completeness makes the praise weaker.

200.

Be careful with writing and teaching. Once someone has written, and feels the passion for writing inside them, they learn from almost everything they do and live through only one thing: whatever can be passed on in writing. They no longer think about themselves, but about the writer and the writer's readers. They want insight, but not for their own use. Someone who is a teacher is mostly unable to do anything for their own good anymore. They always think about what is good for their students, and every piece of knowledge pleases them only as far as they can teach it. In the end they see themselves as just a passageway for knowledge, and in general as a tool, so that they no longer take themselves seriously.

201.

Bad writers are necessary. There will always have to be bad writers, because they suit the taste of people in the young, undeveloped, unripe stages of life, and these people have their needs just as much as the more mature ones do. If human life were longer, the number of people who had grown mature would be larger than, or at least equal to, the number of immature ones. But as things are, by far most people die too young. That means there are always many more undeveloped minds with bad taste. On top of that, these minds want their needs satisfied with all the greater force of youth, and so they demand bad authors and get them.

202.

Too close and too far away. Readers and authors often do not understand each other for this reason: the author knows his subject too well and finds it almost boring, so he leaves out the examples, even though he knows hundreds of them. But the reader is new to the subject, and when the examples are kept from him, he easily thinks the argument has no solid support.

203.

A training for art that has disappeared. Of everything the old grammar school taught, the most valuable thing was practice in writing Latin in good style. That was real training in an art, while all the other subjects only aimed at knowledge. Putting the German essay first is barbaric, because we have no German style good enough to serve as a model, one that grew up through public speaking. But if the German essay is meant to train people in thinking, then it is surely better to forget about style altogether for the time being, and so to keep practice in thinking separate from practice in expressing things. Practice

in expressing should be about putting a given content into many different forms, not about inventing a content on your own. Simply expressing a given content was exactly the task of Latin style, and the old teachers had a fine ear for it that has long since been lost. In the past, anyone who learned to write well in a modern language owed it to this training. Now people are forced to go and learn from the older French writers instead. But there was even more to it: such a person got a sense of how noble and how difficult form is, and was prepared for art in general in the only right way, through practice.

204.

Dark and too bright side by side. Writers who, on the whole, do not know how to make their thoughts clear will love to choose the strongest, most exaggerated words and superlatives in the details. This creates a lighting effect like torchlight on tangled forest paths: a few spots blaze brightly, while everything else stays confusing and dark.

205.

Painting with words. You will describe an important subject best if you take the colours for your picture from the subject itself, the way a chemist extracts substances, and then use them like an artist. That way you let the drawing grow out of the edges of the colours and the way they blend into each other. Then the picture gets some of the thrilling natural power that makes the subject itself important.

206.

Books that teach you to dance. There are writers who present the impossible as if it were possible, and who talk about morals and genius as if both were just a mood or a matter of choice. In this way they

create a feeling of bold, high-spirited freedom, as if a person rose up on tiptoe and simply had to dance out of inner joy.

207.

Thoughts that never got finished. Not only adulthood has value in itself; youth and childhood do too, and they should not be prized only as passages and bridges to something else. In the same way, thoughts that were never finished also have their value. So you should not torture a poet with clever, overly detailed interpretations. Instead, enjoy the fact that his horizon is uncertain, as if the road to several different thoughts were still open. You stand at the doorway. You wait, as when a treasure is being dug up: it feels as if a lucky find of deep meaning is just about to be made. The poet gives us a taste in advance of the thinker's joy at finding a great central idea, and that makes us eager, so that we grab for it. But the idea flutters past our head, shows us the most beautiful butterfly wings, and still slips away from us.

208.

The book that has almost become a person. Every writer is surprised all over again by how a book, as soon as it has separated from him, goes on living a life of its own. He feels as if part of an insect had been cut off and was now going its own way. Maybe he forgets the book almost completely. Maybe he moves beyond the views he put into it. Maybe he no longer even understands it, and has lost the wings he flew on back when he dreamed up that book. Meanwhile the book looks for its readers, sparks life, makes people happy, frightens them, gives rise to new works, and becomes the soul behind people's plans and actions. In short, it lives like a being with a mind and a soul, and yet it is not a human being. The author who has drawn the luckiest lot is the one who, as an old man, can say this: that all the thoughts

and feelings in him that created life, gave strength, lifted people up and shed light, still live on in his writings, and that he himself is now only the grey ashes, while the fire has been saved and carried on everywhere. And if you go further and consider that every action a person takes, not just a book, somehow leads to other actions, decisions and thoughts, and that everything that happens is tied tight, beyond untying, to everything that will happen, then you see the one real immortality there is: the immortality of movement. Whatever has once set something in motion is locked into the great web of everything that exists and is preserved forever, like an insect in a piece of amber.

209.

Joy in old age. The thinker, and the artist too, who has saved his better self by putting it into his works, feels an almost wicked joy when he sees how time slowly cracks and wears down his body and mind. It is as if he were watching from a corner as a thief works away at his safe, while he knows the safe is empty and all his treasures have been rescued.

210.

Calm fruitfulness. People who are born aristocrats of the mind are not too eager. Their creations appear and drop from the tree on a calm autumn evening, without being hungrily demanded, pushed along, or pushed aside by something new. Wanting to create all the time, without a break, is common and low, and it shows jealousy, envy and ambition. If you really are something, you do not actually need to make anything, and yet you still do a great deal. Above the "productive" person there is an even higher kind of person.

211.

Achilles and Homer. - It is always like it was between Achilles and Homer: one of them has the experience and the feeling, and the other one describes it. A real writer only gives words to other people's strong feelings and experiences. He is an artist because, from the little he has felt himself, he can guess a great deal. Artists are not at all the people of great passion. But they often act as if they were, because deep down, without knowing it, they sense that people will trust the passion they paint more if their own lives seem to prove they have lived through such things. After all, you only have to let yourself go, stop controlling yourself, and give your anger and your desires free room to play, and right away the whole world shouts: "How passionate he is!" But the kind of passion that digs deep, that eats away at a person and often swallows them up completely, is a serious matter. Whoever really lives through it is certainly not going to describe it in plays, in music, or in novels. Artists are often people with no self-control, at least in the parts of their lives where they are not being artists. But that is something else.

212.

Old doubts about what art does to us. - Is it really true, as Aristotle claims, that tragedy lets out our pity and fear, so that the audience goes home calmer and cooler? Do ghost stories really make people less fearful and less superstitious? It is true for some bodily processes, for example the pleasure of making love, that when a need is satisfied, the urge eases off and calms down for a while. But fear and pity are not needs of particular body parts in that sense, needs that want to be relieved. And in the long run, every urge actually gets stronger through being practised and satisfied, even though it eases off now and then. It could be that in each single case tragedy softens our pity and fear and lets them out. Even so, overall, the effect of

tragedy might make them bigger. Then Plato would be right after all when he says that, taken as a whole, tragedy makes people more anxious and more easily moved to tears. In that case, the tragic poet himself would be bound to end up with a gloomy, fearful view of the world and a soft, touchy soul that is always eager to cry. And it would also fit Plato's opinion if the tragic poets, and also whole city communities that especially enjoy them, sank into less and less moderation and self-control. - But what right does our own time have to answer Plato's great question about the moral influence of art at all? Even if we had art ourselves, where do we see its influence, any influence of art at all?

213.

Delight in nonsense. - How can people enjoy nonsense? Because wherever there is laughter in the world, that is what is happening. In fact, you could say that almost everywhere there is happiness, there is delight in nonsense. Turning experience upside down into its opposite, turning what has a purpose into what is pointless, turning what must be into what is just random, delights us. But only as long as this does no harm and is just imagined for once, out of high spirits. It delights us because, for a moment, it frees us from the pressure of what must be, what has a purpose, and what experience teaches us. Usually we see these things as our merciless masters. So we play and laugh when the thing we expected, which normally makes us nervous and tense, gets released without hurting anyone. It is the joy of slaves at the Saturnalia, the old Roman festival when slaves were allowed to act like their masters.

214.

Making reality nobler. - People saw a god in the sexual drive, and they felt it working inside them with grateful worship. Because of this,

over time, that strong feeling became woven through with higher thoughts and ideas, and so it really did become much nobler. In the same way, some peoples, through this art of making things ideal, turned illnesses into great powers that helped their culture. Take the Greeks, for example. In earlier centuries they suffered from great outbreaks of nervous illness, something like epilepsy and the dancing sickness called St. Vitus's dance, and out of this they shaped the wonderful figure of the Bacchante, the wild woman who dances in honour of the god of wine. - You see, the Greeks had anything but a sturdy, solid, rough-and-ready health. Their secret was that they honoured even illness as a god, as long as it had power.

215.

Music. - Music in itself is not so full of meaning for our inner life, or so deeply moving, that it could count as the direct language of feeling. Instead, its very old link with poetry has packed so much symbolism into rhythm, and into loud and soft notes, that we now imagine it speaks straight to our inner self and comes straight from it. Dramatic music only becomes possible once the art of sound has won a huge range of symbolic tools, through song, through opera, and through hundreds of attempts to paint pictures with sound. So-called "absolute music", music on its own without words or story, is one of two things. Either it is pure form, in the raw early stage of music, when simply hearing sounds in a beat and at different strengths is a joy in itself. Or it is a symbolism of forms that we can understand even without poetry, but only after the two arts have been joined for a long time and the musical form has finally become completely woven through with threads of ideas and feelings. People who have stayed behind in the development of music can hear the very same piece purely as patterns of form, while those who are further along understand everything in it as symbols. No music is deep and meaningful in

itself. It does not speak about "the will" or about "the thing as it really is". The mind could only fool itself into thinking so in an age that had already won the whole range of inner life for musical symbolism. The mind itself first put this meaning into the sound. It did the same in architecture, where it put meaning into the relations of lines and masses, even though that meaning has nothing at all to do with the mechanical laws behind them.

216.

Gestures and language. - Copying gestures is older than language. It happens without our wanting it to. And even now, when gesture language has been pushed back in general and educated people keep their muscles under control, it is still so strong that we cannot look at a face that is moving without the nerves in our own face stirring too. You can see this for yourself: if someone fakes a yawn, a person watching will yawn for real. The copied gesture led the person copying back to the feeling that the gesture expressed in the face or body of the person being copied. That is how people learned to understand one another, and that is how a child still learns to understand its mother. In general, painful feelings were probably expressed through gestures that themselves cause pain, such as tearing out one's hair, beating one's chest, or twisting and straining the face muscles violently. The other way round, gestures of pleasure were themselves pleasant, and so they were well suited for sharing understanding. For example, laughing, which is the reaction to being tickled, and being tickled is pleasant, came to be used to express other pleasant feelings too. - Once people understood one another through gestures, a symbolism of gestures could grow up in turn. What I mean is that people could come to understand one another through a language of sound signs. At first they made both the sound and the gesture, with the sound added as a symbol for the gesture; later they made only the

sound. - It seems that in early times the same thing often happened that is now going on before our eyes and ears in the development of music, especially dramatic music. At first, music without dance and mime, that is, gesture language, to explain it, is just empty noise. But after people get used, over a long time, to music and movement going side by side, the ear is trained to read the patterns of sound right away. In the end it reaches such a level of quick understanding that it no longer needs to see any movement at all, and it understands the composer without it. Then people talk about absolute music, meaning music in which everything is understood at once as a symbol, without any extra help.

217.

How more advanced art loses its connection to the senses. - Modern music has developed as an art in a way that has given the mind an enormous workout, and because of this our ears have become more and more a thing of the mind. That is why we can now stand much louder sound, much more "noise", than our ancestors could: we are much better trained to listen for the reason, the sense, inside it. In fact, all our senses have become somewhat dulled for exactly this reason: they immediately ask about the sense, that is, about "what it means", and no longer about "what it is". This dulling shows itself, for example, in the total rule of equal tuning, where notes are slightly adjusted so every key fits; these days, ears that can still hear the finer differences, for example between C sharp and D flat, are the exception. In this respect our ears have become coarser. Then again, the ugly side of the world, the side that was at first hostile to the senses, has been won over for music. Because of this, music's power, especially for expressing what is grand and overwhelming, terrifying, or mysterious, has grown amazingly. Our music now gives a voice to things that used to have no tongue. In a similar way, some painters

have made the eye more a thing of the mind, and they have gone far beyond what used to be called the joy of colours and shapes. Here too, the side of the world that was first thought ugly has been conquered by the artist's understanding. - What follows from all of this? The more the eye and the ear become able to think, the closer they come to the limit where they stop being senses at all. The enjoyment moves into the brain, the sense organs themselves grow dull and weak, and the symbol takes the place of what actually exists more and more. And so this road leads us to barbarism, to a crude and uncivilized state, just as surely as any other road. For now people can still say: the world is uglier than ever, but it stands for a more beautiful world than there has ever been. But the more the sweet perfume of meaning, like the rare scent of ambergris, scatters and fades into the air, the fewer people there are who can still smell it. And the rest end up stopping at the ugly thing itself and trying to enjoy it directly, which can never work for them. So in Germany there are two currents in the development of music. On one side is a crowd of ten thousand with ever higher and more delicate demands, listening more and more for "what it means". On the other side is the huge majority, who become less able every year to understand what is meaningful when it comes in the form of ugliness to the senses. And so, with more and more pleasure, they learn to reach in music for what is ugly and disgusting in itself, that is, for the low pleasures of the senses.

218.

The stone is more like plain stone than it used to be. - On the whole, we no longer understand architecture, or at least not nearly in the way we understand music. We have grown out of the habit of reading meaning into lines and shapes, just as we have lost the habit of being moved by the sound effects of fine speech-making. We no longer soaked up this kind of training from the very first moment of our

lives, the way a baby takes in its mother's milk. In a Greek or Christian building, everything once meant something, and that meaning pointed to a higher order of things. This feeling that the building was full of endless meaning hung around it like a magic veil. Beauty came into the whole scheme only on the side. It did not really weaken the basic feeling of something eerie and grand, something made holy by being close to the gods and to magic. At most, beauty softened the dread, but that dread was always there underneath, as the starting point. - So what does the beauty of a building mean to us now? The same as the pretty face of a woman with nothing behind it: something like a mask.

219.

The religious roots of modern music. - Music full of soul first came about in the Catholic Church after it had pulled itself together again following the Council of Trent. It came through Palestrina, who gave a voice in sound to the newly awakened, heartfelt and deeply stirred spirit of that time. Later, with Bach, it also came about among Protestants, to the extent that the Pietists had deepened Protestant faith and freed it from its original, rule-bound focus on doctrine. Both of these beginnings needed something to come first: the way people dealt with music in the Renaissance and the time just before it. Above all, they needed that learned study of music, that basically scientific delight in the clever tricks of harmony and of how separate voices move together. On the other hand, opera also had to come first. In opera, the ordinary music lover showed his protest against a music that had become too learned and cold, and wanted to give the muse of music a soul again. - Without that deep religious change of mood, without the innermost stirrings of the heart finding their way out into sound, music would have stayed either learned or operatic. The spirit of the Counter-Reformation, the Catholic fight back against the Prot-

estants, is the spirit of modern music (because the Pietism in Bach's music is also a kind of Counter-Reformation). That is how deeply we owe a debt to religious life. - Music was the counter-Renaissance in the world of art. The later paintings of Murillo belong with it, and maybe the Baroque style does too: at any rate, more than the architecture of the Renaissance or of the ancient world. And even today one might ask: if our modern music could move stones, would it put them together into an ancient-style building? I very much doubt it. For the things that rule in this music are strong emotion, the delight in heightened and far-reaching moods, the wish to come alive at any cost, the quick changes of feeling, the strong contrast of light and shadow that makes things stand out, and the placing of wild ecstasy right next to simple innocence. All of that once ruled in painting and sculpture before and created new rules of style. But that was neither in the ancient world nor in the Renaissance.

220.

The world beyond in art. - It is not without deep pain that we admit this to ourselves: artists of every age, at their highest flights, have lifted up into heavenly glory exactly those ideas that we now see are false. They are the ones who glorified the religious and philosophical mistakes of humankind, and they could not have done so without believing those ideas were completely true. Now, if belief in such truth fades in general, if the rainbow colours around the farthest edges of human knowledge and human fancy grow pale, then a certain kind of art can never bloom again. This is the kind of art that takes for granted that its works have a meaning not only for the whole universe but also for a world beyond this one, like Dante's Divine Comedy, the paintings of Raphael, the wall paintings of Michelangelo, and the great Gothic cathedrals. It will become a touching legend that such an art, and such a faith among artists, once existed.

221.

The Revolution in Poetry. The French playwrights forced strict rules on themselves. A play had to have one single plot, one place, and one span of time. They also kept tight rules for style, for how verses and sentences were built, and for which words and thoughts they chose. These rules were just as important a training school as counterpoint and the fugue were in the growth of modern music, or as the set figures of speech of Gorgias were in Greek public speaking. Tying yourself down like that can seem silly. But there is no other way to get past simply copying nature than to first limit yourself as strongly as possible, maybe even in the most random way. Little by little, you learn to walk gracefully even on narrow footbridges that cross dizzying cliffs. And you bring home, as your reward, the most flexible and easy way of moving. The history of music proves this in front of everyone alive today. In music you can see how, step by step, the chains grow looser, until at last they can seem to be thrown off completely. That appearance of freedom is the highest result of a necessary growth in art. Modern poetry had no such lucky, gradual unwinding from the chains it had put on itself. Lessing made the French form, which was the only modern art form, into a joke in Germany, and he pointed to Shakespeare instead. So people lost the steady, gradual loosening of those chains. Instead they made a leap into naturalism, which means a leap back to the very beginnings of art. Goethe tried to rescue himself from it by finding new ways, again and again, to tie himself down. But once the thread of growth has been cut, even the most gifted person can only go on experimenting forever. Schiller owed the fairly steady confidence of his form to the example of French tragedy. He looked up to it without meaning to, even though he denied it. And he stayed fairly independent of Lessing, whose attempts at plays, as is well known, he rejected. As for the French themselves, after Voltaire they suddenly lacked the great tal-

ents who could have carried tragedy forward, out of its strict rules and toward that appearance of freedom. Later, following the German example, they too made the leap into a kind of Rousseau-style "state of nature" in art, and they experimented. Just read Voltaire's play Mahomet from time to time, and you will see clearly what European culture lost once and for all when that tradition was broken off. Voltaire was the last of the great playwrights who tamed his many-sided soul with Greek measure and balance, a soul strong enough to handle even the greatest storms of tragedy. He could do what no German has yet been able to do, because the French nature is much closer to the Greek nature than the German nature is. He was also the last great writer who handled prose with a Greek ear, with a Greek artist's care, and with Greek simplicity and grace. In fact, he was one of the last people who could unite in himself the greatest freedom of mind with a completely unrevolutionary attitude, without being inconsistent or cowardly. Since then the modern spirit has taken over in every area, with its restlessness and its hatred of measure and limits. First it was let loose by the fever of the Revolution. Then it put the reins back on itself whenever it grew afraid and horrified of itself. But these were the reins of logic, no longer the reins of artistic measure. It is true that, thanks to this setting loose, we can enjoy for a while the poetry of every people: everything that grew up in hidden places, everything raw and original, wild-flowering, strangely beautiful, and hugely irregular, from the folk song all the way up to that "great barbarian" Shakespeare. We taste the joys of local color and costumes from past times, joys that were unknown to all artistic peoples before us. We make full use of the "barbarian advantages" of our time, the ones Goethe pointed to when arguing with Schiller, to show the shapelessness of his Faust in the best possible light. But for how much longer? This flood of poetry in every style from every people, pouring in, must slowly wash away the soil in which quiet, hidden growth might still have been possible. All poets must turn into experimenting imitators

and daredevil copiers, however great their strength may have been at the start. And finally the public will have forgotten how to see the true artistic deed in the taming of creative power and in the organized mastery of all of art's tools. So the public must more and more value power for the sake of power, color for the sake of color, thought for the sake of thought, even sudden inspiration for the sake of sudden inspiration. As a result, it will only enjoy the parts and conditions of a work of art when they are separated out, if at all. And in the end it will make the natural demand that the artist hand them over separately too. Yes, people threw off the "unreasonable" chains of French and Greek art. But without noticing, they got used to thinking that all chains, all limits, are unreasonable. And so art is moving toward its own breakdown. On the way, and this is very instructive, it passes through all the stages of its beginnings: its childhood, its imperfection, its early daring and its excesses. As it falls apart, it explains how it first came into being and grew. One of the great ones, whose instinct you can really trust, and whose theory lacked nothing except thirty more years of practice, Lord Byron, once said: "As for poetry in general, the more I think about it, the firmer my belief becomes that we are all on the wrong road, every one of us. We are all following a revolutionary system that is wrong at its core. Our generation or the next one will come to the same firm belief." This is the same Byron who says: "I consider Shakespeare the worst model to follow, even though he is the most extraordinary poet." And doesn't Goethe's mature artistic insight, from the second half of his life, say exactly the same thing at bottom? That insight put him so far ahead of several generations that you could say, on the whole, Goethe has not yet had his real effect, and his time is still to come. For a long time his nature held him on the path of the poetic revolution. He tasted more fully than anyone all the new finds, views, and tools that had been discovered, indirectly, because the tradition was broken off, things that had been dug up, so to speak, from under the ruins of art. That is

exactly why his later change and conversion carries so much weight. It means that he felt the deepest longing to win back the tradition of art. He wanted, with the imagination of his eye, at least to picture the old perfection and wholeness onto the ruins and columns of the temple that were still standing, in case the strength of his arm proved far too weak to build where such huge forces had already been needed just to tear down. So he lived in art as if in a memory of true art. His poetry had become a tool for remembering and understanding old ages of art that were long gone. His demands could not be met, given the strength of the new age. But the pain of that was more than balanced by the joy that those demands had once been met, and that we too can still share in that fulfilment. Not individual people, but more or less ideal masks. Not reality, but a general meaning told through symbols. The features of a period and local color toned down until they are almost invisible and turned into myth. Present-day feelings and the problems of present-day society squeezed into their simplest forms, stripped of their exciting, thrilling, and unhealthy qualities, and made to have no effect except an artistic one. No new subjects and characters, but the old, long-familiar ones, again and again given new life and reshaped. That is art as Goethe later understood it, and as the Greeks, and the French too, practiced it.

222.

What is left of art. It is true that, if you start from certain beliefs in a world beyond, art becomes worth much more. Take, for example, the belief that a person's character never changes, and that the true nature of the world keeps showing itself in every character and every action. If you believe that, then the artist's work becomes a picture of something that lasts forever. But the way we see things, an artist can only ever make his picture true for a certain time. That is because humankind as a whole has come into being over time and keeps changing,

and even a single person is nothing fixed or lasting. It is the same with another belief of that kind. Suppose our visible world were only how things appear, as the believers in a world beyond assume. Then art would stand fairly close to the real world. For there would be a great deal in common between the world of how things appear and the dreamlike world the artist makes. And whatever difference remained would even make art more important than nature, because art would show what stays the same: the basic types and models that nature follows. But those beliefs are false. So now that we know this, what place is left for art? Above all, for thousands of years art has taught us to look at life in every shape it takes with interest and enjoyment. It has trained our feelings until we finally cry out: "Whatever life may be like, it is good." This lesson from art has two parts: to take pleasure in being alive, and to look at human life as a piece of nature, without getting too worked up about it, as something that develops according to fixed rules. This lesson has grown deep inside us. Now it is coming back into the light as an all-powerful need for knowledge. We could give up art, but we would not lose the ability we learned from it. In the same way, people have given up religion, but they have not lost the heightened and uplifted feelings that religion gave them. Painting, sculpture and music are the measure of how much richness of feeling religion really brought us and added to our lives. In the same way, if art disappeared, the strong and many-sided joy in life that art planted in us would still demand to be satisfied. The person of science and scholarship is what the artistic person grows into next.

223.

The sunset of art. When people grow old, they remember their youth and hold celebrations in its memory. In the same way, humanity will soon look back on art as a touching memory of the joys of its youth.

Perhaps art has never been understood as deeply and with as much feeling as it is now, when the magic of death seems to be playing around it. Think of that Greek town in southern Italy which, on one day each year, still held its Greek festivals. The people did so with sadness and tears, because the foreign, uncivilised ways around them were winning out more and more over the customs they had brought with them. Probably nobody ever enjoyed Greek life so much, and nowhere did anyone sip this golden nectar with such deep delight, as these dying-out Greeks did. Soon people will see the artist as a glorious leftover from the past. They will honour him like a wonderful stranger whose strength and beauty the happiness of earlier times depended on, and they will give him honours we do not easily give to people like ourselves. Perhaps the best thing in us has been passed down from the feelings of earlier times, feelings we can hardly reach directly any more. The sun has already gone down, but the sky of our life still glows and shines with its light, even though we can no longer see the sun itself.

Part Five

Signs of More Advanced and Less Advanced Culture

224.

Becoming nobler by going off the usual track. History teaches us that a people survives best when most of its members share a lively sense of community. This sense comes from everyone holding the same familiar principles, ones nobody ever questions; in other words, it comes from their shared faith. In such a people, good, solid custom grows strong. Here each person learns to put himself below the group, and a firm character is handed to him at birth, like a gift, and then trained into him as he grows up. But these strong communities, built on people who are all alike and all firm in character, face a danger. That danger is a creeping dullness of mind, which gets worse as it is passed down from parents to children. This dullness simply follows every kind of stability, the way a shadow follows a body. In such communities, any progress of the mind depends on the people who are less tied down, much less sure of themselves, and morally weaker. These are the people who try new things, and who try many different things in general. Countless people of this kind are destroyed because of their weakness, without leaving much visible effect. But on the whole, especially when they have children, they loosen things up, and from time to time they give a wound to the stable part of the community. And it is exactly at this wounded, weakened spot that something new is, so to speak, injected into the whole body, the way a doctor gives a vaccine. However, the body as a whole must be strong enough to take this new thing into its blood and make it part of itself. People who stray from the usual type matter enormously wherever progress is supposed to happen. Every big step forward has

to be preceded by a partial weakening. The strongest natures keep the type steady; the weaker ones help it develop further. Something similar is true for a single person. A defect, a crippling injury, even a vice, or any physical or moral loss, rarely comes without some gain on another side. For example, a sicker person living among a warlike and restless tribe may have more reason to be alone, and so may become calmer and wiser. A one-eyed person will have one stronger eye. A blind person will look more deeply inside himself, and will certainly hear more sharply. So in my view, the famous struggle for survival is not the only way to explain how a person or a race moves forward or grows stronger. Instead, two things have to come together. First, the stable strength has to grow, by tying minds together in faith and shared feeling. Second, there has to be a chance to reach higher goals, which happens when people stray from the usual type and, because of them, the stable strength gets partly weakened and wounded. It is precisely the weaker nature, being the more delicate and freer one, that makes any progress possible at all. A people that is crumbling and weak in some places, but is still strong and healthy as a whole, can take in the infection of the new and absorb it to its own benefit. For a single person, the task of education goes like this: make him so firm and secure that, as a whole, he can no longer be pushed off his path at all. But then the educator has to give him wounds, or make use of the wounds that fate gives him. And once pain and need have arisen this way, something new and noble can be injected into the wounded spots. His whole nature will take it in, and later, in what it produces, it will show that it has become nobler. As for the state, Machiavelli says that "the form of government matters very little, even though half-educated people think otherwise. The great aim of governing should be lasting a long time. This outweighs everything else, because it is far more valuable than freedom." Only when the longest possible lasting is firmly founded and guaranteed can steady development and this ennobling injection of the new happen at all. Of course,

authority, the dangerous companion of everything that lasts, will usually fight against it.

225.

Free thinker is a relative idea. We call someone a free thinker when he thinks differently from what people expect of him, based on his background, his surroundings, his social rank and job, or the views that are in fashion at the time. He is the exception; the tied-down minds are the rule. They accuse him of one of two things. Either his free principles come from a craving to stand out, or else they suggest that he does free actions, meaning actions that clash with the tied-down morality. Sometimes people also say that this or that free principle comes from a twisted or overexcited mind. But only spite talks like that. Spite does not even believe what it is saying; it just wants to do harm. For the proof that the free thinker has a better and sharper mind is usually written all over his face, so clearly that the tied-down minds can read it well enough. But the other two explanations of free thinking are meant honestly. And in fact, many free thinkers really do come about in one way or the other. Even so, the conclusions they reached by those paths could still be truer and more reliable than those of the tied-down minds. When it comes to knowledge of the truth, what matters is that you have it, not what drove you to look for it or which path led you to find it. If the free thinkers are right, then the tied-down minds are wrong. It makes no difference whether the free thinkers reached the truth through being immoral, while the others have so far clung to untruth through being moral. Besides, being a free thinker does not mean having more correct views. It means having broken free from custom handed down, whether that turned out well or badly. Usually, though, the free thinker will have the truth on his side, or at least the spirit of searching for truth. He asks for reasons; the others ask for faith.

226.

Where belief comes from. The tied-down mind does not take up its position because of reasons, but because of habit. For example, such a person is a Christian, but not because he looked into the different religions and chose between them. He is English, but not because he decided in favour of England. Instead, he found Christianity and Englishness already there and took them on without reasons, just as someone born in wine country becomes a wine drinker. Later, once he was a Christian and an Englishman, he may also have dug up a few reasons in favour of his habit. You can knock those reasons down, but that will not knock him out of his position as a whole. For example, make a tied-down mind give his reasons against having two wives at once. Then you will find out whether his holy zeal for having only one wife rests on reasons or on habit. Taking on principles of the mind out of habit, without reasons, is what people call faith.

227.

Working backward from results to whether something has reasons or not. - Every state and every order in society, such as social ranks, marriage, education and the law, gets its strength and its staying power only from the belief that tied-down minds have in it. In other words, it rests on having no reasons, or at least on refusing to ask for reasons. Tied-down minds do not like to admit this, and they can sense that it is something to be ashamed of. Christianity was very innocent in its ideas about thinking, and it noticed nothing of this shameful thing. It demanded belief and nothing but belief, and it passionately rejected any demand for reasons. Instead it pointed to what belief would bring you. It hinted: you will soon feel how good it is to believe; through belief you will be saved and made happy. In fact, the state does exactly the same, and every father brings up his son in the same way. "Just hold this to be true," he says, "and you will feel how

good it is for you." But this means that an opinion is supposed to be proven true by the personal benefit it brings. How useful a teaching is, is supposed to guarantee that it is sound and well-founded as a matter of thinking. This is like a man on trial in court saying: "My lawyer is telling the whole truth, because just look at what follows from his speech: I will be set free." - Because tied-down minds hold their principles for the sake of what they get out of them, they suspect that the free thinker is also after his own benefit with his views, and only holds true whatever happens to suit him. But since what seems to help him is the opposite of what helps the people of his country or his social class, they assume that his principles are dangerous to them. They say, or at least feel: "He must not be right, because he does us harm."

228.

The strong, good character. - Being tied to fixed views, once habit has turned it into an instinct, leads to what people call strength of character. When someone acts from only a few motives, but always the same ones, his actions gain great energy. If these actions fit in with the principles of the tied-down minds, they are approved of, and on top of that they give the person doing them the feeling of a good conscience. A few motives, energetic action and a good conscience: that is what people call strength of character. The person with a strong character does not know about the many possible ways and directions in which one could act. His mind is not free; it is tied down, because in any given situation it may show him only two choices. Between these two he must now choose, as his whole nature forces him to, and he does it easily and quickly, because he does not have to choose between fifty possibilities. The people and surroundings that bring a person up want to make every human being unfree, by always putting the smallest possible number of choices in front of him. Those who raise a

person treat him as if he were indeed something new, but something that ought to become a repeat. If a person first appears as something unknown, something that has never existed before, he is supposed to be turned into something known, something that has existed before. In a child, what people call a good character is when you can see that the child is becoming tied to what has been before. When the child takes the side of the tied-down minds, it shows for the first time its growing sense of belonging to the group. And on the basis of this sense of belonging, it later becomes useful to its state or its social class.

229.

How tied-down minds measure things. - There are four kinds of things that tied-down minds say are in the right. First: all things that last are in the right. Second: all things that do not bother us are in the right. Third: all things that bring us an advantage are in the right. Fourth: all things for which we have made sacrifices are in the right. This last one explains, for example, why a war that was started against the will of the people is carried on with enthusiasm as soon as sacrifices have been made. - Free thinkers who argue their case in front of the court of tied-down minds have to prove three things. They have to show that there have always been free thinkers, so that free thinking has lasted. Then they have to show that they do not want to be a bother. And finally they have to show that, on the whole, they bring an advantage to the tied-down minds. But since they cannot convince the tied-down minds of this last point, it does them no good at all to have proven the first and second points.

230.

The strong mind. - Compared with someone who has custom handed down on his side and needs no reasons for what he does, the free

thinker is always weak, especially when it comes to acting. That is because he knows too many motives and points of view, and so his hand is unsure and out of practice. So what ways are there to make him fairly strong after all, so that he can at least hold his own and not go under without having any effect? How does the strong mind, which the French call "esprit fort", come about? In this one case, it is really the question of how genius is produced. Where does the energy come from, the unbending strength, the staying power, with which a single person, going against custom handed down, tries to gain a completely personal knowledge of the world?

231.

How genius comes about. - Think of a prisoner and the cleverness with which he looks for ways to escape, and how coolly and patiently he makes use of every tiny advantage. This can teach us what tool nature sometimes uses to produce genius. And I ask that this word be understood without any flavour of myth or religion. Nature locks it up in a prison and stirs up its desire to break free as much as possible. - Or, to use a different picture: someone who has got completely lost on his way through a forest, but who pushes with enormous energy in some direction to get out into the open, sometimes discovers a new path that nobody knows. This is how the geniuses come about who are praised for being original. - It was already mentioned that when a body part is damaged, crippled or seriously lacking, this often causes another part to develop unusually well, because it has to do its own job and another one as well. From this we can guess where many brilliant talents come from. - Now take these general hints about how genius comes about, and apply them to the special case: how the complete free thinker comes about.

232.

A guess about where free thinking comes from. - Glaciers grow when the sun near the equator burns down on the seas more fiercely than before. In the same way, a very strong free thinking that spreads widely may well be a sign that somewhere the heat of feeling has grown enormously.

233.

The voice of history. - In general, history seems to teach the following lesson about how genius is produced. It calls out to the passions of envy, hatred and rivalry: "Mistreat people and torture them! Drive them to the limit, one person against another, one people against another, and do it for centuries!" Then perhaps, like a stray spark flying off from the terrible energy this has set on fire, the light of genius suddenly blazes up. The will, like a horse driven wild by the rider's spur, then breaks loose and leaps over into a different field. - Anyone who came to understand how genius is produced, and wanted to actually put into practice the way nature usually works, would have to be just as wicked and ruthless as nature. - But perhaps we heard history wrong.

234.

The value of the middle of the road. - Maybe producing a genius is something that can only happen during a limited stretch of human history. We cannot expect the future of humanity to also give us everything that only very specific conditions in some past time were able to produce. For example, we cannot expect again the amazing effects of religious feeling. Religious feeling has had its time, and many very good things can never grow again, because they could only grow out of it. So there will never again be a way of life and a culture whose

whole horizon is fenced in by religion. Maybe even the type of the saint is only possible when the mind is caught up in a certain narrowness, and that, it seems, is over for good. In the same way, the highest peak of intelligence may have been saved up for one single age of humanity. It appeared, and is still appearing, because we are still living in that age, at a moment when an extraordinary amount of willpower, built up over a long time, was passed down through inheritance and, as an exception, turned towards goals of the mind. That peak will be over once this wildness and energy are no longer bred to grow strong. Perhaps humanity comes closer to its real goal halfway along its road, in the middle period of its existence, than it does at the end. The forces that art depends on, for example, could simply die out. The pleasure people take in lying, in being vague, in symbols, in being carried away and in ecstasy could come to be looked down on. In fact, once life is fully organised in the perfect state, the present will offer no reason at all to write poetry. Only the people who have fallen behind would still long for the unreal world of poetry. These people would then surely look back with longing to the times of the imperfect state, of a half-barbaric society, back to our own times.

235.

Genius and the ideal state are at odds. - The socialists want to create a comfortable, good life for as many people as possible. If the lasting home of this comfortable life, the perfect state, were really reached, then this very comfort would destroy the soil from which great minds, and powerful individuals in general, grow. By that soil I mean strong energy. Once this state was reached, humanity would have become too weak and tired to produce a genius any more. So shouldn't we wish that life keeps its violent character, and that wild forces and energies are stirred up again and again? Now, the warm, caring heart wants exactly the opposite: it wants that violent and wild character of

life removed. And the warmest heart you could imagine would long for this most passionately of all. Yet its passion took its fire, its warmth, even its very existence from that wild and violent character of life. So the warmest heart wants to remove its own foundation, to destroy itself. And that means it wants something that makes no logical sense; it is not intelligent. The highest intelligence and the warmest heart cannot live together in one person. The wise man who passes judgement on life also places himself above kindness, and sees it only as one more thing to be weighed up in the overall accounting of life. The wise man has to resist those excessive wishes of unintelligent kindness, because he cares about his own type surviving and about the highest mind finally coming into being. At the very least, he will not help to set up the "perfect state", since only worn-out, weakened individuals would have room in it. Christ, on the other hand, whom we will imagine for a moment as the warmest heart, helped make people duller. He took the side of those who were poor in mind, and he held back the birth of the greatest minds. And that was consistent with who he was. His opposite, the perfect wise man, will, we can safely predict, just as surely get in the way of another Christ being born. - The state is a clever arrangement for protecting individuals from one another. But if you push its improvement too far, in the end it weakens the individual, even dissolves him. And so the original purpose of the state is defeated more completely than by anything else.

236.

The climate zones of culture. - You could say, as a comparison, that the ages of culture are like the belts of different climates on the earth, except that they lie one after another in time, not side by side like geographic zones. Compared with the temperate zone of culture, which it is our task to move into, the past mostly gives the impres-

sion of a tropical climate. There we find violent contrasts, sudden switches between day and night, heat and a blaze of colour, the worship of everything sudden, mysterious and terrifying, storms that break out quickly, and everywhere nature pouring out its riches without limit, as if from overflowing horns of plenty. Against this, in our culture, we have a clear but not glowing sky, pure air that stays fairly much the same, sharpness, and now and then even cold. That is how the two zones stand out against each other. When we look back there and see how the most furious passions were wrestled down and broken with eerie force by ideas about a world beyond, it feels to us as if we were watching wild tigers in the tropics being crushed in the coils of enormous snakes. Our mental climate has no such events. Our imagination is mild; even in our dreams we do not come up with the things earlier peoples saw while wide awake. But shouldn't we be allowed to be glad about this change? Even if we admit that artists have lost a great deal through the disappearance of tropical culture, and that they find us non-artists a little too sober and dull? In that sense, artists may well have the right to deny "progress". Because in fact, whether the last three thousand years show steady progress in the arts is, at the very least, open to doubt. In the same way, a philosopher of the world beyond, like Schopenhauer, will have no reason to see progress when he looks over the last four thousand years of philosophy about the world beyond and of religion. - For us, though, the very existence of the temperate zone of culture counts as progress.

237.

Renaissance and Reformation. - The Italian Renaissance carried inside it all the positive forces that modern culture owes its existence to. These were: freeing thought, refusing to bow to authorities, the victory of education over the snobbery of noble birth, - excitement about science and scholarship and about humanity's scientific past, setting

the individual free, a burning love of truthfulness and a dislike of fake appearances and mere showing off. (That burning love blazed up in a whole crowd of artistic personalities, who demanded perfection in their work, and nothing but perfection, with the highest moral purity.) In fact, the Renaissance had positive forces that have not yet become that powerful again in our modern culture so far. It was the golden age of this thousand years, in spite of all its stains and vices. Against this, the German Reformation stands out as a forceful protest by minds that had fallen behind. These people were not at all tired of the medieval way of seeing the world. They saw the signs that the Middle Ages were falling apart - the way religious life had become extremely shallow and all about outward show. But instead of cheering at this, as they should have, they felt deep resentment. With their northern strength and stubbornness, they threw people back again. They forced the Counter-Reformation into being, which means a Catholic Christianity fighting in self-defence, with all the violence of a city under siege. In doing so, they delayed by two or three hundred years the full awakening and rule of science and scholarship. And they also made it impossible, perhaps forever, for the ancient spirit and the modern spirit to grow together fully into one. The great task of the Renaissance could not be finished. What stopped it was the protest of the German character, which had fallen behind in the meantime. (Back in the Middle Ages, that same German character had been sensible enough to cross the Alps into Italy again and again, for its own good.) It was the chance result of an unusual political situation that Luther survived back then and that his protest gained strength. The Emperor protected him, so that he could use Luther's new movement as a tool to put pressure on the Pope. And the Pope, too, quietly favoured him, so that he could use the Protestant princes of the Empire as a counterweight against the Emperor. Without this strange mix of intentions, Luther would have been burned at the stake like

Hus. And the dawn of the Enlightenment might have risen somewhat earlier, and shone more beautifully, than we can now even guess.

238.

Being fair to the God who is still coming into being. - Suppose the whole history of culture opens up before your eyes as a tangle of evil and noble ideas, true and false ones. Watching these waves rise and fall, you almost start to feel seasick. Then you can understand what comfort lies in the idea of a God who is still developing. Such a God reveals himself more and more through the changes and the fate of humankind. In that view, not everything is blind machinery, a meaningless and pointless jumble of forces bumping into each other. Treating change and development as something divine is a view that reaches beyond this world - like looking down from a lighthouse onto the sea of history. A generation of scholars who were far too obsessed with history found their comfort in that view. We should not get angry about that, however mistaken that idea may be. Only someone like Schopenhauer, who denies that there is any development at all, feels nothing of the misery of these waves of history. And so, because he knows nothing and feels nothing of that developing God, or of the need to believe in him, he has every right to make fun of it.

239.

Each season has its own fruit. - Any better future that we wish for humankind will necessarily also be, in some ways, a worse future. It is just wishful dreaming to believe that a new, higher stage of humanity will combine all the good points of earlier stages, and that it must, for example, also produce the highest form of art. In fact, each season has its own advantages and charms, and these shut out the advantages and charms of the other seasons. Whatever grew out of religion, or grew up close beside it, cannot grow again once religion has been des-

troyed. At most, a few stray shoots that sprout late might fool us about this. The same goes for the memory of the old art that bursts out now and then. That state of things does show a feeling of loss and of missing something. But it is no proof of the strength that a new art could be born from.

240.

The world is getting more serious. - The more advanced a person's culture becomes, the more areas of life are no longer open to jokes and mockery. Voltaire was thankful to heaven, from the bottom of his heart, for inventing marriage and the Church, because heaven had taken such good care of our entertainment that way. But he and his age, and the sixteenth century before him, mocked these topics until there was nothing left to mock. Any joke someone makes about these things now comes too late, and above all it is far too cheap to make anyone want to buy it. Nowadays people ask about the causes; this is the age of seriousness. Who still cares about seeing the funny side of the gap between reality and grand appearances - between what a person really is and what he tries to look like? The feeling for these contrasts soon has a very different effect once you start looking for the reasons behind them. The more deeply someone understands life, the less he will mock it - except that in the end he might still mock "how deeply he understands."

241.

The genius of culture. - If someone wanted to imagine a genius, a guiding spirit, of culture, what would it be like? It handles lies, violence and the most ruthless selfishness so confidently as its tools that you could only call it an evil, demonic being. But its goals, which shine through here and there, are great and good. It is a centaur, half

animal and half human, and on top of that it has angel's wings on its head.

242.

Miracle education. - People will only start to care deeply about education from the moment they give up believing in a God who looks after us. In the same way, medicine could only flourish once people stopped believing in miracle cures. But so far, everyone still believes in miracle education. After all, people have seen the most productive and most powerful human beings grow up out of the greatest disorder, confused goals and bad conditions. How could that possibly happen in a natural way? - Now, and soon in these cases too, people will look more closely and check more carefully. They will never discover a miracle there. Under the same conditions, large numbers of people keep on going under. The one individual who is saved has usually become stronger because of it. He got through those bad circumstances thanks to a tough inborn strength that could not be destroyed, and he has also trained and increased that strength. That is how the miracle is explained. An education that no longer believes in miracles will have to pay attention to three things. First, how much energy has been inherited? Second, what can light the spark of new energy? Third, how can the individual be fitted to the many, many different demands of culture, without those demands unsettling him and breaking his unique character into pieces? In short: how can the individual take his place in the counterpoint - the interweaving of musical lines - of private and public culture? How can he both lead the melody and, at the same time, accompany it as a melody?

243.

The future of the doctor. Right now there is no job that could rise as high as the job of the doctor. This is especially true now that the

doctors of the soul, the so-called pastors, are no longer allowed to practise their magic spells to public applause, and educated people keep out of their way. A doctor has not reached the highest level of mental training just because he knows the best and newest methods and is skilled in them, and just because he can make those quick leaps from effects back to causes that make diagnosticians famous. On top of that, he must have a way of speaking that fits itself to each single person and wins that person's heart completely. He must have a manly strength whose mere sight drives away faint-heartedness, which is like a worm eating away at every sick person. He must have a diplomat's smooth skill in going between two kinds of people: those who need joy in order to get better, and those who, for the sake of health, must bring joy to others, and are able to. He must have the sharpness of a police detective and a lawyer, so he can understand the secrets of a soul without giving them away. In short, a good doctor today needs the tricks and special skills of every other profession. Equipped like this, he can then become a helper of the whole of society. He can do this by increasing good deeds, joy of the mind, and creative energy. He can do it by preventing evil thoughts, evil plans, and wicked acts, whose disgusting source is so often the belly. He can do it by building up an upper class that is fine in both mind and body, by acting as a matchmaker and as someone who stops bad marriages. And he can do it by kindly cutting away all so-called torments of the soul and pangs of conscience. Only then does he change from a "medicine man" into a saviour. And yet he does not need to work any miracles, and he does not need to let himself be crucified either.

244.

Close to madness. The total of feelings, knowledge, and experiences, in other words the whole weight of culture, has grown so huge that the general danger is overstraining our nerves and our powers of

thinking. In fact, the educated classes of the European countries are neurotic through and through, and almost every one of their larger families has one member who has come close to madness. It is true that people now try in every possible way to support health. But the main thing that is still needed is to lower that tension of feeling, that crushing weight of culture. Even if this has to be paid for with heavy losses, it still gives us room for the great hope of a new Renaissance, a new rebirth. We owe Christianity, the philosophers, the poets, and the musicians an overflow of deeply stirred feelings. So that these feelings do not grow over us like weeds, we must call up the scientific spirit. On the whole, this spirit makes us a bit cooler and more doubtful, and above all it cools down the burning flood of belief in final, ultimate truths. That flood became so wild mainly because of Christianity.

245.

Casting the bell of culture. Culture came into being the way a bell is cast: inside a mould made of rougher, cheaper material. That mould was made of untruth, violence, and the limitless spreading out of every single self and every single people. Is it now time to take that mould off? Has the liquid metal hardened? Have the good, useful drives and the habits of a nobler heart become so secure and so common that we no longer need to lean on belief in a world beyond and on the mistakes of religions? Do we no longer need harshness and violence as the strongest glue between person and person, and between nation and nation? To answer this question, no sign from a god can help us any more: our own understanding has to decide. Humans must take the government of the earth, on the large scale, into their own hands. Their own "knowing everything" must watch with a sharp eye over the future fate of culture.

246.

The giants who build culture. When you see those deep, scarred hollows where glaciers once lay, you can hardly believe that a time will come when, in that same spot, a valley of meadows and forests with streams running through it will stretch out. It is the same in the history of humanity. The wildest forces break a path, destroying things at first. But even so, their work was needed so that, later on, a gentler way of life could build its home there. These terrible energies, what people call evil, are like the giant Cyclops of old legend: they are the mighty architects and road-builders of humanity.

247.

The circle of humanity. Maybe the whole of humanity is only one stage in the development of a certain kind of animal, and it will last only a limited time. So humans came from the ape and will turn back into the ape, while nobody is there to take any interest in this strange ending to the comedy. When Roman culture fell apart, its most important cause being the spread of Christianity, people throughout the Roman Empire became uglier in general. In the same way, if the culture of the whole earth falls apart one day, it could bring about a much greater ugliness in people, and finally turn them into beasts, all the way down to something like apes. But precisely because we can look ahead and see this possibility, we may be able to prevent such an end in the future.

248.

Words of comfort from a desperate kind of progress. Our time gives the impression of being an in-between stage. The old ways of looking at the world and the old cultures are still partly here. The new ones are not yet secure or habitual, so they lack unity and consistency. It

looks as if everything is turning into chaos, as if the old is getting lost while the new is worthless and keeps getting weaker. But this is what happens to a soldier who is learning to march. For a while he is more unsure and clumsier than ever, because his muscles move sometimes by the old system and sometimes by the new one, and neither has clearly won yet. We waver, but we must not let this make us afraid, and we must not give up what we have newly gained. Besides, we cannot go back to the old: we have burned our ships behind us. All that is left is to be brave, whatever comes of it in the end. So let us just keep walking, let us just get moving! Maybe one day the way we behave will look like progress after all. But if not, then the words of Frederick the Great may be said to us too, and as a comfort. He said, in French: "Ah, my dear Sulzer, you do not know well enough this cursed race to which we belong."

249.

Suffering from the past of culture. Anyone who has seen clearly what the problem of culture is will then suffer from a feeling much like that of someone who has inherited wealth gained by unjust means, or like that of a prince who rules because of the violence of his ancestors. He thinks about where he came from with sadness, and he often feels ashamed and often easily upset. All the strength, will to live, and joy that he puts into what he owns is often balanced out by a deep tiredness: he cannot forget where he came from. He looks at the future with sorrow. He knows ahead of time that his children and grandchildren will suffer from the past just as he does.

250.

Manners. Good manners fade away as the influence of the royal court and of a closed-off nobility grows weaker. You can see this decline clearly from one decade to the next, if you have an eye for public cere-

monies, because they are plainly getting more and more crude and common. Nobody knows anymore how to pay tribute or give compliments in a clever, witty way. This leads to a ridiculous situation. Nowadays, when people have to honour someone in public (for example, a great statesman or artist), they borrow the language of the deepest feeling, of trusting, solid, honest-hearted plainness. They do this because they feel awkward and lack wit and grace. So when people meet in public on festive occasions, they seem clumsier and clumsier, but also more full of feeling and more honest, though they are not really so. But will manners just keep going downhill forever? To me it seems more likely that manners are moving along a deep curve, like a dip in a road, and that we are getting close to the lowest point. Once society has become surer of its own aims and principles, so that these start to shape how people behave, there will be new manners. Right now, the learned manners left over from earlier times, when other things shaped behaviour, are being passed down and taught more and more weakly. But then there will be ways of treating each other, gestures and expressions for dealing with one another, that will seem just as necessary and simply natural as those aims and principles themselves. All of this will come from a better sharing out of time and work, from exercise and sport turned into a companion of every pleasant stretch of free time, and from more and stricter thinking, which gives even the body good sense and ease of movement. Here, of course, one could think of our scholars with a bit of mockery, and ask: do they, who want to be the forerunners of this new culture, actually stand out for their better manners? That is probably not the case, even though their spirit may be willing enough. But their flesh is weak. The past is still too strong in their muscles. They are still in a position that is not free. They are half priests without a church, and half dependent teachers serving noble people and upper classes. On top of that, they have been crippled and made lifeless by the fussy narrowness of science and scholarship and by old, dull, spiritless

methods. So, at least in their bodies, and often in three quarters of their minds too, they are still the courtiers of an old culture, even a worn-out, elderly culture, and so they are worn-out and elderly themselves. The new spirit that sometimes rumbles around inside these old shells, like a noise in an old house, only makes them more unsure and more anxious for now. Both the ghosts of the past and the ghosts of the future haunt them. So is it any wonder that they don't put on the best face, or carry themselves in the most pleasing way?

251.

The future of science and scholarship. Science and scholarship give a lot of enjoyment to the person who works and searches in them, but very little to the person who just learns their results. And over time, all the important truths of science and scholarship are bound to become everyday and ordinary, so even this small enjoyment comes to an end. It is like learning the times tables: they are truly something to admire, but we stopped being delighted by them long ago. Now, science and scholarship give less and less joy on their own. At the same time, they take away more and more joy, by casting doubt on the comforting belief in a world beyond, on religion and on art. When that happens, the greatest source of pleasure dries up, the source to which humanity owes almost everything that makes it human. That is why a more advanced culture must give people a double brain, as if it had two rooms: one for feeling science and scholarship, and one for feeling what is not science. These two rooms must lie side by side, without getting mixed up, able to be kept apart and closed off from each other. This is something health demands. In one room lies the source of power, in the other the regulator, the thing that keeps it under control. Think of a furnace: it has to be fed with fuel, and the fuel is illusions, one-sided views and passions. And with the help of science and scholarship, which seek knowledge, we must prevent the

nasty and dangerous results of overheating. If this demand of a more advanced culture is not met, then what will happen next in human development can be predicted almost for certain. Interest in what is true will die out, the less pleasure it gives. Illusion, mistake and fantasy, because they bring pleasure, will fight their way back, step by step, onto the ground they once held. The next result will be the ruin of science and scholarship and a sinking back into a savage, uncivilised state. Humanity will have to start weaving its cloth all over again, after it has unravelled it during the night, just like Penelope in the old Greek story. But who can promise us that it will always find the strength to start again?

252.

The pleasure of gaining knowledge. Why is gaining knowledge, which is the natural home of the researcher and the philosopher, tied up with pleasure? First and most of all, because while doing it you become aware of your own strength. So it is for the same reason that exercise is enjoyable even when no one is watching. Second, because as your knowledge grows, you get past older ideas and the people who stand for them. You become the winner, or at least you believe you are. Third, because even the tiniest bit of new knowledge makes us feel above everyone else, as if we were the only ones who know the right answer on this point. These three reasons for pleasure are the most important, but there are many smaller reasons too, depending on the nature of the person seeking knowledge. A fairly long list of these can be found in a place where you wouldn't expect it: in my essay about Schopenhauer, which was written to encourage and urge on the reader. Any experienced servant of knowledge can be satisfied with what it lays out, even if he would rather wish away the touch of irony that seems to hang over those pages. For it may be true that, to make a scholar, "a lot of very human drives and little urges have to be

poured together". It may be true that the scholar is a very noble metal, but not a pure one, and that he "is made up of a tangled web of very different drives and stimuli". But the same is also true of how the artist, the philosopher and the moral genius come into being and what they are made of, and of all the other great names that are praised to the skies in that essay. Everything human deserves to be looked at with irony when you consider how it came to be. That is why irony is so unnecessary in the world: there is already so much to be ironic about that adding more is pointless.

253.

Loyalty as proof that something holds up. It is a perfect sign that a theory is good if the person who came up with it doesn't start to distrust it for forty years. But I claim that there has never yet been a philosopher who did not, in the end, look down on the philosophy he invented in his youth with contempt, or at least with suspicion. But perhaps he did not speak publicly about this change of mind. Maybe this was out of a hunger for honour, or, as is more likely with noble people, out of a gentle wish to spare the feelings of his followers.

254.

Things become more interesting. As a person's education grows more advanced, everything becomes interesting to him. He quickly knows how to find the side of a thing he can learn from, and he can point to the exact spot where it fills a gap in his thinking or backs up one of his ideas. Along the way, boredom disappears more and more, and so does the tendency to get too easily worked up. In the end he moves among people the way a naturalist moves among plants, and he even sees himself as just one more thing to study, something that does nothing but strongly stir up his drive for knowledge.

255.

Superstition about things that happen at the same time. People think that when two things happen at the same time, they must be connected. A relative dies far away, and at that very moment we dream about him. "So there you have it!" we say. But countless relatives die and we don't dream about them at all. It's like the shipwrecked sailors who make vows to the gods if they are saved. Later, in the temple, you see the thank-you plaques of the ones who survived. You never see plaques from those who drowned. A person dies, an owl screeches, a clock stops, all in the same hour of the night. Surely there must be some connection? People are flattered by this hunch, because it assumes nature is on such close and personal terms with them. This kind of superstition shows up again, in a more refined form, among historians and writers who paint pictures of whole cultures. They tend to have a sort of fear of water, a horror, of things that simply sit side by side with no meaning. And yet the lives of single people and of whole nations are full of exactly such meaningless side-by-side happenings.

256.

Science trains your ability, not just your knowledge. Suppose you have spent some time doing a strict science in a strict way. The value of that does not really lie in the results you got. Compared with the ocean of things worth knowing, those results will be a tiny drop that hardly counts. But the work gives you more energy, a better ability to reason things out, and tougher staying power. You have learned how to reach a goal in a way that actually fits the goal. That is why it is very valuable, for everything you do later in life, to have once been a scientific person.

257.

The youthful charm of science. Searching for truth still has a special charm right now. Everywhere, truth stands out sharply against mistakes, which have grown grey and boring. But this charm is slowly fading. For now, it's true, we are still living in the youth of science and scholarship, and we usually chase after truth the way one chases a pretty girl. But what happens when, one day, she has turned into an ageing, sour-faced woman? In almost every science, the basic insight has either been found only very recently or is still being searched for. How much more exciting that is than when everything important has already been found, and all that is left for the researcher is a poor little gleaning after the autumn harvest, picking up the last scraps. That feeling is one you can get to know in some areas of history.

258.

The statue of humanity. The genius of culture works the way the artist Cellini did when he was casting his statue of Perseus. The melted metal looked as if it would not be enough, but it had to be enough. So he threw in bowls and plates and whatever else came to hand. In just the same way, the genius of culture throws in mistakes, vices, hopes, illusions and other things, some made of cheaper metal and some of nobler metal. After all, the statue of humanity has to come out and be finished. What does it matter if poorer material was used here and there?

259.

A culture of men. Greek culture in the classical age was a culture of men. As for women, Pericles says it all in his famous funeral speech. He says women are at their best when men talk about them as little as possible. The love relationship between men and young men was,

to a degree we can hardly understand, the necessary and only basis for all education of males. It was a bit like how, among us, for a long time women only got any higher education through a love affair and marriage. All the idealism and strength of the Greek nature poured itself into that relationship. Probably young people have never again been treated so attentively, so lovingly, and so completely with their best qualities in mind, what the Romans called virtus, as in the sixth and fifth centuries before Christ. This fits the beautiful line by the poet Hölderlin: "for in loving, the mortal gives of his best." The more highly this relationship was valued, the lower dealings with women sank. Only two things counted there: having children and physical pleasure. Nothing more. There was no meeting of minds, not even real romance. Think, too, that women were shut out of contests and shows of every kind. Then the only higher entertainment left to women was religious worship. Now, it's true that Electra and Antigone, strong women, were put on stage in tragedies. But people put up with that in art, even though they did not like it in real life. It's just like today: we can't stand anything highly emotional and dramatic in real life, but we enjoy watching it in art. Women had no other task than to produce beautiful, powerful bodies, in which the father's character lived on as unbroken as possible. In this way they were meant to work against the growing nervous over-excitement of such a highly developed culture. That is what kept Greek culture young for a comparatively long time. For in the Greek mothers, the Greek genius kept returning again and again to nature.

260.

The prejudice in favour of greatness. People clearly overrate everything that is great and stands out. This comes from a realization, conscious or not, that it is very useful for them when someone throws all his strength into one single field and turns himself, so to speak,

into one monstrous organ. For the person himself, though, it is surely more useful and brings more happiness to develop all his powers evenly. For every talent is a vampire that sucks blood and strength out of the person's other powers. And producing too much can drive even the most gifted person almost to madness. In the arts, too, extreme types attract far too much attention. But it also takes a much lower level of culture to be gripped by them. Out of habit, people bow down to anything that wants to have power.

261.

The tyrants of the mind. Only where the light of myth falls does the life of the Greeks shine. Everywhere else it is dark and gloomy. Now, the Greek philosophers took away this very myth from themselves. Isn't that as if they wanted to move out of the sunshine and sit in the shade, in the gloom? But no plant turns away from the light. Deep down, those philosophers were only looking for a brighter sun. To them, myth was not pure enough and not bright enough. They found this light in their knowledge, in what each of them called his "truth." Back then, knowledge still had a greater shine to it. It was still young and knew very little about all the difficulties and dangers along its paths. In those days it could still hope to reach the very center of everything that exists in one single leap, and to solve the riddle of the world from there. These philosophers had a solid, sturdy faith in themselves and in their "truth," and they used it to knock down all their neighbors and all who came before them. Each of them was a quarrelsome, violent tyrant. Maybe the happiness of believing that you own the truth was never greater in the world. But the harshness, the cockiness, the bullying and the evil of such a belief were never greater either. They were tyrants, which means they were what every Greek wanted to be, and what every Greek actually was whenever he could be. Perhaps only Solon is an exception. In his poems he tells

how he turned down the chance to rule as a tyrant himself. But he did that out of love for his work, for the laws he was making. And being a lawmaker is just a more refined-down form of being a tyrant. Parmenides also gave laws, and probably Pythagoras and Empedocles did too. Anaximander founded a city. Plato was the wish made flesh: the wish to become the highest philosophical lawmaker and founder of states. He seems to have suffered terribly because his true nature was never fulfilled, and toward the end of his life his soul filled up with the blackest bitterness. The more power Greek philosophy lost, the more it suffered inside from this bitterness and this urge to insult others. Once the different schools began fighting for their truths out on the streets, the souls of all these suitors of truth were completely clogged with mud, from jealousy and from spitting rage. The tyrant in them now raged like poison in their bodies. These many little tyrants would have liked to eat each other alive. There was not a spark of love left in them, and far too little joy in their own knowledge. In general, the saying that tyrants are usually murdered and that their children and heirs do not live long also holds true for the tyrants of the mind. Their story is short and violent, and their influence breaks off suddenly. You could say about almost all the great Greeks that they seem to have come too late: Aeschylus, Pindar, Demosthenes, Thucydides. One generation after them, and then it is always completely over. That is what is so stormy and eerie about Greek history. Nowadays, it is true, people admire the gospel of the tortoise, the idea that slow is best. Thinking historically now almost means believing that history was always made by the rule: "as little as possible in as long a time as possible!" Oh, but Greek history moves so fast! Never again did people live so lavishly, so without limits. I cannot convince myself that the history of the Greeks took that natural course that people praise it for. They were far too gifted in far too many ways to move gradually, step by step, the way the tortoise does in its race with Achilles. And that, after all, is what people call natural development.

With the Greeks, things move forward fast, but they go downhill just as fast. The whole machine runs at such a high speed that a single stone thrown into its wheels makes it burst apart. Socrates, for example, was such a stone. In one night, the development of philosophical science and scholarship, which until then had been so wonderfully steady, though admittedly far too rushed, was destroyed. It is not a pointless question to ask whether Plato, if he had stayed free of Socrates' spell, might have discovered an even higher type of philosophical human being, a type that is now lost to us forever. Looking at the times before him is like looking into a sculptor's workshop where such types were being shaped. Yet the sixth and fifth centuries before Christ seem to promise even more, and higher things, than they actually produced. But it stayed at promising and announcing. And yet there is hardly a heavier loss than the loss of a type, of a new and highest possibility of philosophical life that had never been discovered before. Even of the older types, most have been badly passed down to us. All the philosophers from Thales to Democritus seem to me extremely hard to make out. But whoever manages to recreate these figures walks among shapes of the mightiest and purest kind. This ability is rare, of course. Even the later Greeks who studied the older philosophy lacked it. Aristotle especially seems not to have eyes in his head when he stands in front of these figures. And so it seems as if these magnificent philosophers had lived for nothing, or as if their only purpose had been to prepare the way for the quarrelsome, chattering crowds of the Socratic schools. Here, as I said, there is a gap, a break in the development. Some great disaster must have happened. The one statue that would have shown the meaning and purpose of all that great practice work by the sculptors either broke or turned out badly. What really happened has remained a secret of the workshop forever. What happened among the Greeks was this: every great thinker, believing he owned the absolute truth, became a tyrant. So the history of the mind among the Greeks took on the same violent,

rushed and dangerous character that their political history shows. But this kind of event did not end with them. Much of the same has happened right up to the most recent times, though less and less often, and these days hardly ever with the pure, innocent conscience of the Greek philosophers. For on the whole, opposing views and doubt now speak too powerfully and too loudly. The age of the tyrants of the mind is over. In the realms of more advanced culture, there will of course always have to be some kind of rule. But from now on, that rule lies in the hands of the oligarchs of the mind, a small group of leading thinkers who share power. Even though they are separated by distance and by politics, they form a society that belongs together. Its members recognize one another and respect one another, no matter what public opinion says, and no matter what judgments of praise or blame are spread around by the newspaper and magazine writers who influence the masses. Mental superiority, which used to divide people and make them enemies, now tends to bring them together. How could these individuals hold their ground and swim through life on their own course, against every current, if they did not see others like themselves, here and there, living under the same conditions, and take their hands? They need each other in the fight against the mob-rule of the half-educated and half-thinking, and just as much against the occasional attempts to set up a tyranny with the help of the masses. The oligarchs need one another. They take their greatest joy in each other. They understand each other's badges and signs. But even so, each of them is free. Each one fights and wins at his own post, and would rather go under than give in.

262.

Homer. – The biggest fact in Greek culture is still this: Homer became the shared property of all the Greeks very early on. All the freedom of mind and of human life that the Greeks ever reached goes back to this

fact. But at the same time it was the real doom of Greek culture. By pulling everything toward one center, Homer made things shallower, and he dissolved the more serious instincts for independence. Every now and then, from the deepest roots of Greek life, a protest rose up against Homer; but Homer always won. All great powers of the mind set people free, but they also hold people down. Still, of course, it makes a difference whether it is Homer, or the Bible, or science and scholarship that rule over people like tyrants.

263.

Gifts. – In a humanity as highly developed as ours is today, everyone is born with access to many talents. Everyone has some inborn talent. But only a few are born with, and brought up to have, enough toughness, staying power and energy to really become a talent. That means: to become what he already is, by letting it out in works and actions.

264.

The clever person is either overrated or underrated. – People who are not scientific, but who are gifted, value every sign of cleverness, whether it is on the right track or the wrong one. Above all, they want the person who spends time with them to entertain them well with his cleverness. They want him to spur them on, set them on fire, sweep them along into seriousness and into fun, and in any case to protect them from boredom, like the strongest lucky charm. People with a scientific nature, on the other hand, know that the gift of having all sorts of bright ideas must be held in check very strictly by the scientific spirit. What such a person wants to shake down from the tree of knowledge is not the fruit that glitters, shines and excites. It is the truth, which often looks quite plain. Like Aristotle, he must not make any difference between "boring" people and "clever" people. His inner guiding spirit leads him through the desert just as much as

through lush tropical jungle, so that everywhere he finds joy only in what is real, lasting and genuine. – Out of this comes, among unimportant scholars, a contempt for clever people in general and a suspicion of them. And in turn, clever people often dislike science and scholarship: almost all artists do, for example.

265.

Reason in school. – School has no more important job than to teach strict thinking, careful judging, and drawing conclusions step by step in a consistent way. So it should leave aside everything that is no good for these tasks, religion for example. After all, school can count on this: later on, human vagueness, habit and need will loosen the bow of thinking again, after it has been drawn too tight. But as far as its influence reaches, school should force out what is essential and special about human beings – "reason and science and scholarship, man's very highest power", as Goethe, at least, judges. – The great natural scientist von Baer sees the superiority of all Europeans over Asians in a trained ability: they can give reasons for what they believe, which the Asians, he says, are completely unable to do. Europe has gone through the school of consistent and critical thinking. Asia, he says, still cannot tell truth from fiction, and does not know whether its firm beliefs come from its own observation and proper thinking or from fantasies. – Reason in school made Europe into Europe. In the Middle Ages, Europe was on its way to becoming once again a piece of Asia and a tail hanging off it – that is, to losing the scientific sense it owed to the Greeks.

266.

The underrated effect of grammar-school teaching. – People seldom look for the value of the classical grammar school in the things that are really learned there and that pupils carry home with them for

good. Instead they look for it in the things that are taught there, but that the pupil takes in only unwillingly, so that he can shake them off as soon as he is allowed. Reading the classics – every educated person admits this – is, the way it is done everywhere, a monstrous procedure. It happens in front of young people who are in no way ready for it, and it is led by teachers who, with every word, and often just by showing up, spread a kind of mildew over a good author. But here lies the value that is usually overlooked. These teachers speak the abstract language of more advanced culture. That language is heavy and hard to understand, but it is a high-level workout for the head. Ideas, technical terms, methods and hints keep turning up in their speech that the young people almost never hear when their families talk, or out on the street. If the pupils just listen, their minds are shaped in advance, without their even meaning it, toward a scientific way of looking at things. It is impossible to come out of this training completely untouched by abstract thinking, as a pure child of nature.

267.

Learning many languages. – Learning many languages fills the memory with words instead of with facts and thoughts. Yet memory is a container that, in every person, can only hold a certain limited amount. Next, learning many languages does harm because it makes people believe they have real skills, and it actually does give them a certain tempting prestige when they deal with others. It also does harm in a roundabout way, because it works against getting deep knowledge and against the aim of earning people's respect honestly. Finally, it is the axe laid at the root of the finer feeling for language in one's own mother tongue: that feeling is damaged beyond healing and ruined. The two peoples who produced the greatest masters of style, the Greeks and the French, did not learn foreign languages. – But people's dealings with one another must keep becoming more interna-

tional. For example, a proper merchant in London today already has to make himself understood in eight languages, in writing and in speech. So learning many languages is, of course, a necessary evil. But when it finally reaches the extreme, it will force humanity to find a cure. In some far-off future there will be a new language for everyone, first as a language for trade, and then as a language for all exchange of ideas – as surely as there will one day be travel by air. Otherwise, why would the science of language have spent a whole century studying the laws of language and weighing up what is necessary, valuable and successful in each single language!

268.

On the war history of the individual. – In a single human life that passes through several cultures, we find packed together the struggle that otherwise plays out between two generations, between father and son. Being closely related makes this struggle sharper, because each side ruthlessly drags in the other side's inner life, which it knows so well. And so this struggle will be most bitter inside one single person. Here each new stage tramples over the earlier ones with cruel unfairness, misunderstanding what their means and their goals were.

269.

A quarter of an hour early. – Now and then you find someone whose views are ahead of his time, but only by just enough that he reaches the common opinions of the next ten years before everyone else. He holds public opinion before it has become public. That means: he has fallen into the arms of a view that deserves to become commonplace a quarter of an hour sooner than other people did. But his fame is usually much louder than the fame of the truly great and superior people.

270.

The art of reading. Every strong movement is one-sided. It comes close to being a straight line, and like a straight line it shuts other things out. That means it does not touch many other directions, the way weak parties and weak characters do as they wave back and forth. So we should also forgive scholars of old texts for being one-sided. For centuries, one group of experts kept working at rebuilding old texts, keeping them pure, and explaining them. Because of that, the right methods have finally been found. The whole of the Middle Ages was deeply unable to give a strict, careful explanation of a text, which simply means wanting to understand what the author actually says. Finding these methods was a real achievement, and no one should underrate it! All science and scholarship only gained an unbroken line and steady progress once the art of reading correctly, which is what the study of texts is, reached its peak.

271.

The art of reasoning. The greatest step forward that humans have made is that they learned to reason correctly, drawing the right conclusions from what they know. This is not at all something natural, as Schopenhauer believes when he says: "Everyone is able to reason, but few are able to judge." No, it was learned late, and even now it is not yet in charge. In older times, faulty reasoning was the rule. The myths of all peoples, their magic and their superstitions, their religious rituals, and their laws are an endless source of proof for this claim.

272.

The growth rings of each person's culture. How strong or weak someone's mind is at producing new things does not depend nearly so much on the talent they were born with. It depends much more on

the amount of stretch and drive, the inner springiness, they were given. Most young educated people, at around thirty, reach the early turning point of their lives, like the sun turning at midsummer, and from then on they go backward. After that they have no wish for new turns of thought. That is why, for the good of a culture that keeps growing, a new generation is needed right away. But this new generation does not get very far either. To catch up with the father's culture, the son has to use up almost all the inherited energy that the father himself had at the stage of life when he fathered the son. With the small amount left over, the son gets a little further. This is because the road is being travelled for the second time, so it goes a bit faster: to learn the same things the father knew, the son does not use up quite as much strength. Men with a great deal of this inner drive, such as Goethe, cover as much ground as barely four generations could manage one after another. But because of that, they get too far ahead, so that other people only catch up with them in the next century, and maybe not even fully. That is because the many breaks between generations have weakened how tightly the culture holds together and how steadily it develops. Over the course of history, humanity has won its way through the usual stages of mental culture, and people now catch up with these stages faster and faster. These days they enter culture as children stirred by religion, and maybe around the age of ten these feelings are at their most lively. Then they move on to weaker forms, like pantheism, the belief that God is in everything, while they come closer to science and scholarship. They leave God, life after death, and things like that completely behind, but then fall under the spell of a philosophy based on belief in a world beyond. In the end, this too stops being believable to them. Art, on the other hand, seems to offer more and more, so that for a while belief in a world beyond barely survives, living on only as something changed into art, or as an artistic mood that makes things glow. But the scientific way of thinking becomes more and more commanding.

It leads a man toward the natural sciences and history, and above all toward the strictest methods of gaining knowledge, while art is given a gentler and more modest role. All of this now usually happens within the first thirty years of a man's life. It is a repeat, a quick review, of a lesson that humanity has perhaps been toiling over for thirty thousand years.

273.

Gone back, not left behind. Someone today who still begins his development from religious feelings, and who perhaps lives on for a long time afterward in belief in a world beyond and in art, has certainly stepped back quite a long way. He starts his race against other modern people with a disadvantage. He seems to lose ground and time. But he spent time in those areas where heat and energy are set free, and where power keeps pouring out like a stream of lava from a spring that never runs dry. So, as long as he leaves those areas at the right moment, he moves forward all the faster. His feet have wings, and his chest has learned to breathe more calmly, more deeply, and with more staying power. He only stepped back to have enough room for his jump. So there can even be something frightening and threatening in this stepping back.

274.

A slice of ourselves as a subject for art. Lesser people live through certain stages of growing up almost without thinking, and then wipe them off the slate of their soul. It is a sign of a superior culture to hold on to these stages on purpose and to sketch a true picture of them. This is the higher kind of painting, which only a few people understand. To do it, you need to cut these stages off on purpose and look at them by themselves. Studying history trains this painter's skill. History keeps asking us, whenever we look at a piece of the past,

or at the life of a people or a person, to imagine a very particular range of thoughts, a particular strength of feeling, with some of these feelings in the lead and others fading into the background. The sense of history consists in being able to quickly rebuild such systems of thought and feeling from a few given clues, the way you can picture a whole temple from a few columns and bits of wall that happen to be left standing. The first result of this sense is that we understand our fellow humans as very particular systems of this kind, and as representatives of different cultures. That means we see them as necessary, but also as changeable. And it also means that we can cut pieces out of our own development and set them up on their own to look at.

275.

Cynics and Epicureans. The Cynic, a follower of the old Greek school that scorned comfort and custom, sees the link between the greater and sharper pains of a highly cultured person and the huge number of things that person needs. So he understands that the great number of opinions about what is beautiful, proper, fitting, and enjoyable was bound to create rich sources of enjoyment, but just as much rich sources of pain. Acting on this insight, he trains himself backward. He gives up many of these opinions and steps away from certain demands of culture. By doing this, he gains a feeling of freedom and of getting stronger. Slowly, as habit makes his way of life bearable, he really does feel pain less often and less strongly than cultured people do, and he becomes more like a farm animal. On top of that, he feels everything with the extra thrill of contrast, and he can also curse and grumble as much as he likes. In that way he rises high above the world of feelings that an animal has. The Epicurean, a follower of the old Greek school that sought calm and quiet pleasure, has the same point of view as the Cynic. Usually the only difference between them is one of temperament. Beyond that, the Epicurean uses his more advanced culture

to make himself independent of the opinions most people hold. He rises above them, while the Cynic just stays stuck in saying no. The Epicurean walks, so to speak, along shady paths that are calm, well sheltered, and half dark, while above him the treetops roar in the wind and tell him how wildly the world out there is being tossed about. The Cynic, on the other hand, walks around outside, naked as it were, in the blowing wind, and toughens himself until he hardly feels anything at all.

276.

The small world and the big world of culture. – A person makes the best discoveries about culture inside himself, when he finds two very different powers at work there. Suppose someone loves painting and sculpture, or music, just as much as he is carried away by the scientific spirit. And suppose he sees no way to end this conflict by destroying one power and letting the other run completely free. Then the only thing left for him is to build, out of himself, a building of culture so large that both powers can live in it, even if at opposite ends. Between them, there must also be room for peacemaking powers in the middle, strong enough to settle the fight if one breaks out. Such a building of culture inside a single person will look very much like the way culture is built across whole periods of history. It will keep teaching us about that larger building, by comparison. For wherever the great architecture of culture has grown, its task was this: to force the powers that pull against each other to get along. It did this by gathering together a huge mass of the other powers, the ones that clash less, so that they outweighed the fighters. And it did this without crushing the fighting powers or putting them in chains.

277.

Happiness and culture. – Seeing the places of our childhood again shakes us deeply: the summer house in the garden, the church with its graves, the pond and the woods. We always see these again as people who have suffered. We are gripped by pity for ourselves, because think of everything we have been through since then! And here everything still stands so calm, as if it would last forever. Only we have changed so much, only we are so restless. We even meet some people again on whom time has left no more marks than on an oak tree: farmers, fishermen, people who live in the forest. They are just the same. – Being shaken, feeling sorry for ourselves when we face a less developed culture: this is the sign of a more advanced culture. From this it follows that a more advanced culture has certainly not made anyone happier. So anyone who wants to harvest happiness and comfort from life should simply keep out of the way of more advanced culture.

278.

The dance as a picture. – These days, the deciding sign of a great culture is this: that someone has the strength and flexibility to be pure and strict in seeking knowledge, and yet, at other moments, is also able to give poetry, religion and belief in a world beyond a head start of a hundred paces, so to speak, and to feel their power and beauty for himself. Standing between two such different demands is very hard. Science and scholarship push to make their own method rule over everything. And if you do not give in to this push, another danger appears: weakly swaying up and down between different urges. Still, to at least open up a view of how this problem might be solved, using a picture, remember that dancing is not the same thing as tiredly stumbling back and forth between different urges. Advanced

culture will look like a bold dance. And that is why, as I said, it takes a lot of strength and suppleness.

279.

On making life easier. – One of the main ways to make life easier is to idealize everything that happens in it, that is, to see it in a better light. But we should learn very clearly from painting what idealizing means. The painter wants the viewer not to look too closely or too sharply. He forces the viewer to step back to a certain distance and look from there. He has to assume one very particular distance between the viewer and the picture. In fact, he even has to assume that the viewer's eyes are exactly so sharp and no sharper. In such matters he must not waver at all. So anyone who wants to idealize his life must not try to see it too closely. He must always hold his gaze back at a certain distance. Goethe, for example, understood this trick.

280.

Making things harder as making them easier, and the other way round. – Many things that make life harder for people at certain levels actually make life easier for people at a higher level, because those people have come to know much harder burdens in life. The opposite also happens. Religion, for example, has two faces. It depends on whether a person looks up to it, hoping it will take away his burden and his troubles, or looks down on it, as on a chain that has been put on him so that he does not climb too high into the air.

281.

More advanced culture is bound to be misunderstood. – Imagine someone whose instrument has only two strings, like the scholars who have nothing but the urge to know things plus a religious urge

they were brought up with. Such a person does not understand people who can play on more strings. It is in the very nature of a more advanced culture, one with many strings, that a less developed culture always reads it wrongly. This happens, for example, when art is taken to be religion in disguise. In fact, people who are only religious even see science and scholarship as a search for religious feeling, just as deaf people do not know what music is, unless it is some movement they can see.

282.

A song of complaint. – Perhaps it is the very strengths of our times that cause the thoughtful life to fade into the background and sometimes be valued too little. But we must admit to ourselves that our time is poor in great teachers of morals. Pascal, Epictetus, Seneca and Plutarch are hardly read anymore. Work and hard effort, which used to follow along behind the great goddess Health, now sometimes seem to rage like a disease. Because there is no time to think and no calm in which to think, people no longer weigh up opinions that differ from their own. They are content just to hate them. With life speeding up so enormously, the mind and the eye get used to seeing and judging only halfway, or wrongly. Everyone is like those travellers who get to know a country and its people from the window of a train. A careful, independent way of seeking knowledge is almost seen as a kind of madness. The free thinker has been given a bad name. This is mostly the doing of scholars, who miss in his way of looking at things their own thoroughness and their ant-like hard work, and who would love to lock him away in one single corner of science and scholarship. But he has a completely different and higher task: from a lonely lookout post, to command the whole army of scientists and scholars, and to show them the paths and the goals of culture. – A complaint like the one I have just sung will probably have its day. And one day it

will fall silent by itself, when the spirit of quiet reflection makes a mighty return.

283.

The main thing busy people lack. – Busy, active people usually lack the higher kind of activity: I mean the kind that belongs to them as individuals. They are active as officials, business people or scholars, that is, as members of a type, but not as particular, single, one-of-a-kind human beings. In this respect, they are lazy. – It is the bad luck of busy people that what they do is almost always a little senseless. For example, you must not ask a banker who keeps piling up money what the point of his restless activity is: it is senseless. Busy people roll along the way a stone rolls, following the dumb laws of mechanics. – Now, just as in all times, all people fall into two groups: slaves and free people. Because whoever does not have two-thirds of his day for himself is a slave, no matter who else he is: politician, businessman, official or scholar.

284.

In favour of the idle. You can tell that people value the thoughtful life less than they used to: scholars now compete with busy, active people in a kind of rushed enjoyment. So they seem to value this hurried way of enjoying things more highly than the way that really belongs to them, which in fact gives far more enjoyment. Scholars are ashamed of free time. But free time and idling are a noble thing. If idleness really is the start of every vice, as the saying goes, then at least it lives right next door to every virtue. The idle person is still a better person than the busy one. You don't think I'm talking about you when I praise free time and idling, do you, you lazybones?

285.

Modern restlessness. The further west you go, the more restless modern life becomes. To Americans, all the people of Europe look like calm, easygoing folk who enjoy life, even though the Europeans themselves buzz about like bees and wasps. This restlessness is getting so great that more advanced culture can no longer ripen its fruits. It is as if the seasons were following one another too fast. Because there is no calm, our civilization is ending up in a new kind of barbarism, a new savagery. Never before have the active people, which means the restless people, been so highly prized. That is why one of the needed corrections to the character of humankind is to strengthen, in a big way, the thoughtful, reflective side. Even now, though, every single person who is calm and steady in heart and head has the right to believe this: that he has not just a good temperament, but a virtue that is useful to everyone, and that by keeping this virtue he is even carrying out a higher task.

286.

How the busy person is lazy. I believe that everyone must have an opinion of his own on every matter where opinions are possible. That is because he himself is a unique thing that exists only once, and he stands in a new relationship, never seen before, to all other things. But the laziness that lies at the bottom of the busy person's soul stops him from drawing water from his own well, that is, from thinking for himself. Freedom of opinion is like health. Both are personal, and neither can be given a definition that holds for everyone. What one person needs to be healthy can make another person ill. In the same way, some means and paths to freedom of mind may count, for more highly developed people, as means and paths to being unfree.

287.

Judge of life. For a long time, a person who wants to become free in how he judges life swings back and forth between love and hate. That swinging marks his inner state. He doesn't forget, and he holds everything against things, the good and the bad alike. In the end, when the whole slate of his soul is covered with experiences, he will neither despise nor hate existence, but he won't love it either. Instead he will hover above it, looking at it sometimes with joyful eyes and sometimes with sad ones. And like nature, he will be in a summer mood at some times and an autumn mood at others.

288.

A side effect. Whoever seriously wants to become free will, without forcing himself at all, lose his leaning towards faults and vices along the way. Anger and irritation will also attack him less and less often. That's because his will wants nothing more eagerly than knowledge and the means to it, which means the lasting state in which he is best able to gain knowledge.

289.

The value of illness. A person lying sick in bed sometimes realizes something. Usually he is sick from his job, his business or the company he keeps, and because of them he has lost all clear thinking about himself. He gains this wisdom from the free time that his illness forces on him.

290.

A feeling in the countryside. Suppose there are no firm, calm lines on the horizon of your life, lines like those of mountains and forests. Then a person's deepest will becomes restless, scattered and greedy,

just like the nature of a city dweller. Such a person has no happiness and gives no happiness.

291.

How careful free spirits are. Free-minded people, who live for knowledge alone, will soon find that they have reached their outward goal in life, their final place in society and the state. They will gladly be content with, say, a small job, or with just enough money to live on. They arrange their lives so that a big change in worldly wealth, or even the overthrow of the political order, will not knock their own lives over too. They spend as little energy as possible on all these things, so that they can dive down into the world of knowledge with all their stored-up strength, as if taking one long breath. That way they can hope to dive deep and perhaps even see the bottom. Such a mind likes to take just one corner of an event. He does not love things spread out in all the breadth and endless detail of their folds, because he doesn't want to get tangled up in them. He too knows the workdays of being unfree, dependent and serving others. But now and then a Sunday of freedom has to come for him, or else he won't be able to bear life. Probably even his love for people will be careful and a little short of breath. That's because he only wants to get involved with the world of feelings and blindness as far as he needs to for the sake of knowledge. He has to trust that the spirit of fairness will speak up for its follower and the one it protects, if accusing voices should call him poor in love. In the way he lives and thinks there is a refined kind of heroism. Unlike its cruder brother, it refuses to offer itself up to be worshipped by the masses, and it usually goes quietly through the world and out of it. Whatever mazes he wanders through, whatever rocks his stream has had to squeeze its way under for a while, when he comes out into the light he goes on his way bright, light and

almost silent, like a clear stream, and lets the sunshine play all the way down to his bottom.

292.

Forward. - And so, forward on the road to wisdom, with a good stride and good confidence! Whatever you are like, use yourself as a source of experience! Throw off your unhappiness about the kind of person you are. Forgive yourself for being who you are, because either way you carry inside you a ladder with a hundred steps, and you can climb those steps to knowledge. You may feel sad that you were thrown into this age. But this very age calls you lucky because of that good fortune. It calls out to you that you still get to have experiences that people in later times may have to do without. Do not look down on the fact that you were once religious. Dig deep and fully understand how you once had a real way into art. Isn't it exactly these experiences that let you follow, with more understanding, the huge stretches of road that earlier humanity travelled? And isn't it exactly on the ground you sometimes dislike so much, the ground of muddled, impure thinking, that many of the most wonderful fruits of older culture grew up? You must have loved religion and art the way you love a mother and a nurse who raised you - otherwise you cannot become wise. But you must also be able to see beyond them and grow out of them. If you stay under their spell, you do not understand them. In the same way, you need to know history well, and the careful game of weighing things on the scales: "on the one hand, on the other hand." Walk back, stepping in the footprints that humanity left on its great and painful journey through the desert of the past. That way you learn most surely where all later humanity cannot go again, or must not go again. And as you try with all your strength to see ahead how the knot of the future is still being tied, your own life gains the value of a tool, a means to knowledge. It is in your hands to make sure that

everything you have lived through - your attempts, your wrong turns, your mistakes, your illusions, your passions, your love and your hope - all of it goes into your goal, with nothing left over. This goal is to become yourself a necessary chain of links of culture, and from this necessity in yourself, to work out the necessity in the course of culture as a whole. When your eyes have grown strong enough to see the bottom of the dark well that is your own nature and your own knowledge, then perhaps, reflected in that well as in a mirror, you will also see the distant star patterns of future cultures. Do you think such a life, with such a goal, is too hard, too empty of all comforts? Then you have not yet learned that no honey is sweeter than the honey of knowledge. You have not learned that even the heavy, hanging clouds of sadness must serve you like an udder, from which you will milk the milk that refreshes you. When old age comes, you will really notice how you have listened to the voice of nature, that nature which rules the whole world through pleasure. The same life that reaches its peak in old age also reaches its peak in wisdom, in that gentle sunshine of a lasting, cheerful joy of the mind. You meet both of them, old age and wisdom, on one and the same mountain ridge of life - that is how nature wanted it. Then it is time, and no reason to be angry, that the fog of death comes closer. Towards the light - your last movement. A shout of joy at knowledge - your last sound.

Part Six.

People Among Other People.

293.

Kind pretending. - When we deal with people, we often need to pretend, out of goodwill, that we don't see through the reasons behind what they do.

294.

Copies. - You quite often meet copies of important people. And just as with paintings, most people like the copies better than the originals.

295.

The speaker. - You can speak in a way that is exactly right for your audience, and still have the whole world shouting that you got it all wrong. This happens when you were not speaking to the whole world in the first place.

296.

Lack of openness. - When friends don't open up to each other, that is a fault you cannot point out without making it impossible to fix.

297.

On the art of giving. - If you have to turn down a gift only because it wasn't offered in the right way, you end up feeling bitter toward the giver.

298.

The most dangerous party member. - In every party there is one person who states the party's principles with such blind faith that he makes everyone else want to leave.

299.

People who give advice to the sick. - Anyone who gives advice to a sick person gets a feeling of being above him, whether the advice is taken or thrown out. That is why touchy and proud sick people hate the advice-givers even more than their illness.

300.

Two kinds of equality. - The craving for equality can show itself in two ways. Either you want to drag everyone else down to your level, by belittling them, keeping them out, and tripping them up. Or you want to lift yourself up together with everyone, by giving them credit, helping them, and being glad when others succeed.

301.

Against embarrassment. - The best way to help very embarrassed people and calm them down is to praise them firmly and clearly.

302.

A special liking for certain virtues. - We don't put any special value on having a certain virtue until we notice that our enemy has none of it at all.

303.

Why we disagree. - We often argue against an opinion when really it's only the tone in which it was said that we don't like.

304.

Trust and closeness. - Someone who works hard to force closeness with another person is usually not sure whether that person really trusts him. Someone who is sure of being trusted cares little about closeness.

305.

The balance of friendship. - Sometimes, between us and another person, the right balance of friendship comes back once we put a few grains of wrongdoing on our own side of the scale. In other words, admitting a little fault of our own can even things out again.

306.

The most dangerous doctors. - The most dangerous doctors are the ones who are born actors and copy the born doctor with a perfect skill at fooling people.

307.

When paradoxes are useful. - To win clever people over to an idea, you sometimes only need to present it as a wildly outrageous paradox, something that sounds as if it can't possibly be true.

308.

How to win over brave people. - You talk brave people into doing something by making it sound more dangerous than it really is.

309.

Polite favours. - When people we dislike are polite and kind to us, we count it against them as if it were an offence.

310.

Keeping people waiting. - A sure way to make people angry and put nasty thoughts in their heads is to keep them waiting a long time. It makes them behave badly.

311.

Against people who confide too much. - People who give us their complete trust think this gives them a right to ours. That is bad reasoning: gifts don't earn you any rights.

312.

A way to make up. - If you have done someone harm, it is often enough to give him a chance to make a joke at your expense. That makes up for it in his eyes, and can even put him in a good mood toward you.

313.

Vanity of the tongue. - A person may hide his bad qualities and vices, or he may openly admit them. Either way, his vanity wants to get something out of it. Just notice how carefully he chooses whom he hides those qualities from and with whom he becomes honest and open.

314.

Considerate. - Wanting not to hurt anyone and not to harm anyone can be the sign of a fair-minded character, but it can just as well be the sign of a timid one.

315.

What you need for arguing. - Someone who doesn't know how to put his thoughts on ice should not step into the heat of an argument. In other words, if you can't keep a cool head, stay out of heated debates.

316.

Company and arrogance. - You lose your arrogance when you know you are always among people who have truly achieved something. Being alone breeds overconfidence. Young people are arrogant because they spend time with others like themselves, who are all nobodies but would love to be somebody.

317.

Why people attack. - We don't attack only to hurt someone or to beat him. Sometimes we may do it just to feel how strong we are.

318.

Flattery. - People who try to dull our caution by flattering us are using a risky method. It's like a sleeping drink: if it doesn't put you to sleep, it only keeps you all the more awake.

319.

A good letter writer. - Someone who doesn't write books, thinks a lot, and lives among people who aren't good enough company for him will usually be a good letter writer.

320.

The ugliest of all. - It's doubtful that anyone who has travelled widely has found uglier landscapes anywhere in the world than in the human face.

321.

People full of pity. - People who feel pity and are always ready to help when there is trouble are seldom the same people who share in others' joy. When others are happy, they have nothing to do. They are not needed, they don't get to feel superior, and so they easily show that they are displeased.

322.

Relatives of someone who took his own life. - The relatives of someone who took his own life hold it against him that he didn't stay alive out of concern for their reputation.

323.

Expect no thanks. - Whoever gives a huge gift gets no gratitude. The person receiving it already feels too heavy a burden just by accepting it.

324.

Among dull people. - When a clever person puts himself on the same level as a group where it isn't polite to show cleverness, nobody thanks him for being so polite.

325.

When others are watching. - We are twice as willing to jump in after someone who has fallen into the water if there are people around who don't dare to.

326.

Silence. - The most unpleasant way to answer an attack in an argument, unpleasant for both sides, is to get angry and stay silent. The attacker usually takes the silence as a sign of contempt.

327.

A friend's secret. - There are few people who, when they run out of things to talk about, won't give away their friends' more private matters.

328.

Kindness. - The kindness of famous thinkers consists in this: when they deal with people who aren't famous, they graciously let themselves be in the wrong.

329.

The insecure person. - People who don't feel sure of themselves in company use every chance to show, openly in front of everyone, that

they are better than someone close to them whom they can beat, for example by teasing him.

330.

Thanks. - A sensitive soul feels weighed down knowing that someone owes it thanks. A coarse soul feels weighed down knowing that it owes someone thanks.

331.

Sign of drifting apart. - The clearest sign that two people's views have drifted apart is this: they say slightly ironic, mocking things to each other, but neither of them notices the irony.

332.

Arrogance in people who have achieved things. - Arrogance in someone who has real achievements is even more offensive than arrogance in someone who has none. After all, achievement itself already offends people.

333.

Danger in the voice. - Sometimes in a conversation the sound of our own voice makes us uneasy and tempts us into saying things we don't actually believe at all.

334.

In conversation. - Whether, in conversation, you mostly agree with the other person or mostly disagree is purely a matter of habit. Both make sense.

335.

Fear of the people around us. - We are afraid of the people around us being hostile to us, because we fear that this hostility will lead them to discover our secrets.

336.

Honouring by criticism. - Very respected people give even their criticism in a way that is meant to honour us. It is supposed to show us how much effort they are putting into thinking about us. We completely misunderstand them if we take their criticism at face value and defend ourselves against it. That only annoys them and pushes us away from them.

337.

Annoyed by other people's goodwill. We are often wrong about how much we think we are hated or feared. That is because we ourselves know very well how far we differ from a person, a movement, or a party. But those others know us only on the surface, and so they also hate us only on the surface. We often meet with a goodwill that we cannot explain. But once we do understand it, it insults us, because it shows that people do not take us seriously, that they do not think we are important enough.

338.

Clashing vanities. Two people meet, and both have the same amount of vanity. Afterwards, each one is left with a bad impression of the other. Why? Because each was so busy with the impression they wanted to make on the other that the other made no impression on them at all. In the end, both notice that their effort has failed, and each blames the other for it.

339.

Bad manners as good signs. A superior mind actually enjoys it when ambitious young men treat him without tact, with arrogance, or even with hostility. These are the bad habits of fiery horses that have never yet carried a rider, but that will soon be proud to carry him.

340.

When it is wise to let yourself be in the wrong. It is a good idea to accept accusations without arguing back, even when they are unfair to us, if the person accusing us would see it as an even bigger wrong on our part if we contradicted him, or worse, proved him wrong. Of course, this way a person can always be in the wrong and still always get his way. In the end, with the clearest conscience in the world, he can become the most unbearable tyrant and tormentor. And what is true of a single person can also happen with whole classes of society.

341.

Not honoured enough. Very conceited people who have been shown less attention than they expected try for a long time to fool themselves and others about it. They turn into clever, hair-splitting amateur psychologists, trying to work out that the other person did honour them enough after all. If they do not manage it, and the veil of self-deception tears, then they give in to an even greater rage.

342.

Early times still echoing in speech. In the way men today make claims when they talk with each other, you can often hear an echo of the times when men were better at handling weapons than anything else. Sometimes they handle their claims the way a marksman aims his rifle. At other times you almost seem to hear the whistling and clash-

ing of sword blades. And with some men, a claim comes crashing down like a heavy club. Women, on the other hand, speak like beings who for thousands of years sat at the loom, or worked with the needle, or played childishly with children.

343.

The storyteller. When someone tells a story, it is easy to notice whether he is telling it because the facts interest him, or because he wants to make himself interesting by telling it. In the second case, he will exaggerate, use words like "the greatest" and "the worst," and do things of that sort. He then usually tells the story worse, because he is thinking not so much about the matter as about himself.

344.

Reading aloud. Someone who reads plays aloud discovers things about his own character. He finds that his voice sounds more natural for certain moods and scenes than for others, for example for everything grand and emotional, or for everything silly and clownish. Yet in everyday life he may simply never have had the chance to show grand emotion or clownishness.

345.

A comedy scene that happens in real life. Someone thinks up a clever opinion on some topic so that he can share it at a social gathering. In a comedy, we would now hear and watch him trying, at full speed, like a ship under full sail, to reach the right point and to steer the whole group to where he can make his remark. We would see him keep pushing the conversation toward one goal, sometimes losing his way, finding it again, and finally reaching the moment. He is almost out of

breath, and then someone else in the group takes the remark right out of his mouth. What will he do? Argue against his own opinion?

346.

Rude without meaning to be. When someone treats another person rudely without meaning to, for example by not saying hello because he did not recognize him, it bothers him, even though he cannot blame his own intentions. He may be hurt by the bad opinion he has created in the other person. Or he may fear what will come of the bad feeling. Or it may pain him to have hurt the other person. So vanity, fear, or pity can be stirred up, or perhaps all of them together.

347.

A traitor's masterpiece. Imagine you are part of a secret plot. You tell your fellow plotter, in a hurtful way, that you suspect he might betray you, and you do this at the very moment when you yourself are betraying him. That is a masterpiece of wickedness. It keeps the other person busy with himself and forces him, for a while, to act very open and above suspicion. That way the real traitor has freed his own hands.

348.

Insulting and being insulted. It is far more pleasant to insult someone and later ask for forgiveness than to be insulted and grant forgiveness. The person who does the first shows a sign of power, and afterwards a sign of a good character. The other person has no real choice but to forgive, if he does not want to seem heartless. Because he is forced into it, the pleasure he gets from the other person's humbling of himself is small.

349.

In an argument. When you argue against another opinion and at the same time lay out your own, you keep paying attention to the other opinion. This usually bends your own opinion out of its natural shape. It comes across as more deliberate, sharper, and maybe a bit exaggerated.

350.

A clever trick. If you want to get something difficult out of another person, you must not treat the matter as a problem at all. Instead, you should simply lay out your plan as if it were the only possibility. And as soon as you see an objection or disagreement starting to dawn in the other person's eyes, you must know how to break off quickly and not give him any time.

351.

A guilty conscience after parties. Why do we feel guilty after ordinary social gatherings? Because we took important things lightly. Because, when we talked about other people, we were not completely loyal to them. Or because we kept quiet when we should have spoken. Because, now and then, we did not jump up and walk out. In short, because we behaved at the gathering as if we belonged there.

352.

People judge us wrongly. Anyone who is always listening out for how others judge him will always be annoyed. For we are judged wrongly even by those who are closest to us, the ones who "know us best." Even good friends sometimes let out their bad mood in a spiteful word. And would they still be our friends if they knew us exactly? The judgments of people who do not care about us hurt a lot, because they

sound so neutral, almost objective. But if we notice that someone who is our enemy knows us as well as we know ourselves on some point we keep secret, how great our annoyance is then!

353.

The tyranny of the portrait. Artists and statesmen quickly put together the whole picture of a person or an event from a few single features. They are most unfair in this: afterwards they demand that the event or the person must really be the way they painted it. They actually demand that someone be just as gifted, as cunning, or as unfair as he is in the picture they have in their heads.

354.

The relative as the best friend. The Greeks knew so well what a friend is. Of all peoples, they alone have a deep and many-sided philosophical discussion of friendship. So they were the first, and so far the last, to see the friend as a problem worth solving. And these very same Greeks called their relatives by a word that means "most friend," the highest form of the word "friend." This remains something I cannot explain.

355.

Honesty mistaken for something else. When someone quotes themselves in a conversation, saying things like "As I said back then" or "As I always say," it comes across as arrogance. But more often it comes from exactly the opposite place, or at least from honesty. Such a person does not want to decorate and dress up the present moment with clever ideas that really belong to an earlier moment.

356.

The freeloader. It shows a complete lack of noble character when someone would rather live dependent on others, at other people's expense, just so they don't have to work, and usually while secretly feeling bitter toward the very people they depend on. This kind of attitude is much more common in women than in men, and also much easier to forgive in them (for historical reasons).

357.

On the altar of making peace. There are situations where the only way to get something from a person is to insult him and make him your enemy. The feeling of having an enemy torments him so much that he gladly grabs the first sign of a friendlier mood to make peace. And to make that peace, he sacrifices, as if on an altar, the very thing he once cared about so much that he would not have given it up at any price.

358.

Demanding pity as a sign of arrogance. There are people who, when they fly into a rage and insult others, then demand two things. First, that nobody hold it against them. And second, that people feel pity for them, because they suffer from such violent fits. That is how far human arrogance goes.

359.

Bait. "Everyone has their price" — that is not true. But there probably is a bait for everyone, one they just can't help biting. For example, to win certain people over to a cause, you only need to give that cause a shine of being kind to humanity, noble, charitable, and self-sacrificing. And what cause could you not give that shine to? That is the candy, the sweet treat their soul craves. Other people have other treats.

360.

How to act when praised. When good friends praise a gifted person, that person will often act pleased out of politeness and goodwill. But in truth, they don't care. Their real nature is completely lazy about it. Praise won't make them roll a single step out of the sunshine or the shade where they are lying. But people want to give pleasure by praising, and you would hurt them if you weren't happy about their praise.

361.

What Socrates found out. If you have become a master at one thing, then usually, for that very reason, you have stayed a complete beginner at most other things. But people judge it the other way around, as Socrates already discovered. This is the problem that makes spending time with masters so unpleasant.

362.

A way of turning into a beast. When they fight against stupidity, even the fairest and gentlest people end up becoming brutal. Maybe they are on the right path of defending themselves by doing this. After all, a thick skull rightly deserves a clenched fist as its argument. But because, as I said, their character is gentle and fair, they suffer more from using this kind of self-defence than they make others suffer.

363.

Curiosity. If there were no curiosity, very little would be done for the good of our neighbours. But curiosity sneaks into the homes of the unlucky and the needy, disguised under the name of duty or pity. Maybe there is even a good bit of curiosity in the much-praised love of a mother.

364.

Getting it wrong in company. One person wants to seem interesting because of his opinions, another because of his likes and dislikes, a third because of the people he knows, and a fourth because he keeps to himself. And they are all mistaken. Because the person they are putting on this show for thinks that he himself is the only show worth watching.

365.

The duel. In favour of all quarrels over honour and all duels, this much can be said. If someone is so touchy that he doesn't want to go on living when so-and-so says or thinks such-and-such about him, then he has the right to let the matter be settled by the death of one of them. There's no point arguing about the fact that he is so touchy. In this we are the heirs of the past, of both its greatness and its excesses, and there has never been greatness without excess. Now, if there is a code of honour that lets blood count in place of death, so that after a proper duel a man's feelings are relieved, then that is a great blessing, because otherwise many human lives would be in danger. Besides, such a custom teaches people to be careful about what they say, and it makes it possible to get along with them.

366.

Nobility and gratitude. A noble soul is happy to feel it owes someone thanks. It won't nervously avoid situations where it ends up owing something. And later, it will be calm and relaxed in showing its thanks. Lower souls, on the other hand, resist ever being in someone's debt, or else later they are over the top and far too eager in showing their gratitude. By the way, this second thing also happens

with people of humble birth or in a downtrodden position: any favour done for them seems to them like a miracle of mercy.

367.

The hours of speaking well. One person, in order to speak well, needs someone who is clearly and openly above him. Another can only find total freedom of speech and clever turns of phrase in front of someone he is above. In both cases the reason is the same. Each of them only speaks well when he speaks without awkwardness, at ease. The first one, because in front of a superior he doesn't feel the urge to compete or race against him. The second one for the same reason, in front of someone lower. Now, there is a completely different kind of person who only speaks well when competing, when he is trying to win. Which of these two kinds is the more ambitious? The one that speaks well because its hunger for honour is stirred up, or the one that, for exactly the same reasons, speaks badly or not at all?

368.

The talent for friendship. Among people who have a special gift for friendship, two types stand out. The first type keeps climbing higher and higher, and for each stage of his growth he finds a friend who fits that stage exactly. The series of friends he gathers this way rarely have anything to do with each other. Sometimes they even clash and contradict each other. That matches the fact that the later stages of his growth cancel out or undercut the earlier ones. Jokingly, you could call such a person a ladder. The second type is someone who attracts very different characters and talents, so that he wins a whole circle of friends. And because of him, these friends become friendly with each other too, despite all their differences. You could call such a person a circle, because somehow, inside him, the way such different gifts and natures can belong together must already be built in. By the way, in

many people the gift of having good friends is much bigger than the gift of being a good friend.

369.

Tactics in conversation. After talking with someone, you feel best about that person if you had the chance to show off your wit and your charm in front of them in all their glory. Clever people who want to win someone over use this. During the conversation they hand the other person the best openings for a good joke and so on. It would be funny to imagine a conversation between two very clever people who both want to win each other over. So they keep tossing these nice openings back and forth, and neither one takes them. As a result, the conversation as a whole would turn out dull and charmless, because each one kept handing the other the chance to be witty and charming.

370.

Letting off bad temper. When something goes wrong for a person, he would rather blame it on someone else's ill will than on chance. His irritated feelings get some relief when he can picture a person, not a thing, as the cause of his failure. That is because you can get revenge on people, but the blows of chance you just have to swallow, like a bitter lump in your throat. So when something has gone wrong for a prince, the people around him usually point to one single person as the supposed cause, and sacrifice him for the sake of all the courtiers. Otherwise the prince's bad mood would come down on every one of them, since he cannot, after all, take revenge on the goddess of fate herself.

371.

Taking on the colour of your surroundings. Why are liking and disliking so catching that you can hardly live near someone with strong feelings without being filled up, like a jar, with all their for and against? First, it is very hard to hold back from judging altogether. Sometimes our vanity simply cannot stand it. Holding back looks the same, it has the same colour, as having few thoughts and feelings, or as being timid and unmanly. And so we are at least pulled along into taking sides, maybe even against the direction of the people around us, if that position gives our pride more pleasure. But usually, and this is the second reason, we do not notice at all the moment when we move from not caring to liking or disliking. Instead, we slowly get used to the way the people around us feel. And because agreeing with others and understanding each other feels so pleasant, we soon wear all the badges and party colours of the people around us.

372.

Irony. Irony only has a proper place as a teaching tool, used by a teacher dealing with pupils of any kind. Its aim is to humble and to shame, but in that healthy way that wakes up good intentions, and that makes us feel respect and gratitude toward the person who treated us that way, the way we feel toward a doctor. The person using irony pretends not to know things, and does it so well that the pupils talking with him are fooled. Trusting that they know better, they grow bold and expose their weak spots in all kinds of ways. They stop being careful and show themselves as they really are, until, in a single moment, the lamp they were holding up to the teacher's face turns its light back on them, in a very humbling way. Where there is no such relationship, like the one between teacher and pupil, irony is bad manners, a low and common feeling. All writers who use irony are counting on a silly kind of person, the kind who likes to feel

superior to everyone else together with the author, whom they see as the mouthpiece of their own arrogance. Besides, getting used to irony, just like getting used to sarcasm, spoils your character. Little by little it gives you a kind of superiority that enjoys other people's misfortune. In the end you are like a snappy dog that has learned to laugh as well as bite.

373.

Arrogance. There is nothing you should guard against so carefully as the growth of that weed called arrogance, which ruins every good harvest we might have. For arrogance can show up in warmth of heart, in showing respect, in friendly closeness, in affectionate touches, in friendly advice, in admitting your mistakes, in pity for others. And all these lovely things become distasteful when that weed grows among them. The arrogant person, meaning someone who wants to count for more than he is or is worth, always gets his sums wrong. True, he wins in the moment, because the people he acts arrogant toward usually give him the amount of respect he demands, out of fear or because it is easier. But they take a nasty revenge for it. Whatever extra he demanded beyond his due, they subtract exactly that much from the value they had given him until then. There is nothing people make you pay for more dearly than being humbled. An arrogant person can make his own real and great merit look so doubtful and small in other people's eyes that they trample on it with dusty feet. You should allow yourself even a proud manner only where you can be quite sure you will not be misunderstood and seen as arrogant, for example in front of friends and wives. For in dealing with people, there is no greater foolishness than earning a reputation for arrogance. It is even worse than never having learned to lie politely.

374.

Conversation between two. A conversation between just two people is the perfect conversation. That is because everything one person says gets its particular colour, its tone, and the gestures that go with it, all carefully shaped with the other person in mind. It is like what happens with letters: one and the same person shows ten different ways of expressing his inner self, depending on whether he is writing to this person or that one. In a conversation between two, a thought is bent in only one way, like light passing through a single lens. The other person in the conversation does this bending; he is the mirror in which we want to see our own thoughts reflected back as beautifully as possible. But what happens when there are two, three or more other people? Then the conversation is bound to lose its fine, personal touch. The different things you have to keep in mind cross each other and cancel each other out. A turn of phrase that pleases one person does not suit the way another person thinks. So when a person is dealing with several people at once, he is forced to pull back into himself and to lay out the facts as they are. But in doing so he takes away from the subject that playful, airy human warmth which makes conversation one of the most pleasant things in the world. Just listen to the tone men usually use when they talk to whole groups of men. It is as if the deep bass note under everything they say were: "This is who I am, this is what I say, now think of it what you like!" This is why clever, witty women mostly leave a strange, awkward, off-putting impression on someone who got to know them in company. It is talking to many people, in front of many people, that robs them of all the charm of their minds. It shows only, in harsh light, how consciously they rely on themselves, their tactics, and their aim of winning in public. Yet the very same women, in a conversation between two, become women again and find their charm of mind once more.

375.

Fame after death. Hoping to be recognised in a distant future only makes sense if you assume that humanity will stay basically the same, and that everything great must be felt as great not just in one age but in all ages. But that is a mistake. Humanity changes very greatly in everything it feels and judges about what is beautiful and good. It is pure fantasy to believe that you are a mile ahead on the road and that all of humanity is going to travel down your street. Besides, a scholar who is not appreciated today can count on it for sure that someone else will make the same discovery. At best, some historian will later grant that he too already knew this or that, but was not able to get people to believe what he said. Later generations always explain not being recognised as a lack of strength. In short, we should not be so quick to speak up for proud loneliness. There are exceptions, of course. But mostly it is our own faults, weaknesses and foolishness that stop people from recognising our great qualities.

376.

About friends. Just think it over by yourself for a moment. Think how different people's feelings are, and how split their opinions are, even among the people closest to us. Think how even the same opinions sit in your friends' heads in a completely different place, or with a completely different strength, than they do in yours. Think of the hundreds of chances there are for misunderstanding, for running apart from each other in anger. After all that, you will say to yourself: how shaky the ground is that all our alliances and friendships stand on! How close we always are to cold downpours or nasty weather between us! How alone every person is! But suppose someone sees this, and sees something more as well: that all the opinions of the people around him, and how they hold them and how strongly, are just as much bound to happen and just as much not their fault as

their actions are. Suppose he learns to see how opinions grow, by inner necessity, out of a tangle that can't be undone, made of a person's character, work, talents and surroundings. Then he may lose the bitterness and sharpness of the feeling behind the cry of that wise man of old, who said: "Friends, there are no friends!" Instead he will admit to himself: yes, there are friends. But it was a mistake, a false picture of you, that brought them to you. And they must have learned to keep quiet in order to stay your friends. Because human ties like these almost always depend on a few things never being said, and indeed never even being touched. But once those little stones start rolling, the friendship rolls after them and breaks apart. Are there any people who would not be wounded to death if they found out what their closest friends really know about them, deep down? When we come to know ourselves, and look at our own nature as a shifting circle of opinions and moods, we learn to think a little less of ourselves. And in this way we bring ourselves back into balance with everyone else. It's true that we have good reasons to think little of each of the people we know, even the greatest of them. But we have just as good reasons to turn that same feeling against ourselves. And so let us put up with one another, since after all we put up with ourselves. And perhaps a happier hour will come to each of us one day, when he says:

"Friends, there are no friends!" cried the dying wise man. "Enemies, there is no enemy!" I cry, the living fool.

Chapter Seven

Woman and Child

377.

The perfect woman. The perfect woman is a higher kind of human being than the perfect man. She is also something much rarer. The science that studies animals gives us a way to show that this claim is probably true.

378.

Friendship and marriage. The best friend will probably end up with the best wife, because a good marriage rests on a talent for friendship.

379.

Parents live on. When the parents' characters and ways of thinking clash and that clash is never settled, it keeps sounding on in the child, like a sour note in music that never finds its resolution. It becomes the story of the child's inner suffering.

380.

From the mother. Every person carries inside himself a picture of woman that comes from his mother. That picture decides whether he will honor women in general, look down on them, or not really care about them at all.

381.

Correcting nature. If you do not have a good father, you should go and get yourself one.

382.

Fathers and sons. Fathers have a lot of work to do to make up for the fact that they have sons.

383.

The mistake of upper-class women. Upper-class women think that a thing simply does not exist if it is not possible to talk about it in polite company.

384.

A men's illness. Men often suffer from the illness of despising themselves. The surest cure for it is to be loved by a clever woman.

385.

A kind of jealousy. Mothers easily become jealous of their sons' friends when those friends are especially successful. Usually a mother loves herself in her son more than she loves the son himself.

386.

Sensible nonsense. When a person reaches full maturity in life and in understanding, a feeling comes over him that his father was wrong to bring him into the world.

387.

Motherly kindness. Some mothers need happy, respected children. Others need unhappy ones. Otherwise their kindness as mothers has no chance to show itself.

388.

Different sighs. Some men have sighed because someone ran off with their wives. Most men have sighed because nobody wanted to run off with them.

389.

Love matches. Marriages made out of love, the so-called love matches, have a mistake as their father and need, meaning want or lack, as their mother.

390.

Women's friendship. Women can very well become friends with a man. But to keep that friendship going, a little bodily dislike probably has to help out.

391.

Boredom. Many people, especially women, do not feel boredom, because they have never learned to work properly.

392.

One part of love. In every kind of love a woman feels, something of a mother's love also shows through.

393.

Unity of place and the drama. In old theater rules, a play had to stay in one single place. But in marriage it is the other way round: if husbands and wives did not live together, there would be more good marriages.

394.

The usual effects of marriage. Every kind of company that does not lift you up drags you down, and the other way round. That is why men usually sink a little when they take wives, while women are lifted up a little. Men who live too much in their minds need marriage just as much as they resist it, the way you resist a bad-tasting medicine.

395.

Teaching how to give orders. Children from humble families must be taught through upbringing how to give orders, just as much as other children must be taught how to obey.

396.

Wanting to fall in love. Engaged couples who have been put together because it was convenient often try hard to fall in love. They do this to escape the charge that their match is cold and calculating, only about what is useful. In the same way, people who switch over to Christianity for their own advantage try hard to become truly devout, because then putting on a religious face comes easier to them.

397.

Love never stands still. A musician who loves a slow tempo will play the same pieces slower and slower. In the same way, no love ever stands still.

398.

Modesty. In general, the more beautiful women are, the more modest and bashful they become.

399.

A marriage that lasts. A marriage holds together well when each partner wants to reach a personal goal through the other. For example, when the wife wants to become famous through her husband, and the husband wants to become well liked through his wife.

400.

A shape-shifting nature. Out of love, women turn completely into whatever the men who love them imagine them to be.

401.

Loving and owning. When women love an important man, they mostly love him in such a way that they want him all to themselves. They would gladly lock him away, if their vanity did not advise against it. Their vanity wants him to look important in front of other people too.

402.

The test of a good marriage. You can tell a marriage is good when it can put up with an "exception" just once.

403.

A way to get anyone to do anything. You can wear out any person and make him weak with worries, fears, and too much work and too many thoughts. Then, when something looks complicated, he no longer resists it but gives in. Diplomats know this, and so do women.

404.

Respectability and honesty. Some girls want to get themselves provided for their whole lives only through the charm of their youth, and their crafty mothers whisper clever tricks to them, like a prompter feeding lines to actors. These girls want exactly the same thing as courtesans, women who are paid for their love. The only difference is that the girls are cleverer and less honest about it.

405.

Masks. There are women who have nothing inside, no matter where you look. They are nothing but masks. Pity the man who gets involved with such almost ghostly beings, who can never truly satisfy him. Yet it is exactly these women who can stir up a man's desire most strongly. He searches for their soul, and he keeps on searching forever.

406.

Marriage as a long conversation. When you are about to marry, you should ask yourself this question: do you believe you will enjoy talking with this woman right into old age? Everything else in marriage passes away, but most of the time you spend together is spent in conversation.

407.

Girls' dreams. Girls without experience flatter themselves with the idea that they have the power to make a man happy. Later they learn that this really means looking down on a man, to assume that all it takes to make him happy is a girl. Women's vanity demands that a man be more than just a happy husband.

408.

Faust and Gretchen are dying out. A scholar once made a very wise remark: the educated men of today's Germany are like a mix of Mephistopheles, the mocking devil, and Wagner, the dry bookworm, from the story of Faust. But they are not at all like Faust himself, the restless seeker whom their grandfathers felt stirring inside them, at least when they were young. So, to carry that remark further, the Gretchens, the sweet innocent girls like the one Faust loved, do not suit these men, for two reasons. And because nobody wants them anymore, it seems they are dying out.

409.

Girls in grammar school. For heaven's sake, let us not also hand on our grammar-school education to girls! That education so often takes young people who are witty, eager to learn, and full of fire, and turns them into copies of their teachers!

410.

No rivals. Women can easily tell whether a man's soul already belongs to something else. They want to be loved without any rivals. So they hold it against him if he has ambitious goals, political work, science and scholarship, or art, whenever he feels a passion for such things. The exception is when these things make him shine. Then, if they

enter into a love affair with him, they hope that some of his shine will rub off on them too. When that is the case, they favor the lover.

411.

The female mind. - The mind of women shows itself as perfect self-control, quick presence of mind, and the use of every advantage. They pass this on to their children as their basic quality, and the father adds the darker background of the will. His influence decides, so to speak, the rhythm and harmony with which the new life is to be played, like a piece of music; but the melody of it comes from the woman. - This is said for those who know how to work something out for themselves: women have the sharp mind, men have the deep feeling and the passion. It is no contradiction that men in fact get so much further with their minds: they have the deeper, more powerful drives, and these drives carry their mind, which in itself is something passive, so far. Women are often quietly surprised at how much men honour their deep feelings. When men, in choosing a partner for marriage, look above all for someone deep and warm-hearted, while women look for someone clever, quick-witted and dazzling, you can see clearly, at bottom, that the man is looking for an idealized man, and the woman for an idealized woman. So they are not looking for someone to fill in what they lack, but for someone who perfects the strengths they already have.

412.

A judgement of Hesiod's confirmed. - One sign of how clever women are is that almost everywhere they have managed to get themselves fed and kept, like drones in a beehive. But just think about what that originally means, and why men do not let themselves be fed by women. Surely it is because male vanity and hunger for honour are greater than female cleverness; for women have managed, by giving way

and taking the lower place, to secure the bigger advantage for themselves, and even to rule. Even caring for children may originally have been used by women's cleverness as an excuse to get out of work as much as possible. Even now, when they really are busy, for example running a household, they know how to make a dizzying fuss about it, so that men usually rate the value of their work ten times too high.

413.

Short-sighted people are in love. - Sometimes a stronger pair of glasses is enough to cure someone in love; and anyone with enough imagination to picture a face and a body twenty years older might go through life without being troubled at all.

414.

Women who hate. - When they hate, women are more dangerous than men. First, because once their hostile feeling has been stirred up, no concern for what is fair holds them back; instead they let their hate grow, undisturbed, all the way to its final consequences. Second, because they are well trained at finding sore spots, which every person and every group has, and stabbing right into them. Their mind, sharp as the point of a dagger, serves them excellently in this. Men, on the other hand, when they see wounds, tend to hold back, and often become generous and ready to make peace.

415.

Love. - The way women worship love as if it were an idol is, at bottom and in its origin, an invention of cleverness. By making love seem so ideal and grand, they increase their own power and make themselves look ever more desirable in men's eyes. But after centuries of getting used to rating love this highly, they have walked into their own net

and forgotten where it all began. Now they themselves are fooled even more than men are, and so they also suffer more from the disappointment that will almost surely come in every woman's life - at least if she has enough imagination and intelligence to be fooled and then disappointed at all.

416.

On the freeing of women. - Can women really be fair at all, when they are so used to loving, to feeling for or against something right away? That is also why they are less often won over by causes and more often by people. But when they are won over by a cause, they immediately become its loyal supporters, and in doing so they spoil the pure, innocent effect it would otherwise have. So a real danger arises if politics and certain parts of science and scholarship are handed over to them, history for example. For what could be rarer than a woman who truly knows what science and scholarship is? The best of them even secretly look down on it in their hearts, as if they were somehow above it. Maybe all this can change; for now, this is how it is.

417.

Sudden inspiration in women's judgements. - Women tend to make sudden decisions for or against things. Their likes and dislikes burst out and light up personal relationships in a flash. In short, these are proofs of how unfair women can be. Yet men in love have surrounded all this with a glow, as if every woman had sudden inspiration full of wisdom, even without the steaming cauldron and the laurel headband of the ancient priestess at Delphi. And long afterwards, their sayings are explained and puzzled over like the mysterious prophecies of the ancient Sibyls. But if you consider that something can be said in favour of every person and every thing, and just as well something against them, and that all things have not just two sides but three or

four, then it is almost hard to be completely wrong with such sudden decisions. You could even say: the nature of things is arranged so that women are always right.

418.

Letting yourself be loved. - In a couple, one person is usually the one who loves and the other the one who is loved. Because of this, people have come to believe that in every love affair there is a fixed amount of love: the more one person grabs for themselves, the less is left over for the other. Now and then it happens that vanity convinces each of the two that they are the one who ought to be loved, so that both want to be loved. This leads, especially in marriage, to all sorts of scenes that are half funny and half absurd.

419.

Contradictions in women's heads. - Because women think so much more about persons than about things themselves, ideas that logically contradict each other can live side by side in their minds. They tend to become excited, one after another, about the people who stand for these ideas, and they accept those people's whole systems of thought all in one lump. But whenever a new personality later gains the upper hand, a dead spot is left behind in the place of the old idea. It may even happen that the whole philosophy in an old woman's head is made up of nothing but such dead spots.

420.

Who suffers more? - After a personal quarrel and fight between a woman and a man, one of them suffers most at the thought of having hurt the other. The other one, though, suffers most at the thought of not having hurt the first one enough, and so tries, with tears, sobbing

and a distressed face, to make the other's heart heavy even after the fight is over.

421.

A chance for women to be generous. If, just in our thoughts, we set aside for a moment what custom demands, we might well ask whether nature and reason do not point a man toward marrying several times, one marriage after another. It could go something like this. First, at the age of twenty-two, he marries an older woman who is ahead of him in mind and in morals. She can guide him through the dangers of his twenties, such as ambition, hatred, despising himself, and passions of every kind. Later, her love would turn completely into a mother's love. And then, when the man is in his thirties and joins himself to a very young woman whose upbringing he takes into his own hands, the first wife would not only put up with it, she would actually help it along in the most healthy way. Marriage is a necessary arrangement for a man in his twenties. In his thirties it is useful, but not necessary. In later life it often does harm, and it helps a man's mind to slide backwards.

422.

The tragedy of childhood. It may happen quite often that people with noble, high aims have to fight their hardest battle in childhood. For example, they may have to stand up for their own way of thinking against a father who thinks small and gives himself over to putting on a show and telling lies. Or, like Lord Byron, they may live in constant battle with a childish mother who flies into rages. Anyone who has lived through something like that will never, for the rest of his life, get over knowing who his greatest and most dangerous enemy really was.

423.

Parents' foolishness. The worst mistakes in judging a person are made by that person's parents. This is a fact, but how can we explain it? Do the parents have too much experience of the child, so that they can no longer pull it all together into one picture? We notice that travellers among foreign peoples only grasp the general features that set a people apart during the first part of their stay. The better they get to know the people, the more they lose the ability to see what is typical and special about them. As soon as their eyes get used to looking up close, they stop being able to see from a distance. Could it be that parents judge their child wrongly because they have never stood far enough away from it? A completely different explanation would be this: people usually stop thinking about the things closest around them, and simply take them for granted. Perhaps it is the parents' habit of not thinking that explains why, when they are finally forced to judge their children, they judge them so crookedly.

424.

From the future of marriage. Those noble, free-minded women who make it their task to educate women and raise them up should not overlook one point. Think of marriage in its higher sense: as a friendship of the soul between two people of different sexes, the kind of marriage people hope for in the future, entered into for the purpose of having and raising a new generation. Such a marriage uses the physical side, so to speak, only as a rare, occasional means toward a bigger goal. And so, we have to fear, it will probably need a natural helper alongside it: the keeping of a mistress. For if, for the sake of the man's health, his wife is also supposed to be the only one who satisfies his sexual needs, then the wrong thing will decide his choice of a wife, something that works against the goals just mentioned. Having children will become a matter of chance, and raising them well will be-

come very unlikely. A good wife is supposed to be a friend, a helper, the one who gives birth, a mother, the head of the family and the one who runs the household. She may even have her own business and her own job to look after, apart from her husband. She cannot be a mistress as well. In general, that would be asking too much of her. So in the future, the reverse of what happened in Athens in the time of Pericles might come about. Back then, men got hardly more from their wives than they would from mistresses. So on the side they turned to women like Aspasia, clever and charming companions, because they longed for the delight of company that sets the head and the heart free, the kind of company that only the grace and quick, flexible minds of women can create. All human institutions, like marriage, allow only a moderate amount of making them ideal in practice. Otherwise, rough repairs at once become necessary.

425.

Women's time of storm and stress. In the three or four civilized countries of Europe, with a few centuries of education, you can make women into anything you like, even into men. Not in the sexual sense, of course, but in every other sense. Under such an influence they will one day have taken on all the virtues and strengths of men. At the same time, though, they will have to accept men's weaknesses and vices into the bargain. That much, as I said, can be forced. But how are we going to put up with the in-between stage this brings about? It may itself last a couple of centuries. During that time, women's old follies and unfairness, which they have carried with them since ancient times like a birth gift, will still hold the upper hand over everything newly gained and learned. In that time, anger will be the true male feeling. Men will be angry that all the arts and sciences are flooded and choked with mud by amateurs on an unheard-of scale. They will be angry that philosophy is talked to death

by confusing chatter, that politics is more fanciful and one-sided than ever, and that society is completely falling apart. And it will fall apart because the women who used to guard the old customs will have become ridiculous to themselves, and will be trying in every way to stand outside custom. For if women had their greatest power in custom, what will they have to reach for to win back a similar amount of power once they have given custom up?

426.

The free thinker and marriage. Will free thinkers live with women? In general, I believe that, like the birds of ancient times that people watched to tell the future, they are the ones who think truly and speak the truth today, and so they must prefer to fly alone.

427.

The happiness of marriage. Everything we get used to pulls a web of spider threads around us, and the web keeps getting tighter. Soon we notice that the threads have turned into ropes, and that we ourselves are the spider sitting in the middle. We have caught ourselves here and must feed on our own blood. That is why the free thinker hates all habits and rules, everything lasting and final. That is why, painfully, he tears apart the web around him again and again. Because of this he will suffer from many wounds, small and large, for he has to rip those threads off himself, off his body and his soul. He must learn to love where he used to hate, and the other way round. In fact, nothing may be impossible for him, not even sowing dragon's teeth, which sprout into armed enemies, in the very same field where he once poured out the horns of plenty of his kindness. From this you can work out whether he is made for the happiness of marriage.

428.

Too close. If we live too closely with another person, it is like handling a fine engraving again and again with bare fingers. One day all we have left in our hands is cheap, dirty paper and nothing more. A person's soul, too, gets worn out in the end by constant handling. At least it finally seems that way to us: we never again see its original lines and beauty. We always lose something when we are too familiar with women and friends. And sometimes we lose the pearl of our life that way.

429.

The golden cradle. The free thinker will always breathe a sigh of relief once he has finally made up his mind to shake off all that motherly worrying and watching over him that the women around him busy themselves with. After all, what harm does a rougher breeze do him, the kind of draught people so anxiously kept away from him? What does one real setback more or less in his life matter, whether it is a loss, an accident, an illness, a debt, or being fooled? What does any of that matter compared with the lack of freedom of the golden cradle, of the peacock-feather fan waving over him, and of the heavy feeling that on top of it all he has to be grateful, because he is being looked after and spoiled like a baby? That is why the milk handed to him by the motherly attitude of the women around him can so easily turn into bitterness.

430.

The animal that offers itself for sacrifice. If a man is famous and great, there is nothing an outstanding woman can do that makes his life easier than this: she becomes, so to speak, the container that catches the general dislike and the occasional bad moods of everyone else.

People of his own time tend to forgive their great men many blunders and foolish acts, and even acts of serious unfairness, as long as they can find someone else whom they are allowed to mistreat and slaughter as the real sacrificial animal, just to relieve their feelings. Quite often a woman feels the ambition to offer herself for this sacrifice. And then, of course, the man can be very pleased with himself, that is, if he is selfish enough to put up with having such a volunteer lightning rod, storm shield and rain cover standing right next to him.

431.

Pleasant opponents. Women naturally lean towards a calm, steady way of living and of dealing with people, where everything fits together happily. Like oil poured on the stormy sea of life, they smooth things over and calm them down. Without meaning to, this works against the more heroic inner drive of the free thinker. Without noticing it, women act as if they were clearing the stones off the path of a travelling rock collector so that he won't stub his foot on them, when stubbing his foot on those stones is exactly why he set out in the first place.

432.

Two harmonies that clash. Women want to serve, and that is where they find their happiness. And the free thinker does not want to be served, and that is where he finds his happiness.

433.

Xanthippe. Socrates found exactly the kind of wife he needed. But even he would not have gone looking for her if he had known her well enough. Even the heroism of this free spirit would not have stretched that far. In fact, Xanthippe kept pushing him further and further into

his unusual calling by making his house and home so unhomely and uncomfortable. She taught him to live out in the streets and anywhere else people could chat and loaf about. In this way she trained him into the greatest street debater in Athens. In the end he even had to compare himself to a pesky horsefly that a god had set on the neck of the beautiful horse called Athens, to keep it from ever settling down to rest.

434.

Blind to what lies far off. Mothers really only have eyes and feelings for the pains of their children that are plain to see and feel. In just the same way, the wives of men who aim high cannot bring themselves to watch their husbands suffer, go without, and even be looked down on. Yet all of this may not only be a sign that these men have chosen the right way to live. It may already be a guarantee that their great goals are bound to be reached some day. Women are always quietly scheming against the higher soul of their husbands. They want to cheat that soul out of its future, in exchange for a comfortable present without pain.

435.

Power and freedom. However highly women respect their husbands, they respect the powers and ideas that society accepts even more. For thousands of years they have been used to going about bowed before everyone in charge, with their hands folded on their chests, and they disapprove of any rebellion against public authority. That is why, without even meaning to, almost by instinct, they hang on the wheels of any independent, free-thinking effort like a brake. Sometimes this makes their husbands extremely impatient, especially when the husbands keep telling themselves that what really drives the women in all this is love. To disapprove of the women's methods while generously

respecting the motives behind them: that is the way men are, and often enough it is what drives men to despair.

436.

"Furthermore, I propose." It is laughable when a group of people who own nothing votes to abolish the right to inherit. And it is just as laughable when people without children work on making the actual laws of a country. They simply do not have enough weight in their ship to sail safely out into the ocean of the future. But it seems just as absurd when someone who has chosen as his task the broadest kind of knowledge and the judging of all of existence weighs himself down with personal concerns about a family: feeding them, keeping them safe, earning the respect of his wife and children. It is as if he hung a cloudy veil in front of his telescope, one that hardly lets a few rays from the distant stars get through. So I too arrive at this rule: when it comes to matters of the highest philosophical kind, all married people are suspect.

437.

At the end. There are many kinds of hemlock, the poison Socrates was made to drink. And fate usually finds a chance to raise a cup of this poison to the free thinker's lips, to "punish" him, as everyone then says. And what do the women around him do then? They will scream and wail, and perhaps disturb the thinker's calm, like the peace of a sunset at the end of his life, just as they did in the prison in Athens. "Oh Crito, please have someone take these women away!" Socrates finally said.

Chapter Eight

A Look at the State

438.

Asking to speak. These days, every political party has the same rabble-rousing character and the same goal: to sway the masses. Because of that goal, they all have to turn their principles into huge, crude pieces of foolishness, like giant pictures painted straight onto a wall for everyone to see. Nothing can be done about this anymore. In fact, it is pointless even to lift a finger against it. In this area, what Voltaire said holds true: "When the common crowd starts to reason, all is lost." Since this has happened, we have to adapt to the new conditions, the way people adapt when an earthquake has shifted the old borders and the shape of the land and changed what property is worth. Besides, if all politics is really about making life bearable for as many people as possible, then these as-many-as-possible may as well decide for themselves what they mean by a bearable life. If they believe they have the brains to find the right means to reach that goal, what good would it do to doubt it? They simply want to be the makers of their own luck and their own bad luck. And this feeling of deciding for themselves, this pride in the five or six ideas their heads hold and bring out into the open, may truly make life so pleasant for them that they gladly put up with the unlucky results of their narrow-mindedness. If so, there is little to object to. But only on one condition: that their narrow-mindedness does not go so far as to demand that everything must become politics in this sense, and that everyone must live and act by this measure. For first of all, some people must be allowed, more than ever before, to stay out of politics and step a little to the side. They too are driven by the joy of deciding for them-

selves. And there may also be a little pride in keeping quiet when too many people, or simply many people, are talking. Next, these few must be forgiven if they do not take the happiness of the many so seriously, whether "the many" means whole nations or layers of society, and if now and then they let an ironic look slip onto their faces. Their seriousness lies somewhere else. Their idea of happiness is a different one. Their goal cannot be grasped by every clumsy hand that has only five fingers. Finally, there comes a point that people will surely find hardest to allow them, but which must be allowed all the same. From time to time a moment comes when these few step out of their silent loneliness and test the strength of their lungs once more. Then they call out to one another like people lost in a forest, to let each other know where they are and to give each other courage. Of course, while they do this, some things are said out loud that sound unpleasant to the ears they were not meant for. Well, soon afterwards the forest is quiet again, so quiet that you can once more clearly hear the whirring, buzzing and fluttering of the countless insects that live in it, above it and below it.

439.

Culture and class. A more advanced culture can only come about where society has two separate classes. One is the class of people who work. The other is the class of people with free time, who are truly able to use free time well. Or, to put it more strongly: the class of forced work and the class of free work. When the goal is to produce a more advanced culture, the question of how happiness is shared out is not the main point. In any case, the class with free time is the one more able to suffer, and it does suffer more. Its comfort in being alive is smaller, and its task is greater. Now suppose there is even an exchange between the two classes. The duller, less thoughtful families and individuals of the upper class are pushed down into the lower

one, and in turn the freer people from the lower class are let into the upper one. Then a state of things has been reached beyond which you can only see the open sea of vague wishes. This is how the fading voice of the old times speaks to us. But where are there still ears to hear it?

440.

Of noble blood. What men and women of noble birth have over other people, and what gives them an undeniable right to be valued more highly, are two skills that have grown stronger and stronger by being passed down through families. One is the skill of being able to give orders. The other is the skill of obeying with pride. Now, wherever giving orders is part of daily business, as in the big world of trade and industry, something similar to those families "of noble blood" grows up. But these new people lack the dignified way of obeying. With the old nobles, that dignity is something inherited from the days of lords and vassals, and it just will not grow anymore in the climate of our culture.

441.

Obedience to rank. The strict obedience to those above you, which is so highly valued in states run by soldiers and officials, will soon seem just as unbelievable to us as the tight, closed tactics of the Jesuits already do. And once this kind of obedience is no longer possible, a whole range of the most amazing results can no longer be achieved, and the world will be poorer for it. It has to disappear, because the ground it stands on is disappearing: the belief in an authority that cannot be questioned, and in final truth. Even in military states, physical force is not enough to create this obedience. What creates it is the inherited worship of the ruler as something more than human. In freer conditions, people only place themselves under others on

certain terms, as part of an agreement on both sides, and so with every reservation that self-interest demands.

442.

Armies of the whole people. The biggest drawback of the armies made up of the whole nation, which are now so praised, is that they waste people of the highest level of civilization. Such people exist at all only when every circumstance happens to be favourable. So how carefully and anxiously we ought to treat them, since it takes long stretches of time to create the chance conditions that produce such finely built brains! But just as the Greeks once raged against Greek blood, Europeans now rage against European blood. And it is always the most highly educated who are sacrificed most, relatively speaking: the very people who promise plenty of good children. These people stand at the front in battle, as the ones giving orders. On top of that, because of their greater ambition, they expose themselves to danger the most. The crude patriotism of the ancient Romans is now, when we face quite different and higher tasks than "fatherland" and "honour", either something dishonest or a sign of being left behind.

443.

Hope as arrogance. Our social order will slowly melt away, as all earlier orders have done, once the suns of new opinions shine down on people with new heat. You can only wish for this melting away if you hope. And you can only reasonably hope if you believe that you and people like you have more strength in heart and head than those who stand for the way things are. So usually this hope will be a kind of arrogance, an overestimating of oneself.

444.

War. Against war, you can say this: it makes the winner stupid and the loser spiteful. In favour of war: through both of these effects it makes people more savage, and so more natural. For culture, war is a time of sleep, or a winter season. People come out of it stronger, both for good and for evil.

445.

In the service of the ruler. If a statesman wants to be able to act with no regard for anyone at all, he does best to carry out his work not for himself but for a ruler. The person watching is dazzled by the shine of this apparent unselfishness, so that he does not see the tricks and harshness that the statesman's work brings with it.

446.

A question of power, not of right. Some people, whatever the issue, keep their eye on the greater usefulness. Suppose socialism really is the uprising of people who have been pressed down and held down for thousands of years, rising against those who kept them down. For such people, socialism then raises no problem of right. They do not ask the silly, soft question: "How far should we give in to its demands?" They ask only a question of power: "How far can we make use of its demands?" So it is like dealing with a force of nature, such as steam. Either people force steam to serve them, as a kind of machine god, or, if the machine has faults, which means faults in the human planning that went into building it, the steam smashes both the machine and the people along with it. To answer that question of power, you have to know how strong socialism is. You have to know in what changed form it could still be used as a powerful lever in today's political tug of war between forces. In some situations, you

might even have to do everything you can to make it stronger. Whenever humanity meets any great force, even the most dangerous one, it must think about how to turn that force into a tool for its own goals. Socialism only wins a right at the point where war seems to have broken out between the two powers, those who stand for the old and those who stand for the new. Then, on both sides, clever calculation about how to survive and come out as well as possible makes them want an agreement. Without an agreement, there is no right. But so far, in this area, there has been neither war nor agreement. So there are also no rights yet, and no "ought".

447.

Making use of the smallest dishonesty. The power of the press lies in this: each single person who works for it feels only very slightly bound and committed to it. Usually he says what he thinks. But now and then he does not, because keeping quiet helps his party, or his country's politics, or simply himself. Such small slips into dishonesty, or maybe just a dishonest silence, are not hard for one person to live with. But the results are enormous, because many people commit these little wrongs at the same time. Each of them tells himself: "For such small favours I live better and can earn my living. If I refused to make these small allowances, I would make myself impossible." Writing one more line, or not writing it, perhaps without even signing your name, seems to make almost no moral difference. And because of that, someone with money and influence can turn any opinion into public opinion. Anyone who knows that most people are weak in small things, and who wants to reach his own goals through that weakness, is always a dangerous person.

448.

Complaining too loudly. Take some bad state of affairs, for example the failings of a government office, or bribery and favouritism in political bodies or among scholars. If it is described in a greatly exaggerated way, the description loses its effect on thoughtful people. But it has an even stronger effect on people who do not think things through, who would have stayed unmoved by a careful, balanced account. These people are by far the majority. They also have stronger willpower and a wilder urge to act. So the exaggeration becomes the reason for investigations, punishments, promises and reorganisations. In that sense, it is useful to exaggerate when describing bad states of affairs.

449.

The people who seem to make the political weather. Ordinary people quietly assume that someone who understands the weather, and can predict it a day ahead, actually makes the weather. In the same way, even educated people and scholars, with a great deal of superstitious belief, give great statesmen credit for all the important changes and turns of events that happened while they were in power. They treat these changes as the statesmen's very own work, as long as it is clear that the statesmen knew about something earlier than others and made their plans to fit it. So these statesmen are also taken for weather makers. And this belief is by no means the least of the tools of their power.

450.

The new and the old idea of government. People tend to separate government and people as if they were two different areas of power: a stronger, higher one dealing and making deals with a weaker, lower

one. This is a piece of inherited political feeling. In most states it still matches exactly how power has actually been divided up over history. For example, when Bismarck calls a constitutional system a compromise between government and people, he is speaking from a principle that has its reason in history. Of course, from history it also has its share of unreason, without which nothing human can exist. Against this, we are now supposed to learn a different principle, one that comes purely out of people's heads and has yet to make history. It says that government is nothing but an organ of the people, a part of the people's body doing a job for it. It is not a caring, respectable "up above" set over a "down below" that is used to being humble. This way of defining government is so far unhistorical and arbitrary, even if it is more logical. Before we accept it, we should really think about the consequences. The relationship between people and government is the strongest model relationship there is. Without anyone meaning it to, other relationships shape themselves after it: between teacher and pupil, between the head of a household and the servants, between father and family, between army commander and soldier, between master and apprentice. Under the influence of the constitutional form of government that rules today, all these relationships are now changing a little. They are becoming compromises. But how they will have to turn upside down and shift, changing both their names and their nature, once that very newest idea has taken hold of people's minds everywhere! That, though, may well take another hundred years. Here nothing is more to be wished for than caution and slow development.

451.

Fairness as a party's bait. Noble members of the ruling class, even if not especially wise ones, may well promise themselves: "We want to treat people as equals and give them equal rights." To that extent, a

socialist way of thinking that rests on fairness is possible. But, as I said, only within the ruling class, which in this case practises fairness by making sacrifices and giving things up. On the other hand, demanding equal rights, as the socialists of the class that is kept down do, never flows from fairness. It flows from greed. If you hold bloody chunks of meat close in front of a wild beast and then pull them away again, until at last it roars: do you think that roar means fairness?

452.

Property and fairness. The socialists show that the way property is shared out among people today is the result of countless injustices and acts of violence. And so, all in all, they refuse to feel any duty toward something built on such wrongs. When they do this, they are only seeing one single piece of the picture. The whole past of the old culture is built on violence, slavery, cheating and mistakes. But we ourselves are the heirs of all these conditions, in fact we are what all that past has grown together into. We cannot simply abolish ourselves by decree, and we must not try to pull out one single piece. The unfair way of thinking lives in the souls of those without property too. They are no better than those with property and have no moral advantage, because at some point their ancestors were property owners. What is needed is not new, violent sharing out of property, but a slow reshaping of how people think and feel. Fairness has to grow greater in everyone, and the violent instinct has to grow weaker.

453.

The Helmsman of the Passions. - A statesman stirs up strong public feelings so that he can profit from the opposite feelings this awakens in return. Here is an example. A German statesman knows very well that the Catholic Church will never share the same plans as Russia. In fact, the Church would much rather team up with the Turks than with

Russia. He also knows that every danger to Germany comes from a possible alliance between France and Russia. Now, if he can manage to turn France into the home and stronghold of the Catholic Church, he has removed this danger for a long time. So it is in his interest to show hatred toward Catholics. Through all kinds of hostile acts, he wants to turn the people who accept the Pope's authority into a fiery political force. This force would be against German policy, and it would naturally have to merge with France, since France is Germany's enemy. His goal, then, is to make France more Catholic. He needs this just as much as the French politician Mirabeau once believed that making France less Catholic would save his country. - So one country wants the minds of millions of people in another country to be clouded and kept in the dark, so that it can gain an advantage from that darkness. This is the same attitude that supports the republican form of government in the neighbouring country, which the French writer Mérimée called "organized disorder". It supports it for one reason only: because it believes that this kind of government makes the people weaker, more divided and less able to fight a war.

454.

The Dangerous Ones Among Those Who Want to Overthrow Society. - Let us divide the people who want to overthrow society into two groups: those who want to gain something for themselves, and those who want to gain something for their children and grandchildren. The second group is the more dangerous one. That is because they have the belief, and the clear conscience, that they are not acting out of self-interest. The first group can be bought off with something; the ruling society is still rich enough and clever enough to do that. The danger starts as soon as the goals stop being personal. Revolutionaries who act without personal interest can look at everyone who de-

fends the way things are as people acting only out of personal interest. And because of that, they feel superior to them.

455.

The Political Value of Being a Father. - If a man has no sons, he does not have the full right to have a say in what a particular state needs. You have to have risked what you love most, together with everyone else; only that ties you firmly to the state. You must keep the happiness of your descendants in view, which means, above all, that you must have descendants, in order to take a proper, natural part in all the institutions and in how they change. The growth of a higher morality depends on a person having sons. Having them makes him selfless. Or, to put it more correctly: it stretches his selfishness out over a longer stretch of time, and it makes him seriously pursue goals that reach beyond the length of his own life.

456.

Pride in One's Ancestors. - You may rightly be proud of an unbroken line of good ancestors, all the way down to your father. But you may not be proud of simply having a line of ancestors, because everyone has one. Coming from good ancestors is what real noble birth is. A single break in that chain, meaning one bad ancestor, cancels out that noble birth. Anyone who talks about his noble blood should be asked: "Is there no violent, greedy, wild-living, spiteful or cruel person among your ancestors?" If he can honestly answer "No," knowing it for sure and with a clear conscience, then you should try to become his friend.

457.

Slaves and Workers. - We care more about feeding our vanity than about every other kind of well-being, such as safety, shelter and all sorts of pleasures. This shows to a ridiculous degree in the following fact. Everyone, leaving aside political reasons, wants slavery to be ended, and everyone hates the idea of putting people into that situation. And yet everyone has to admit that slaves live more safely and more happily, in every way, than the modern worker does, and that slave labour is very little work compared with the work of a "worker". People protest in the name of "human dignity". But put more simply, that is just our dear old vanity, which feels that not being treated as an equal, and being publicly looked down on, is the hardest fate of all. - The Cynic, a follower of that old Greek school of thought, sees it differently, because he looks down on honour. And so the philosopher Diogenes was, for a while, a slave and a private tutor in a household.

458.

Leading Minds and Their Tools. - Great statesmen, and in general everyone who has to use many people to carry out their plans, work in one of two ways. Either they pick, very carefully and with great skill, the people who fit their plans, and then give them quite a lot of freedom. They do this because they know that the nature of these chosen people will push them exactly where the leader wants them to go. Or they choose badly, even taking whatever comes to hand, but they shape something useful for their purposes out of every lump of clay. This second way is the more forceful one, and it also demands more obedient tools. Leaders of this kind usually understand people much less, and look down on people much more, than the first kind. But the machine they build usually works better than the machine that comes out of the first kind's workshop.

459.

Arbitrary Law Is Necessary. - Legal experts argue about which kind of law should win out among a people: the law that has been thought through most completely, or the law that is easiest to understand. The first kind, whose finest model is Roman law, seems impossible for ordinary people to understand. So it does not seem to express their own sense of what is right. The laws of the common people, such as the old Germanic laws, were rough, superstitious, illogical, and partly silly. But they matched very specific customs and feelings that had been passed down at home. - But where law is no longer a custom handed down, as is the case with us, it can only be something ordered from above, something forced on people. None of us has a sense of right and wrong that comes from custom handed down anymore. That is why we have to put up with laws that are set by choice, laws that simply express the need for there to be some law. In that case, the most logical law is certainly the most acceptable, because it is the most impartial. This is true even if we admit that, in every case, the smallest unit for matching a crime to its punishment is chosen arbitrarily.

460.

The Great Man of the Masses. - The recipe for what the masses call a great man is easy to give. In every situation, get them something they find very pleasant. Or first put the idea into their heads that this or that would be very pleasant, and then give it to them. But never give it right away, not at any price. Instead, fight for it with the greatest effort, or at least seem to fight for it. The masses must get the impression that a mighty, even unbeatable willpower is at work; at the very least, it must seem to be there. Everyone admires a strong will, because nobody has one, and everyone tells himself that if he had one, there would be no limit to what he and his selfishness could do. Now,

if it turns out that such a strong will does something very pleasant for the masses, instead of following its own greedy desires, people admire it once again and congratulate themselves. As for the rest, this man should have all the qualities of the masses. Then they feel less ashamed in front of him, and he becomes all the more popular. So: let him be violent, envious, someone who uses others, a schemer, a flatterer, a crawler, puffed up with himself, and all of these things as the situation calls for.

461.

Prince and God. - People often deal with their princes in much the same way as they deal with their God. After all, the prince was often the representative of God, or at least his high priest. This almost eerie mood of worship, fear and shame was once strong, and it has become much weaker. But now and then it flares up again and attaches itself to powerful people in general. The worship of genius is an echo of this old worship of god-like princes. Wherever people try to lift single individuals up into something more than human, a tendency also arises to imagine whole layers of the common people as cruder and lower than they really are.

462.

My Utopia. - In a better-arranged society, the hard work and hardship of life would be handed out to the person who suffers least from it, that is, to the dullest and least sensitive person. Then it would go step by step upward, all the way to the person who is most sensitive to the highest and most refined kinds of suffering, and who therefore suffers even when life has been made as easy as possible for him.

463.

A Delusion in the Idea of Overthrow. - There are political and social dreamers who passionately and with great skill in speaking call for every kind of order to be torn down. They believe that once this happens, the proudest temple of a beautiful humanity will rise up right away, as if all by itself. In these dangerous dreams you can still hear the echo of Rousseau's superstition. Rousseau believed that human nature has a wonderful, original goodness, but that this goodness has been buried, as if under rubble. And he blamed the institutions of culture, such as society, the state and education, for burying it. Sadly, we know from history that every overthrow of this kind brings back to life the wildest energies, the terrible cruelties and the lack of all limits from the most distant ages, which had long been buried. So an overthrow may well be a source of strength for a humanity that has grown tired. But it can never be something that puts human nature in order, builds it, shapes it like an artist, or brings it to completion. - It was not Voltaire's balanced nature, which liked to put things in order, to clean them up and to rebuild them, that woke up the hopeful, optimistic spirit of the Revolution. It was Rousseau's passionate follies and half-lies. And against that spirit I cry out: "Crush the vile thing!" Because of it, the spirit of the Enlightenment and of steady progress has been chased away for a long time. Let us see, each of us within ourselves, whether it is possible to call it back again!

464.

Moderation. - When thinking and searching with complete determination, that is, free thinking, has become part of a person's character, it makes that person moderate in how they act. It does this because it weakens their greed and cravings. It also draws much of their available energy toward itself, to serve the goals of the mind. And it shows

how all sudden changes are only half useful, or useless and dangerous.

465.

The Mind Rising Again. - When a nation is lying on its political sickbed, it usually makes itself young again and finds once more the mind and spirit it had slowly lost while it was seeking power and holding on to it. Culture owes its very greatest achievements to times when nations were politically weak.

466.

New Opinions in an Old House. - When opinions are overturned, the institutions are not overturned right away. Instead, the new opinions live for a long time in the empty, creepy house of the opinions that came before them. They even keep the house in good repair themselves, because they have nowhere else to live.

467.

Schools. - In big states, the school system will always be average at best. The reason is the same as the reason why, in big kitchens, the cooking is at best average.

468.

Innocent Corruption. - In every institution that the sharp, fresh air of public criticism does not blow into, an innocent kind of corruption grows up, like a mushroom. This happens, for example, in learned societies and in university senates.

469.

Scholars as Politicians. - Scholars who become politicians are usually given the comical role of having to be the good conscience of a political policy.

470.

The Wolf Hiding Behind the Sheep. - Almost every politician, at some point and in certain situations, needs an honest man so badly that he breaks into a sheep pen like a starving wolf. But he does not do it to eat the ram he has stolen. He does it to hide behind its woolly back.

471.

Happy Ages. - A happy age is simply not possible, because people only want to wish for it, but do not want to actually have it. And every single person, when good days come to him, practically learns to pray for restlessness and misery. Human fate is set up for happy moments, and every life has some, but not for happy ages. Even so, such happy ages will go on existing in people's imagination as "the land beyond the mountains," something inherited from our earliest ancestors. That is because the idea of a happy age probably comes, from ancient times, from that state in which a person, after a huge effort in hunting and war, gives himself over to rest, stretches out his limbs, and hears the wings of sleep rustling around him. It is a false conclusion when a person, following that old habit, imagines that after whole long periods of hardship and toil he could now also enjoy a state of happiness that is just as much greater and just as long-lasting.

472.

Religion and government. - As long as the state, or to put it more clearly, the government, sees itself as a guardian appointed to look after a crowd of people who are like children and cannot manage for themselves, and as long as it asks, for their sake, whether religion should be kept or done away with, it will almost certainly always decide to keep religion. The reason is that religion comforts the individual heart in times of loss, hardship, fear and distrust. Those are exactly the moments when the government feels it cannot do anything directly to ease the inner suffering of a private person. And even when great troubles strike everyone, troubles that cannot be avoided and at first cannot be stopped, such as famines, money crises and wars, religion keeps the crowd calm, patient and trusting. Wherever a thoughtful person notices the flaws of the government, whether those flaws are unavoidable or just bad luck, or notices the dangerous results of a ruling family's own interests, he may become stubborn and rebellious. But the people who do not see so clearly will think they are seeing the finger of God at work, and they will patiently obey the orders "from above". In that phrase, God's rule and human rule usually blend together into one. In this way peace inside the country is kept, and things can keep developing without a break. The power that comes from a people feeling as one, sharing the same opinions and goals, is protected and sealed by religion. The only exceptions are those rare cases when the priests and the rulers cannot agree on a price and start fighting each other. Normally the state knows how to win the priests over. It needs them, because they shape people's souls in the most private and hidden way. And the state knows how to value servants who, on the surface, seem to stand for something quite different. Even today no power can become "legitimate", that is, rightful in people's eyes, without the help of priests. Napoleon understood this. - So a government that acts as an all-powerful guardian and the

careful keeping of religion necessarily go together. This assumes that the ruling people and classes have come to understand how useful religion is to them, and so they feel, to some degree, above it, since they use it as a tool. That is where free thinking first comes from. - But what happens when a completely different idea of government begins to spread, the idea that is taught in democratic states? What happens when people see government as nothing but the tool of the people's will, not as an "above" standing over a "below", but simply as a job carried out for the one true ruler, the people? In that case the government can only take the same position towards religion that the people take. Every spread of new, clear-headed thinking among the people will have to echo all the way up into their representatives. It will no longer be so easy to use and exploit religious drives and comforts for the purposes of the state, unless powerful party leaders have, for a while, an influence that looks like that of an enlightened dictator. But if the state is no longer allowed to draw any use from religion itself, or if the people think about religious matters in far too many different ways to allow the government one single, uniform approach to religious questions, then the obvious way out will be to treat religion as a private matter, and to leave it to each person's conscience and habits. The first result is that religious feeling seems to grow stronger. Hidden and held-down religious impulses, which the state, either without meaning to or on purpose, had not given room to breathe, now burst out and go to extremes. Later it turns out that religion is overgrown with sects, and that a whole crop of dragon's teeth was sown at the very moment religion was made a private matter. This is an image from the old Greek story where dragon's teeth planted in the ground grow up into armed warriors who fight each other; it means that the seeds of much future fighting were planted. The sight of all this quarrelling, and the hostile exposing of every weakness of every religious faith, finally leaves only one way out: every better and more gifted person makes having no religion his own private matter. This

attitude then also takes hold in the minds of the people who govern, and, almost against their will, it gives their measures an anti-religious character. As soon as this happens, the mood of those who are still moved by religion changes. Before, they had worshipped the state as something half holy or fully holy; now they turn firmly against it. They lie in wait for the government's measures and try to block them, cross them and make trouble for them as much as they can. Through the heat of their opposition, they push the other side, the non-religious side, into an almost fanatical enthusiasm for the state. Quietly adding to this is the fact that, in these circles, people have felt an emptiness inside since they broke away from religion, and for now they try to create a replacement for it, a kind of filling, by devoting themselves to the state. After these struggles of change, which may last a long time, it is finally decided one way or the other. Either the religious parties are still strong enough to bring back the old situation and turn the wheel back, in which case an enlightened dictatorship, perhaps less enlightened and more fearful than before, will unavoidably take control of the state. Or the non-religious parties win and, over several generations, through schools and education for example, they wear away the passing-on of their opponents' views and finally make it impossible. But then their own enthusiasm for the state fades too. It becomes clearer and clearer that once religious worship of the state is gone, the worship that saw it as a mystery and as something founded from beyond this world, then people's respectful and devoted relationship to the state has been shaken as well. From then on, individuals only ever look at the side of the state where it can help them or harm them, and they push forward by every means to gain influence over it. But this competition soon becomes too fierce. People and parties change too quickly. They throw each other down the mountain too wildly, almost as soon as they have reached the top. None of the measures a government pushes through has any guarantee that it will last. People shy away from projects that would need to grow quietly

for decades or even centuries in order to bear ripe fruit. No one feels any other duty towards a law except to bow, for the moment, to the power that brought the law in. But right away people start to undermine it with a new power, a new majority that they set about building. In the end, and this can be said with certainty, distrust of everything that governs, and the insight that these short-winded struggles are useless and wear people out, must drive people to a completely new decision: to get rid of the very idea of the state, and to end the divide between "private" and "public". Step by step, private companies and associations will take over the business of the state. Even the toughest remaining piece of the old work of governing, for example the job of protecting private people from other private people, will one day, at the very last, be handled by private businesses. Contempt for the state, its decline and its death, and the setting free of the private person (I am careful not to say "the individual") is where the democratic idea of the state leads. That is its mission. Once it has done its job, a job that, like everything human, carries a lot of reason and a lot of unreason inside it, and once every relapse into the old sickness has been overcome, a new page will be unrolled in humanity's book of fables. On it people will read all sorts of strange stories, and perhaps some good things too. - To sum up briefly what has been said: the interests of a guardian-style government and the interests of religion go hand in hand, so that when religion begins to die, the foundation of the state is shaken too. The belief in a God-given order of political things, in a mystery surrounding the existence of the state, comes from religion. If religion disappears, the state will unavoidably lose its ancient veil of Isis, the veil of the Egyptian goddess that stood for hidden, sacred mystery, and it will no longer inspire awe. The rule of the people, seen up close, serves to chase away even the last bit of magic and superstition in this area of feeling. Modern democracy is the form in history that the decline of the state takes. - But the outlook that this certain decline opens up is not

unhappy in every way. Of all human qualities, people's cleverness and self-interest are the most highly developed. When the state no longer meets the demands of these forces, the last thing that will happen is chaos. Instead, an invention even better suited to its purpose than the state was will win out over the state. Humanity has already seen many organising powers die out. One example is the clan, the group of people bound together by common descent, which for thousands of years was much more powerful than the family, and which in fact was already ruling and ordering things long before the family even existed. We ourselves are watching the important idea of the family as a source of rights and power, which once ruled wherever Roman ways reached, grow paler and weaker. In the same way, a later generation will see the state, too, become meaningless in certain parts of the world. Many people today can hardly think of this idea without fear and disgust. Working to spread this idea and make it come true is, of course, another matter. A person would have to think very arrogantly of his own reason, and understand history only half at best, to put his hand to the plough already, that is, to start tearing up the old ground now, while no one can yet show the seeds that are supposed to be scattered on that torn-up soil afterwards. So let us trust "people's cleverness and self-interest" to keep the state standing for a good while yet, and to turn back the destructive experiments of over-eager and hasty people who only half know what they are talking about!

473.

Socialism and the means it uses. Socialism is the dreamy younger brother of despotism, the rule of one all-powerful master, which has almost died out, and socialism wants to inherit from it. So, at the deepest level, what socialism aims for is a step backwards. It wants the state to have as much power as any despot ever had. In fact it goes beyond everything in the past, because it aims to wipe out the indi-

vidual person altogether. To socialism, the individual seems like an unjustified luxury of nature, something that needs to be "improved" into a useful organ, a working part of the community. Because they are related, socialism always turns up close to any extreme display of power, just as the old, typical socialist Plato turned up at the court of the tyrant of Sicily. Socialism wishes for, and sometimes even helps along, the strongman states ruled by a Caesar-like leader that we see in this century, because, as I said, it would like to be their heir. But even this inheritance would not be enough for its goals. It needs every citizen to bow down in total submission before an all-powerful state, in a way that has never existed before. And it can no longer even count on the old religious respect people used to feel for the state. On the contrary, without meaning to, it has to keep working to get rid of that respect, because it is working to get rid of all the states that exist now. So socialism can only hope to exist for short periods, here and there, through the most extreme terror. That is why it is quietly getting ready for reigns of terror. It hammers the word "fairness" into the heads of the half-educated masses like a nail. It does this to rob them completely of their good sense, which has already suffered a lot from being only half-educated, and to give them a good conscience about the wicked game they are meant to play. Socialism can be useful in one way: it can teach, very brutally and forcefully, how dangerous it is to pile up state power, and so it can make people distrust the state itself. When its rough voice joins in the battle cry "as much state as possible," that cry first gets louder than ever. But soon the opposite cry breaks through, with all the more force: "as little state as possible."

474.

The growth of the mind, feared by the state. The Greek city-state, the polis, was like every political power that organizes things: it shut

things out and was suspicious of education and culture growing. Its powerful basic drive almost only crippled and held back that growth. It did not want education to have a history or to develop and change. The education fixed in the laws of the state was supposed to bind every generation and keep them all at one single level. Later, Plato wanted exactly the same thing for his ideal state. So education and culture developed in spite of the polis. Still, the polis did help, though indirectly and against its own will. It stirred up each person's hunger for honor to the highest degree, so that once someone had started down the path of developing the mind, he pushed on along it to the very farthest extreme. You should not argue against this by pointing to Pericles' famous speech praising Athens. That speech is just a great, hopeful illusion about a supposedly necessary link between the polis and Athenian culture. The historian Thucydides lets that speech shine out one last time, just before night falls on Athens, meaning the plague and the break with tradition. It glows like a beautiful, golden sunset that is meant to make you forget the bad day that came before it.

475.

The European person and the end of nations. Trade and industry, the exchange of books and letters, the shared nature of all more advanced culture, people quickly moving from place to place and from one landscape to another, the wandering, nomad-like life of everyone who does not own land: all these things must lead to nations becoming weaker and finally disappearing, at least the nations of Europe. Out of all of them, through constant mixing, a mixed race must come into being: the European person. Right now, whether people know it or not, something is working against this goal. Nations are shutting themselves off from each other by stirring up hostility between them. But the mixing still moves forward slowly, in spite of these temporary

currents going the other way. This artificial nationalism, by the way, is just as dangerous as artificial Catholicism was. At its core, it is a forced state of emergency, like a city under siege, imposed by a few people on the many, and it needs tricks, lies and violence to keep up its standing. People like to say this nationalism serves the interests of the many, of the peoples. But that is not what drives it. What drives it is, above all, the interests of certain royal families, and after that the interests of certain classes in business and society. Once you have seen this clearly, you should not be afraid to call yourself a good European openly, and you should work through your actions to blend the nations together. The Germans can help with this, thanks to their old and proven gift for being the translators and go-betweens of the peoples. And by the way: the whole problem of the Jews exists only inside nation-states. There, everywhere, their energy and greater intelligence, their store of mental power and willpower, built up from generation to generation in a long school of suffering, must come to dominate to a degree that stirs up envy and hatred. So in almost all of today's nations, a nasty habit in writing and the press is spreading, and it spreads more the more these nations start acting nationalistic again: leading the Jews to the slaughterhouse as scapegoats for every possible public and private problem. As soon as the goal is no longer to preserve nations, but to produce the strongest possible European mixed race, the Jew is just as useful and welcome as an ingredient as any other leftover of a nation. Every nation and every person has unpleasant, even dangerous, qualities. It is cruel to demand that the Jew should be the exception. Those qualities may even be especially dangerous and off-putting in his case, and maybe the young Jewish stock-market trader is the most disgusting invention of the whole human race. Even so, I would like to know how much we have to forgive, when we add everything up, a people who have had the most painful history of all peoples, and not without all of us being to blame for it. To this people we owe the noblest human being, Christ, the purest

wise man, Spinoza, the most powerful book, and the most influential moral law in the world. What is more, in the darkest times of the Middle Ages, when a heavy layer of Asian clouds had settled over Europe, it was Jewish free thinkers, scholars and doctors who held on to the flag of enlightenment and independent thought, even under the harshest personal pressure, and who defended Europe against Asia. It is to a great degree thanks to their efforts that a more natural, more reasonable, and in any case non-mythical explanation of the world could finally win again. It is also thanks to them that the chain of culture which now links us to the enlightenment of ancient Greece and Rome stayed unbroken. If Christianity did everything it could to make the West more like the East, then Judaism played a big part in making it Western again and again. In a certain sense, that means making Europe's task and history a continuation of the Greek one.

476.

How the Middle Ages only seem to be superior. In the Middle Ages, the Church stands out as an institution with a completely universal goal, one that took in all of humanity. On top of that, this goal was about what were supposedly humanity's highest interests. Seen next to that, the goals of the states and nations we find in modern history leave a gloomy, cramped impression. They look petty, low, concerned only with material things, and limited to a certain piece of land. But this difference in how they strike our imagination should certainly not decide our judgment. That universal institution served needs that were artificial and based on made-up stories, needs it first had to create wherever they did not yet exist, such as the need to be saved. The new institutions, on the other hand, help with real hardships. And the time is coming when institutions will arise to serve the true needs that all people share, and they will push that dreamlike model, the Catholic Church, into the shadows and into forgetfulness.

477.

War cannot be done without. – It is nothing but daydreaming and soft-hearted wishful thinking to expect much more from humanity (or even to expect the most from it) once it has forgotten how to make war. For now, we know of no other way to give peoples who are growing tired the things that every great war gives them, and gives them just as strongly and surely. These things are: the rough energy of the army camp; that deep hatred that is not aimed at any one person; that cold-blooded willingness to kill, with a clear conscience; that shared, burning drive that organizes everyone around destroying the enemy; that proud lack of concern about huge losses, about one's own life and the lives of one's friends; and that dull shaking of the soul, like an earthquake. War is like a flood. The streams and rivers that burst out in war do roll along stones and all kinds of filth, and they ruin the meadows of delicate cultures. But afterwards, if conditions are right, these same waters turn the wheels in the workshops of the mind with new strength. Culture simply cannot do without passions, vices and wickedness. – When the Romans had become an empire and grew somewhat tired of wars, they tried to win new strength from animal hunts in the arena, gladiator fights and the persecution of Christians. Today's English, who on the whole also seem to have turned their backs on war, use a different method to create again those strengths that are fading away. They go on dangerous journeys of discovery, sail across seas, and climb mountains. They say they do this for science and scholarship, but in truth they do it to bring home extra strength from adventures and dangers of every kind. People will find many more such substitutes for war. But perhaps these substitutes will only make it clearer and clearer that a humanity like that of today's Europeans needs wars. It is so highly cultured, and for that reason it is bound to be tired. And it needs not just wars, but the greatest and most terrible wars – that is, falling back into barbarism from time to

time. Otherwise it will lose its culture, and even its very existence, through the very tools of its culture.

478.

Hard work in the South and in the North. – Hard work comes about in two completely different ways. Craftsmen in the South become hard-working not because they want to earn money, but because other people constantly need something from them. Because someone always comes along who wants a horse shod or a cart repaired, the blacksmith is hard-working. If nobody came, he would hang around the marketplace doing nothing. In a fertile country it is not very hard to feed yourself. For that he would need only a very small amount of work, and certainly no hard work. In the end he would beg and be content. – The hard work of English workers, on the other hand, is driven by the wish to earn. It knows itself and knows its goals. Through owning things it wants power, and through power it wants the greatest possible freedom and personal distinction.

479.

Wealth as the origin of a nobility of blood. – Wealth necessarily creates an aristocracy of breeding. This is because it allows a man to choose the most beautiful women and to pay the best teachers. It gives people cleanliness, time for physical exercise, and above all it spares them from physical labour that dulls the mind. In this way it provides all the conditions which, over a few generations, make people move gracefully and nobly, and even act nobly. These conditions are: greater freedom of the mind, and the absence of what is pitifully petty, of bowing low to those who give you your bread, and of penny-pinching. – It is exactly these missing things, these things a person does not have to deal with, that are the richest gift luck can give a young person. Someone who is really poor usually ruins him-

self if he has noble ways of thinking. He gets nowhere, earns nothing, and his family line cannot survive. – But we should remember that wealth has almost the same effects whether someone can spend three hundred thalers a year or thirty thousand. Beyond a certain point, the helpful conditions do not really keep growing. But to have less than that, to have to beg and lower yourself as a boy, is terrible. And yet for people who look for their fortune in the glitter of royal courts, in serving the powerful and influential, or who want to become heads of the Church, it may be just the right starting point. (– It teaches you to bend down and creep into the tunnels of favour, like crawling into caves.)

480.

Envy and laziness pointing in different directions. – The two opposing parties, the socialist one and the nationalist one – or whatever they may be called in the different countries of Europe – deserve each other. Envy and laziness are the forces that drive both of them. In the first camp, people want to work with their hands as little as possible. In the second camp, people want to work with their heads as little as possible. The nationalists hate and envy outstanding individuals who grow from within themselves and who will not willingly line up in rank and file so that the masses can make an impact together. The socialists hate and envy the better class of society, the one that is better off on the outside. Yet this class's real task, which is to create the highest goods of culture, makes its life much harder and more painful on the inside. Of course, if that mass-movement spirit succeeds in becoming the spirit of the higher classes of society too, then the socialist crowds are quite right to try to make themselves and those classes equal on the outside as well. After all, they are already equal on the inside, in head and heart. – So live as higher human beings, and keep doing the deeds of a more advanced culture! Then

everything that lives will grant you your right, and the order of society, with you at its top, will be protected against every evil look and every grab.

481.

Big politics and what it costs. – Think about what war and being ready for war cost a people. The biggest losses are not the costs of war itself, or the way trade and daily business get blocked. They are also not the cost of keeping standing armies – however great these costs may be today, when eight European states spend two to three billion each year on them. The biggest loss is that, year after year, a huge number of the most capable, strongest and most hard-working men are taken away from their real jobs and callings in order to be soldiers. In just the same way, a people that sets out to play big politics, and to secure a deciding voice among the most powerful states, does not suffer its biggest losses where people usually look for them. It is true that from that moment on, it keeps sacrificing a great many of its most outstanding talents on the "altar of the fatherland" or to national ambition. Before, these talents, which politics now swallows up, had other fields of work open to them. But apart from these public mass sacrifices, and really much more horrible than them, a drama is taking place that plays out all the time in a hundred thousand scenes at once. In such a people, hungry for the victory wreaths of political fame, every capable, hard-working, clever and ambitious person is ruled by this hunger. He no longer belongs completely to his own work, as he did before. The new questions and worries about the public good that come up every day eat up a daily tax from every citizen's savings of head and heart. The total of all these sacrifices and losses of personal energy and work is so enormous that when a people blossoms politically, it is almost certain to become poorer and more tired in mind. It becomes less able to produce works that need great concentration and

a focus on one thing. In the end, we may ask: is all this blossoming and splendour of the whole really worth it? (And after all, it only shows itself as other states' fear of the new giant, and as advantages for the nation's trade and business, forced out of foreign countries.) Is it worth it, if all the nobler, more delicate, more spiritual plants and growths, which the nation's soil used to be so rich in, have to be sacrificed to this coarse, gaudy, many-coloured flower of the nation?

482.

And said once more. – Public opinions – private laziness.

Chapter Nine

Man Alone with Himself

483.

Enemies of truth. Firm beliefs are more dangerous enemies of truth than lies are.

484.

A world turned upside down. We criticize a thinker more sharply when he puts forward a statement we don't like. And yet it would make more sense to do that when his statement is one we do like.

485.

Full of character. People seem to have a strong character far more often because they always follow their temperament, their natural mood and nature, than because they always follow their principles.

486.

The one thing that is needed. There is one thing you must have. Either a mind that is light and easygoing by nature, or a mind that has been made lighter by art and knowledge.

487.

Passion for things. Someone who puts his passion into things, such as science and scholarship, the good of the country, the interests of culture, or the arts, takes a lot of fire away from his passion for people. This is true even when those people stand for those things,

the way politicians, philosophers and artists stand for what they have created.

488.

Calm in action. A waterfall, as it falls, seems to become slower and to float in the air. In the same way, a great man of action usually acts more calmly than you would have expected from his stormy eagerness before the deed.

489.

Not too deep. People who understand something all the way to its depths seldom stay loyal to it forever. After all, they have dragged those depths out into the light, and there is always a lot of nasty stuff to be seen down there.

490.

The idealists' delusion. All idealists imagine that the causes they serve are basically better than the other things in the world. They refuse to believe that if their cause is to grow at all, it needs exactly the same bad-smelling manure that every other human project needs.

491.

Watching yourself. A person is very well defended against himself, against spying on himself and laying siege to himself. Usually he can see no more of himself than his outer walls. The real fortress inside is out of his reach, even invisible to him, unless friends and enemies play the traitor and lead him in by a secret path.

492.

The right job. Men rarely stick with a job unless they believe, or talk themselves into believing, that deep down it is more important than every other job. Women are the same with their lovers.

493.

A noble way of thinking. Having a noble mind is largely made up of good nature and a lack of suspicion. So it contains exactly the things that greedy and successful people love to look down on and make fun of.

494.

Goal and roads. Many people are stubborn about the road they have once chosen. Few are stubborn about the goal.

495.

What makes people angry about a very personal way of life. Any rules for living that are very much one's own turn people against the person who adopts them. The special way he treats himself makes them feel put down, as if they were just ordinary creatures.

496.

The privilege of greatness. It is the special right of greatness to make people very happy with small gifts.

497.

Noble without trying. A person behaves in a noble way without even meaning to once he has got used to wanting nothing from people and always giving to them.

498.

What it takes to be a hero. If someone wants to become a hero, the snake must first have grown into a dragon. Otherwise he has no proper enemy to fight.

499.

Friend. Sharing someone's joy, not pity, is what makes a friend.

500.

Using the tides. To gain knowledge, you must know how to use the inner current that pulls you toward something, and also the current that, after a while, pulls you away from it again, like the tide going in and out.

501.

Joy in yourself. People say "I enjoy this thing." But really, it is joy in yourself, by way of that thing.

502.

The modest man. Someone who is modest toward people shows all the more arrogance toward things, such as his town, his country, society, his era, or humanity. That is his revenge.

503.

Envy and jealousy. Envy and jealousy are the private parts of the human soul, the shameful parts we keep covered. Perhaps the comparison could be carried even further.

504.

The most refined hypocrite. Never talking about yourself at all is a very refined kind of hypocrisy.

505.

Annoyance. Being annoyed is a sickness of the body. It does not go away just because the cause of the annoyance is removed afterwards.

506.

Defenders of truth. Truth finds the fewest people to speak up for it not when telling it is dangerous, but when telling it is boring.

507.

Even more troublesome than enemies. Some people we are not sure will be friendly to us in every situation. Yet some reason, gratitude for example, obliges us to keep up the appearance that we are completely on their side. These people torment our imagination far more than our enemies do.

508.

Open nature. We love being out in open nature so much because nature has no opinion about us.

509.

Everyone better at one thing. In a civilized society, everyone feels better than everyone else at one thing at least. That is what general goodwill rests on. Each person is someone who might be able to help in some situation, and so each person can let himself be helped without shame.

510.

Reasons for comfort. When someone dies, we usually need reasons to feel comforted. This is not so much to ease the force of our grief, as to excuse the fact that we feel comforted so easily.

511.

People loyal to their firm beliefs. Someone who has a lot to do keeps his general views and positions almost unchanged. So does everyone who works in the service of an idea. He will never again examine the idea itself; he no longer has time for that. In fact, it goes against his interests even to think it is still open to debate.

512.

Morality and size. When one person's morality is higher than another's, it often just means his goals are bigger in size. The other person is dragged down by dealing with small things in a narrow circle.

513.

Life as the harvest of life. A person may stretch out as far as he likes with his knowledge, and seem to himself as objective as he likes. In the end, all he takes away with him is his own life story.

514.

Iron necessity. "Iron necessity" is something that people, over the course of history, come to see is neither made of iron nor necessary.

515.

From experience. That something makes no sense is no argument against its existing. Rather, it is one of the conditions that let it exist.

516.

Truth. Nobody dies of deadly truths these days. There are too many antidotes.

517.

A basic insight. There is no harmony arranged in advance between moving truth forward and the well-being of humanity.

518.

Human fate. Anyone who thinks more deeply knows that he is always in the wrong, however he acts and however he judges.

519.

Truth as Circe, the witch in the old Greek story who turned men into animals. Mistakes turned animals into humans. Could truth be able to turn humans back into animals?

520.

The danger to our culture. We belong to an age whose culture is in danger of being destroyed by the very tools of culture.

521.

Greatness means giving direction. No river is great and full just by itself. What makes it great is that it takes in so many smaller streams and carries them along. It is the same with all greatness of mind. All that matters is that someone sets the direction which so many streams must then follow. It does not matter whether he was poorly or richly gifted from the start.

522.

A weak conscience. People who talk about how important they are for humanity have a weak conscience when it comes to ordinary everyday honesty, like keeping contracts and promises.

523.

Wanting to be loved. Demanding to be loved is the greatest of all arrogance.

524.

Contempt for people. The clearest sign that someone looks down on people is this: he lets everyone count only as a means to his own ends, or not count at all.

525.

Followers out of opposition. Anyone who has driven people into a rage against him has always also won a group of supporters on his side.

526.

Forgetting what happened to us. - Someone who thinks a lot, and thinks about things in a clear, objective way, easily forgets what has happened to him. But he does not forget so easily the thoughts that those events set off in him.

527.

Holding on to an opinion. - One person holds on to an opinion because he is proud that he came up with it all by himself. Another

holds on to it because he worked hard to learn it and is proud that he understood it. So both do it out of vanity.

528.

Hiding from the light. - A good deed is just as nervous about coming out into the open as a bad deed is. The bad deed is afraid that if people find out, pain will follow, as punishment. The good deed is afraid that if people find out, the pleasure will disappear. That is, the pure pleasure a person takes in himself, which stops the moment his vanity starts to get fed as well.

529.

How long a day is. - If you have a lot to fit into it, a day has a hundred pockets.

530.

The genius of the tyrant. - Suppose there is a desire in someone's soul that cannot be beaten down, a desire to get his way like a tyrant, and it keeps the fire burning all the time. Then even a small talent, in politicians or in artists, slowly turns into something like a force of nature that almost nobody can resist.

531.

Keeping the enemy alive. - Someone who makes his living by fighting an enemy has good reason to want that enemy to stay alive.

532.

More important. - People treat a dark, unexplained matter as more important than one that has been explained and made clear.

533.

Judging favours. - When someone does us a favour, we judge it by how much it is worth to them, not by how much it is worth to us.

534.

Unhappiness. - Being unhappy is seen as such a mark of distinction, as if feeling happy were a sign that you are shallow, easily satisfied and ordinary, that when someone says to you, "But how happy you are!", you usually protest.

535.

The imagination of fear. - The imagination of fear is that wicked little monkey-like goblin who jumps onto a person's back at the very moment when he already has the heaviest load to carry.

536.

Why silly opponents are useful. - Sometimes we stay loyal to a cause only because the people against it never stop being silly and tasteless.

537.

What a job is worth. - Having a job stops you from thinking too much; that is its greatest blessing. It is like a protective wall. When big general doubts and worries come at you, you are allowed to step back behind it and hide.

538.

Talent. - Some people's talent looks smaller than it really is, because they have always set themselves tasks that were too big.

539.

Youth. - Being young is unpleasant, because when you are young it is not possible, or not sensible, to produce anything worthwhile, in any sense.

540.

Goals that are too big. - Someone who announces big goals in public, and then later realises in secret that he is too weak to reach them, usually also lacks the strength to take those goals back in public. And so he can't avoid becoming a hypocrite.

541.

In the current. - Strong waters sweep along a lot of stones and brushwood with them. In the same way, strong minds sweep along a lot of stupid and muddled heads.

542.

The dangers of freeing the mind. - When a person seriously sets out to free his mind, his passions and desires are quietly hoping too, hoping to spot a chance to get something out of it for themselves.

543.

The mind showing in the body. - When someone thinks a lot, and thinks cleverly, not only his face but also his body starts to look clever.

544.

Seeing badly and hearing badly. - Someone who sees little keeps seeing less and less. Someone who hears badly always hears a few extra things that were never said.

545.

Enjoying oneself in vanity. - A vain person doesn't so much want to stand out as to feel that he stands out. That is why he will use any trick to fool himself and outsmart himself. What he really cares about is not what other people think, but what he thinks they think.

546.

Vain only now and then. - A person who is usually content with himself becomes vain, for once, and eager for fame and praise, when he is physically ill. To the extent that he is losing himself, he has to try to win himself back from other people's opinions, from the outside.

547.

The "witty" people. - Whoever goes looking for wit and cleverness has none of his own.

548.

A tip for party leaders. - If you can push people into declaring themselves for something in public, you have usually also got them to declare themselves for it inside. From then on, they want to be seen as consistent.

549.

Contempt. - Being looked down on by others hurts a person more than looking down on himself.

550.

The cord of gratitude. - There are slavish souls who take their thankfulness for the good things done for them so far that they strangle themselves with the cord of gratitude.

551.

The prophet's trick. - To guess ahead of time what ordinary people will do, you have to assume that they will always use the least possible amount of brainpower to get themselves out of an unpleasant situation.

552.

The only human right. - Whoever breaks away from the usual way of doing things becomes the victim of the unusual. Whoever sticks to the usual way becomes its slave. Either way, you end up ruined.

553.

Sinking below the animals. - When a person neighs with laughter like a horse, he is coarser and more vulgar than any animal.

554.

Knowing things halfway. - Someone who speaks a little of a foreign language enjoys it more than someone who speaks it well. The fun belongs to those who only half know.

555.

Dangerous helpfulness. - There are people who want to make life harder for others for no other reason than to offer them, afterwards, their own recipes for making life easier, for example their Christianity.

556.

Hard work and carefulness. - Hard work and carefulness are often enemies. Hard work wants to pick the fruit off the tree while it is still sour. Carefulness, on the other hand, leaves it hanging too long, until it falls down and gets smashed.

557.

Suspecting people. - When we can't stand someone, we try to make ourselves suspicious of them.

558.

The right circumstances are missing. - Many people wait their whole lives for the chance to be good in their own way.

559.

Having no friends. - Having no friends suggests either envy or arrogance. Some people owe their friends only to the lucky fact that they give no one any reason to envy them.

560.

The danger of having many. - With one talent more, you often stand less steadily than with one talent less, just as a table stands better on three legs than on four.

561.

Being an example to others. - Anyone who wants to set a good example has to add a tiny pinch of foolishness to his goodness. Then people copy him and, at the same time, feel superior to the person they are copying, and people love that.

562.

Being a target. - When others say nasty things about us, it often isn't really aimed at us. It is just an outburst of annoyance or a bad mood that comes from completely different causes.

563.

Easily giving up. - You suffer little from wishes that weren't granted if you have trained your imagination to make the past look ugly.

564.

In danger. - You are most in danger of being run over just after you have dodged a carriage.

565.

The voice decides the role. - Someone who has to speak louder than he is used to, say to a half-deaf person or to a big audience, usually exaggerates the things he has to say. - Some people become plotters, nasty gossips or schemers simply because their voice is best suited to whispering.

566.

Love and hate. - Love and hate are not blind, but they are dazzled by the fire they carry inside themselves.

567.

Useful enemies. - People who can't make their good qualities fully clear to the world try to stir up a strong enemy against themselves. Then they have the comfort of thinking that this hostility is what stands between their good qualities and the recognition they deserve, and that plenty of others suspect the same thing. And that does a lot for their reputation.

568.

Confession. - We forget our guilt once we have confessed it to someone else, but the other person usually doesn't forget it.

569.

Being content with oneself. - The golden fleece of self-contentment, like a magic coat, protects you against beatings, but not against pin-pricks.

570.

A shadow in the flame. - A flame is not as bright to itself as it is to the others it gives light to. The same goes for the wise person.

571.

Your own opinions. - When someone suddenly asks us about something, the first opinion that comes into our head is usually not our own. It is just the common opinion that goes with our class, our position in life and the family we come from. Our own opinions rarely float to the top.

572.

Where courage comes from. - The ordinary person is brave and can't be hurt, like a hero, as long as he doesn't see the danger and has no eyes for it. It's the other way round with the hero: his one weak spot is on his back, which is exactly where he has no eyes.

573.

The danger in the doctor. - You have to be born to suit your doctor. Otherwise your doctor will be the ruin of you.

574.

Strange vanity. - Someone who has boldly predicted the weather three times and got it right starts, deep down, to believe a little that he has the gift of seeing the future. We accept strange and unreasonable things when they flatter our opinion of ourselves.

575.

A job. - A job, a calling, is the backbone of life.

576.

The danger of personal influence. - If you feel that you have a big influence on someone else's inner life, you must give him completely free rein, like a horse you don't hold back. You should even be glad when he pushes back now and then, and even bring that about yourself. Otherwise you will be sure to make an enemy of him.

577.

Letting the heir have his place. - Someone who has founded something great, with a selfless attitude, makes sure he trains people to

carry it on after him. It is the sign of a bullying, low-minded nature to see enemies in everyone who might inherit your work, and to live against them as if you were always acting in self-defence.

578.

Half-knowledge. - Knowing half of something wins more often than knowing all of it. Half-knowledge sees things as simpler than they really are, and so it makes its opinion easier to grasp and more convincing.

579.

Not cut out to be a party man. - Someone who thinks a lot is not cut out to be a loyal member of a political party. He thinks his way right through the party, and out the other side, too quickly.

580.

A bad memory. - The advantage of a bad memory is that you can enjoy the same good things for the first time over and over again.

581.

Hurting yourself. - Thinking in a ruthless, harsh way is often the sign of a restless, unpeaceful mind that wants to be numbed.

582.

Martyrs. - The follower of a martyr suffers more than the martyr himself.

583.

Leftover vanity. - Some people wouldn't need to be vain at all, and yet they are. Their vanity is a habit left over from the time when they had no right yet to believe in themselves. Back then they had to beg this belief from other people, bit by bit, like small coins. The habit stayed and grew big.

584.

The tipping point of passion. - When someone is about to fly into a rage, or into a wild fit of love, he reaches a point where his soul is full, like a container filled to the brim. But one more drop of water still has to be added: the willingness to give in to the passion, which people usually call ill will. Only this tiny drop is needed, and then the container overflows.

585.

A gloomy thought. - People are like the charcoal piles in the forest, the heaps of wood that are slowly burned to make charcoal. Only when young people have finished glowing and have turned to charcoal, like those piles, do they become useful. As long as they are still steaming and smoking, they may be more interesting, but they are useless and far too often a nuisance. - Mankind uses every single person, without mercy, as fuel to heat its great machines. But then what are the machines for, if all the individuals (which means mankind itself) are only good for keeping them running? Machines that exist only for their own sake - is that the human comedy?

586.

About the hour hand of life. - Life is made up of a few rare moments that mean the very most, and countless gaps in between. In those

gaps, at best, only shadowy images of those great moments float around us. Love, spring, every beautiful tune, the mountains, the moon, the sea - each of these speaks fully to the heart only once, if it ever gets to speak fully at all. For many people never have such moments. They themselves are just gaps and pauses in the symphony of real life.

587.

Attacking or helping out. - We often make the mistake of fiercely opposing a movement, a party or a period of time. We do this because, by chance, we only get to see its outer surface, its stunted and withered side, or the "faults that come with its virtues", which it can't avoid having. Maybe we see these because we ourselves took part mainly in those very things. Then we turn our back on it and look for the opposite direction. But it would be better to look for its strong, good sides, or to develop them in ourselves. Of course, it takes a sharper eye and a better will to help something that is still growing and imperfect than to see through its imperfection and reject it.

588.

Modesty. - There is such a thing as true modesty. That means knowing that we did not make ourselves. It suits a great mind very well, because a great mind is exactly the kind that can grasp the idea that we are not to blame for anything at all, not even for the good things we create. People don't hate a great man's lack of modesty because he feels his own strength. They hate it because he wants to find out how strong he is by hurting others, bossing them around, and watching how much they can take. Usually this even shows that he lacks a sure feeling of his own strength, and so it makes people doubt that he is great. In this sense, if you want to be smart, it's strongly advised not to be immodest.

589.

The first thought of the day. - The best way to start every day well is this: when you wake up, think about whether you could make at least one person happy that day. If this could take the place of the religious habit of praying, the people around us would gain from the change.

590.

Arrogance as the last comfort. - Suppose you explain a misfortune, your lack of intelligence or your illness to yourself in such a way that you see it as your fate laid out in advance, as your test, or as a mysterious punishment for something you did in the past. By doing this you make your own self seem interesting, and in your imagination you raise yourself above other people. The proud sinner is a well-known character in every church group.

591.

Happiness growing like plants. - Right next to the misery of the world, and often on its volcanic ground, people have planted their little gardens of happiness. You can look at life as someone who only wants to understand existence, or as someone who gives up and accepts things, or as someone who enjoys having overcome a difficulty. Whichever way you look, you will find some happiness that has sprouted up next to the disaster everywhere. And in fact, the more volcanic the ground was, the more happiness there is. Only it would be ridiculous to say that this happiness makes the suffering itself worth it or justifies it.

592.

The road of your ancestors. - It makes sense for someone to keep developing in himself the talent that his father or grandfather worked

hard at, instead of switching to something completely new. Otherwise he takes away his own chance of ever becoming truly perfect at any craft. That's why the saying goes: "Which road should you ride? The road of your ancestors."

593.

Vanity and ambition as teachers. - As long as someone has not yet become a tool that is useful to all of humanity, let ambition torment him. But once he has reached that goal and works, because he must, like a machine for the good of everyone, then let vanity come. Vanity will make him more human in small ways: more sociable, easier to put up with, more forgiving. That happens once ambition has finished the rough work on him, which was making him useful.

594.

Beginners in philosophy. - When you have just taken in the wisdom of some philosopher, you walk through the streets feeling as if you have been made into a new person and become a great man. That's because everyone you meet doesn't know this wisdom, so you have a new, unheard-of verdict to give about everything. Because you now accept a book of laws, you think you also have to act like a judge.

595.

Pleasing by displeasing. - Some people would rather stand out, even if it means people dislike them. Others would rather not stand out, and simply be liked. But the first kind want the same thing as the second kind, only much more strongly, and in a roundabout way. They take a step that seems to lead them away from their goal. What they want is influence and power. So they show off how superior they are, even when this makes others feel uncomfortable. They know that once

someone has finally gained power, almost everything he does and says pleases people. And even when he displeases them, it still looks as if he pleases them. - The free thinker, and the believer too, also want power, so that one day they will be liked through it. Suppose their teaching puts them in danger of a bad fate: being hunted down, thrown in prison, or put to death. Then they are glad at the thought that, in this way, their teaching will be scratched and burned into humanity, like a mark that cannot be removed. They accept it as a painful but strong method, one that works slowly, for still getting power in the end.

596.

An excuse for war, and similar things. - A ruler has already made up his mind to go to war with his neighbour. Then he digs up an official reason for the war, what is called a "casus belli". He is like a father who slips his child a mother who is not really its mother, and says that from now on she must count as its real one. And aren't almost all the reasons we publicly give for our actions just such fake mothers, swapped in for the real ones?

597.

Passion and being in the right. - Nobody talks more passionately about being in the right than the person who, deep down in his heart, has doubts about whether he really is. By pulling strong feelings over to his side, he tries to numb his reason and its doubts. That way he gets a clear conscience, and with it, success with the people around him.

598.

The trick of the person who gives things up. - Someone who speaks out against marriage, the way Catholic priests do, will try to see marriage in its lowest, crudest light. In the same way, someone who turns down the honour his own generation could give him will think of honour in a low, cheap way. This makes it easier for him to do without it, and to fight against wanting it. By the way, a person who denies himself a lot in big things will easily let himself off in small things. It could be that someone who is above caring for the praise of the people of his time still does not want to deny himself the pleasure of little bits of vanity.

599.

The age of arrogance. Among gifted people, the real period of arrogance falls between the ages of twenty-six and thirty. It is the time of first ripeness, like fruit that is ripe but still has a strong sour taste left in it. At that age, because of what you feel inside yourself, you demand honour and humble respect from people who see little or nothing of it. And because that honour and respect don't come right away, you take revenge with a certain look, a certain arrogant gesture, a certain tone of voice. Anyone with a sharp eye and ear can spot these in everything people produce at that age, whether poems, philosophies, paintings or music. Older, experienced men smile at this, and they remember this lovely time of life with tender feeling: the age when you are angry at fate for letting you be so much while seeming so little. Later on you really do seem like more. But by then you have lost the honest belief that you are a lot, unless you stay, your whole life long, a hopeless fool of vanity.

600.

False, and yet it holds. Think of walking past a cliff edge, or crossing a deep stream on a narrow beam. You need a railing there. Not to hold on to, because it would collapse right away with you on it, but to give your eyes the feeling that you are safe. In the same way, when we are young, we need people who, without knowing it, do the job of that railing for us. It's true that they would not help us if we really tried to lean on them in great danger. But they give us the calming feeling that protection is close by. Examples are fathers, teachers and friends, all three of them as they usually are.

601.

Learning to love. You have to learn to love, and learn to be kind, and you have to do this from the time you are young. If our upbringing and chance give us no opportunity to practise these feelings, our soul dries up. It even becomes unable to understand the delicate, thoughtful things that loving people come up with. In the same way, hatred has to be learned and fed if someone wants to become a good, capable hater. Otherwise the seed of it will also slowly die.

602.

The ruin as decoration. People who go through many changes of mind keep some views and habits from their earlier stages. These then stick out into their new thinking and acting like a piece of some unexplained ancient building, a stretch of old grey stone wall. Often they make the whole landscape more beautiful.

603.

Love and honour. Love wants to get close; fear wants to keep away. That is why you cannot be both loved and honoured by the same per-

son, at least not during the same stretch of time. The person who honours you recognizes your power, which means he fears it: his state of mind is awe, a mix of respect and fear. Love, though, recognizes no power, nothing that separates, nothing that sets one person apart or puts one above or below another. Because love does not give honour, people who are hungry for honour resist being loved, either secretly or openly.

604.

A bias in favour of cold people. People who catch fire quickly also cool down quickly, so on the whole they can't be relied on. Because of this, there is a favourable bias toward everyone who is always cold, or acts that way: people assume they must be especially trustworthy and reliable. They get mixed up with the people who catch fire slowly and then hold on to that fire for a long time.

605.

The danger in free opinions. Playing around lightly with free, unconventional opinions gives you a pleasant tingle, a kind of itch. If you give in to it more, you start scratching the spots. In the end an open, painful wound forms. That means: in the end the free opinion starts to disturb and torment us in our position in life and in our relationships with other people.

606.

Craving deep pain. When a passion is over, it leaves behind a dark longing for itself, and as it disappears it throws us one last tempting glance. There must have been some kind of pleasure in being whipped by its lash. Compared with that, calmer feelings seem flat and stale. It seems we would still rather have strong pain than weak pleasure.

607.

Bad mood toward others and toward the world. Very often we take out our bad mood on other people, when really we feel it about ourselves. When we do this, what we are actually after is to cloud and fool our own judgement. We want to explain the bad mood after the fact by pointing to other people's slip-ups and faults, and in this way lose sight of ourselves. Strictly religious people, who are merciless judges of themselves, are also the ones who have said the worst things about humanity in general. There has never lived a saint who kept the sins for himself and left the virtues to everyone else. Nor has there ever lived anyone who followed Buddha's rule of hiding his good side from people and letting them see only his bad side.

608.

Cause and effect mixed up. Without realizing it, we look for the principles and teachings that suit our temperament. So in the end it looks as if those principles and teachings had shaped our character and given it support and security, when what really happened was exactly the opposite. It seems that, after the fact, our thinking and judging are supposed to be made into the cause of who we are. But in reality, who we are is the cause of why we think and judge the way we do. And what pushes us into this almost unconscious play-acting? Laziness and love of comfort, and, not least, vanity's wish to be seen as consistent through and through, all of one piece in character and in thought. Because that earns respect, and brings trust and power.

609.

Age and truth. Young people love what is interesting and strange, no matter whether it is true or false. More mature minds love the parts of truth that are interesting and strange. Finally, fully mature minds

love truth even where it looks plain and simple and bores the ordinary person. They love it there because they have noticed that truth tends to say the deepest, most brilliant things it has with an air of simplicity.

610.

People as bad poets. Bad poets, in the second half of a line, look for a thought that fits the rhyme. In the same way, people in the second half of their life, having grown more anxious, tend to look for actions, positions and relationships that fit those of their earlier life, so that on the outside everything sounds nicely together. But their life is no longer ruled by a strong thought that keeps giving it fresh direction. Instead, that thought is replaced by the goal of finding a rhyme.

611.

Boredom and play. Need forces us to work, and what we earn by working satisfies the need. Because our needs keep waking up again and again, we get used to working. But in the breaks, when our needs are satisfied and are, so to speak, asleep, boredom comes over us. What is boredom? It is the habit of working in general, which now shows up as a new, extra need. It will be stronger the more someone is used to working, and perhaps even the more someone has suffered from need. To escape boredom, a person either works beyond what their other needs require, or invents play. Play is work that is meant to satisfy no other need than the need to work at all. Someone who has grown tired of play, and who has no reason to work because no new needs have come up, is sometimes seized by a longing for a third state. This third state relates to play the way floating relates to dancing, and the way dancing relates to walking: it is a blissful, calm kind of movement. This is the vision of happiness that artists and philosophers have.

612.

What pictures teach us. - If you look at a series of pictures of yourself, from late childhood up to full manhood, you find, with a pleasant surprise, that the grown man looks more like the child than like the young man. So, probably in step with this, there was a stretch in between when a person drifted away from their basic character for a while, and then the gathered, packed-together strength of the grown man took control again. This fits with another thing we notice. All the strong pulls on us in our youth, from passions, teachers and political events, which drag us this way and that, later seem to be brought back down to a steady measure. Of course, they go on living and working inside us. But our basic feeling and basic way of thinking now have the upper hand. They use those influences as sources of energy, but no longer let them steer, the way they probably do in our twenties. So the grown man's thinking and feeling also become more in tune again with the way he thought and felt as a child. And this inner fact shows itself in the outer fact we mentioned, the faces in the pictures.

613.

How voices sound at different ages. - The tone young people use when they talk, praise, criticise or write poems bothers people who have grown older. It is too loud, and at the same time dull and blurry, like a sound inside a vaulted cellar, which booms so much because the space is empty. That is because most of what young people think has not flowed out of the richness of their own nature. It is an echo, a ringing-on of what has been thought, said, praised and criticised around them. But the feelings, the likes and dislikes, echo in them much more strongly than the reasons behind those feelings. So when they let their feelings be heard again, you get that dull, booming tone, which is the sign that reasons are missing or in short supply. The tone

of people at a riper age is firm, short and clipped, and only moderately loud. But, like everything spoken clearly, it carries very far. Old age, finally, often brings a certain softness and patience into the voice, and sweetens it, so to speak. In some cases, of course, old age also makes it sour.

614.

People who lag behind and people who run ahead. - Take the unpleasant kind of person who is full of suspicion, who feels envy at every success of his rivals and neighbours, and who is violent and hot-tempered against opinions that differ from his. He shows that he belongs to an earlier stage of culture, that he is a leftover. The way he deals with people was the right and fitting way back in an age when the strongest fist made the law. He is someone who has lagged behind. Now take another kind of person. He is rich in sharing other people's joy, wins friends everywhere, and feels warmly toward everything that is growing and coming into being. He enjoys along with others all their honours and successes. He does not claim to be the only one who knows the truth, but is full of a modest self-doubt. That person runs ahead of his time, and is reaching toward a more advanced culture for humankind. The unpleasant character comes from the times when the rough foundations of human dealings still had to be built. The other one lives on the top floors of that building, as far away as possible from the wild beast that is locked up in the cellars, under the foundations of culture, raging and howling.

615.

Comfort for people who worry themselves sick. - When a great thinker is sometimes tormented by gloomy, anxious worries he inflicts on himself, he can comfort himself by saying: "It is your own great strength that this parasite feeds and grows on. If your strength

were smaller, you would have less to suffer." A statesman can say the same thing to himself. As the representative of a nation, he must necessarily have a strong talent for jealousy and the urge for revenge, in short for the mood of "the war of all against all". When these sometimes push their way into his personal relationships too and make his life hard, he can comfort himself in the same way.

616.

Cut off from the present. - There are great advantages in, for once, becoming strongly cut off from your own time, as if you were pushed back from its shore into the ocean of past ways of seeing the world. Looking back at the coast from out there, you may see its whole shape for the first time. And when you come close to it again, you have the advantage of understanding it better as a whole than the people who have never left it.

617.

Sowing and harvesting on your own faults. - People like Rousseau know how to use their weaknesses, gaps and bad habits as a kind of fertiliser for their talent. When Rousseau complains that society is rotten and corrupt, as a sad result of culture, a personal experience lies underneath. Its bitterness gives his general condemnation its sharpness and poisons the arrows he shoots. First of all he takes a weight off himself as an individual. And he thinks he is looking for a cure that will help society directly, but that will also help him, indirectly, by way of society.

618.

Having a philosophical outlook. - People usually try to gain one single frame of mind, one kind of view, for every situation and event in life.

That is what is mostly called having a philosophical outlook. But for growing our knowledge, it may be worth more not to make ourselves uniform like this. Instead we can listen to the quiet voice of the different situations in life, because each of them brings its own views with it. In this way we take part, with understanding, in the lives and natures of many people, because we do not treat ourselves as one stiff, fixed, single individual.

619.

In the fire of contempt. - It is a new step toward becoming independent when you first dare to speak out views that are thought shameful for anyone who holds them. At that point even your friends and acquaintances tend to get nervous. A gifted person has to pass through this fire too. Afterwards, they belong to themselves even more than before.

620.

Sacrifice. - When we have the choice, we prefer a big sacrifice to a small one. That is because we make up for the big one by admiring ourselves, which we cannot do with the small one.

621.

Love as a trick. - If you really want to get to know something new, whether it is a person, an event or a book, it is a good idea to take in this new thing with all the love you can. Quickly look away from everything about it that seems hostile, offensive or wrong to you, and even forget it. For example, you give the author of a book the biggest head start possible, and, just like at a race, you long with a pounding heart for him to reach his goal. With this method you get right to the heart of the new thing, to the point that makes it move. And that is

exactly what getting to know it means. Once you have got that far, your reason comes along afterwards and adds its limits and objections. That over-rating, that temporary unhooking of the critical pendulum, was only the trick for luring out the soul of the thing.

622.

Thinking too well or too badly of the world. - Whether you think too well or too badly of things, you always gain a bigger pleasure from it. When we have formed too good an opinion in advance, we usually put more sweetness into things, into our experiences, than they actually contain. When we have formed too bad an opinion in advance, we get a pleasant disappointment: the pleasant part that was in the things anyway is added to by the pleasure of the surprise. - A gloomy temperament, by the way, will have the opposite experience in both cases.

623.

Deep people. - Some people's strength lies in letting impressions sink in deeper and deeper. They are usually called deep people. When something happens suddenly, they are fairly calm and decisive, because in the first moment the impression is still shallow. It only becomes deep later. But things or people that have long been foreseen and expected stir up such natures the most. They make them almost unable to keep their wits about them when those things or people finally arrive.

624.

Dealing with your higher self. Everyone has their good day, a day when they find their higher self, the best version of who they are. And real humanity asks us to judge a person only by that state, and not by their ordinary working days, when they are not free and live like ser-

vants. For example, we should value and honour a painter by the highest vision he was ever able to see and to put on canvas. But people themselves deal with this higher self of theirs in very different ways. Often they become their own actors, because later on they keep copying, again and again, what they were in those special moments. Some people live shy and humble in front of their ideal, and they would rather deny it. They are afraid of their higher self, because when it speaks, it asks a lot of them. On top of that, it has a ghostly freedom to come and to stay away whenever it likes. That is why it is often called a gift of the gods. But really, everything else is a gift of the gods, which means a gift of chance. The higher self, though, is the person himself.

625.

Lonely people. Some people are so used to being alone with themselves that they never compare themselves with others at all. Instead, they carry on their life of talking to themselves in a calm and happy mood, having good conversations with themselves, and even laughing. But if you get them to compare themselves with others, they tend to brood and to think too little of themselves. So they have to be pushed into learning, all over again, a good and fair opinion of themselves from other people. And even from this opinion they have learned, they will keep wanting to take something away and bargain it down. So we should let certain people enjoy being alone, and not be so silly, as often happens, as to feel sorry for them because of it.

626.

Without a melody. There are people who are so naturally settled within themselves, with all their abilities so evenly and peacefully arranged, that they dislike any kind of activity that sets itself goals. They are like a piece of music made only of long, drawn-out, harmoni-

ous chords, without even the start of a shaped, moving melody ever showing up. Every push that comes from outside only serves to give their little boat a new balance again right away, on a lake of harmony and pleasant sound. Modern people usually get extremely impatient when they meet such people, who never become anything, even though you could not honestly say that they are nothing. But in certain moods, the sight of them raises an unusual question: why have a melody at all? Why isn't it enough for us when life is calmly reflected in a deep lake? The Middle Ages had more such people than our own time. How rarely do you still meet someone who can live on so peacefully and happily with himself, even in a crowd, saying to himself, as Goethe did: "The best thing is the deep stillness in which I live and grow, set apart from the world, and in which I gain what the world cannot take from me with fire and sword."

627.

Living and experiencing. Look at how some people know how to handle their experiences, even their small, everyday ones, so that these become like farmland that gives a harvest three times a year. Meanwhile others, and so many of them, are driven through the pounding waves of the most exciting fates and through all kinds of currents of their time and their people, and yet they always stay light, always on the surface, like cork. When you see this, you are finally tempted to divide humanity into two groups. There is a minority, really a tiny minority, of those who know how to make a lot out of a little. And there is a majority of those who know how to make a little out of a lot. You even come across sorcerers working in reverse: instead of creating the world out of nothing, they create nothing out of the world.

628.

Seriousness in play. In Genoa, at dusk, I heard a long peal of bells from a tower. It would not stop. It rang out, as if it could never get enough of itself, over the noise of the streets and into the evening sky and the sea air. It sounded so eerie, and at the same time so childish, and so full of sadness. Then I remembered the words of Plato, and suddenly I felt them in my heart: nothing human at all is worth taking very seriously; and yet—

629.

About firm belief and fairness. We are expected to stand by, later on, in a cold and sober state, whatever a person says, promises or decides while caught up in strong feeling. This demand is one of the heaviest burdens that weigh on humanity. Having to accept, for all time to come, the results of anger, of flaring revenge, of passionate devotion, can make people all the more bitter against these feelings. And that bitterness grows the more these feelings are worshipped like idols everywhere, especially by artists. Artists breed a high regard for strong passions and have always done so. Of course, they also glorify the terrible ways passion takes its satisfaction out on the person himself: those outbursts of revenge followed by death, by maiming, by going into exile of one's own free will, and that giving up of a broken heart. In any case, they keep people curious about the passions. It is as if they wanted to say: without passions, you have not lived through anything at all. Now suppose you have sworn loyalty, perhaps even to a completely made-up being, like a god. Suppose you have given your heart to a prince, a political party, a woman, a religious order, an artist, a thinker, while you were in a blinded, deluded state that filled you with rapture and made those beings seem worthy of every honour and every sacrifice. Are you now tied down for good, with no way out? Didn't we fool ourselves back then? Wasn't it a promise with a

condition attached, even if the condition was never said out loud? The condition being that those beings we devoted ourselves to really are the beings they seemed to be in our minds. Are we obliged to stay loyal to our mistakes, even when we see that this loyalty is harming our higher self? No. There is no law, no duty of that kind. We must become traitors, be unfaithful, and give up our ideals again and again. We do not step from one period of life into the next without causing this pain of betrayal, and without suffering from it ourselves too. To escape this pain, would we need to guard ourselves against our feelings ever rising up? Wouldn't the world then become too empty and too ghostly for us? Instead, let us ask ourselves whether this pain is really necessary when a firm belief changes, or whether it depends on a mistaken opinion and a mistaken way of judging. Why do people admire someone who stays true to his firm belief, and look down on someone who changes it? I am afraid the answer has to be: because everyone assumes that only motives of low self-interest or personal fear cause such a change. In other words, people basically believe that nobody changes his opinions as long as they are useful to him, or at least as long as they do him no harm. But if that is how things stand, it says something very bad about how much firm beliefs are really worth as thinking. Let us look at how firm beliefs come about, and see whether they are not hugely overrated. In doing so, it will turn out that changing firm beliefs, too, is always measured by the wrong standard, and that until now we have usually suffered far too much from such changes.

630.

A firm belief is the belief that, on some point of knowledge, you hold the absolute truth. So this belief takes three things for granted. First, that absolute truths exist. Second, that perfect methods have been found for reaching them. And third, that everyone who holds firm be-

liefs actually uses these perfect methods. All three of these assumptions show at once that the person of firm beliefs is not the person of scientific thinking. Such a person stands before us at the age of innocence when it comes to theory. He is a child, however grown-up he may be in other ways. Yet for thousands of years, people lived by these childlike assumptions, and out of them flowed the most powerful sources of strength humanity has had. All those countless people who sacrificed themselves for their firm beliefs thought they were doing it for the absolute truth. They were all wrong about that. Probably no one has ever sacrificed himself for the truth. At the very least, the way he stated his belief as fixed doctrine will have been unscientific or only half scientific. What people really wanted was to be proven right, because they thought they had to be right. To let your faith be torn away from you might have meant putting your eternal happiness in heaven at risk. In a matter this enormously important, the "will" was all too clearly whispering lines to the mind, like a prompter feeding words to an actor on stage. Every believer, of every kind, started from the assumption that he could not be proven wrong. If the arguments against him turned out to be very strong, he still had one option left: to curse reason itself, and perhaps even to plant the motto "I believe it because it is absurd" like a flag, the banner of the most extreme fanaticism. It is not the fight between opinions that has made history so violent. It is the fight between people's faith in their opinions, in other words, the fight between firm beliefs. If only all those who thought so highly of their firm beliefs, who made every kind of sacrifice for them, and who did not spare their honor, their bodies or their lives in serving them, had spent just half that energy asking what right they had to cling to this or that belief, and how they had come to hold it! How peaceful the history of humanity would look! How much more we would actually know! All the cruel scenes of hunting down heretics of every kind would have been spared us, for two reasons. First, because the inquisitors, the church's investigat-

ors, would above all have investigated themselves, and would have grown out of the arrogance of thinking they were defending absolute truth. Second, because the heretics themselves, after examining them, would have stopped caring about such poorly grounded claims, which is what the claims of all religious sects and so-called "true believers" are.

631.

From the times when people were used to believing they held absolute truth, there comes a deep discomfort with any doubting or relative position on questions of knowledge, that is, any stance that says "I'm not sure" or "it depends." Most people would rather surrender completely, for better or worse, to a firm belief held by people with authority, such as fathers, friends, teachers or rulers. And if they don't do this, they feel a kind of guilty conscience. This leaning is quite understandable, and its results give us no right to blame the development of human reason harshly. But little by little, the scientific spirit in people must ripen into a certain virtue: careful holding back, a wise moderation. This virtue is better known in practical, everyday life than in the life of ideas. Goethe, for example, showed it in his character Antonio, in his play about the poet Tasso. There, Antonio is a figure who makes every Tasso furious, meaning every type of person who is both unscientific and unable to take action. The person of firm beliefs has, in his own way, a right not to understand that person of careful thinking, the Antonio of the world of ideas. The scientific person, on the other hand, has no right to blame him for this. He looks past him, and besides, he knows that in certain cases the man of firm beliefs will still end up clinging to him, just as Tasso finally does with Antonio at the end of the play.

632.

Some people never pass through different firm beliefs. Instead they stay stuck in the first faith that caught them, like a fish caught in a net. Such a person, in every case and precisely because he never changes, stands for cultures that have been left behind. Because he lacks real education, and real education always means being able to be shaped and changed, he is hard, without understanding, impossible to teach, and without gentleness. He is always suspicious of others. He has no scruples, and he will use any means at all to force his opinion through, because he simply cannot grasp that there must be other opinions. Seen this way, he may be a source of strength. In cultures that have become too free and too slack, he may even be good for them. But that is only because he strongly pushes others to stand up against him. In that struggle, the more delicate shape of the new culture, which is forced to fight him, grows strong itself.

633.

At heart, we are still the same people as those who lived at the time of the Reformation. How could it be otherwise? But there is one thing that sets us apart from that time and proves that we belong to a more advanced culture: we no longer allow ourselves certain methods for helping our opinion win. Today, if someone still fights and crushes opinions the way people did in the Reformation, with suspicion and fits of rage, he clearly gives himself away. He shows that he would have burned his opponents if he had lived in other times. And if he had lived as an enemy of the Reformation, he would have turned to all the methods of the Inquisition. Back then, the Inquisition made sense. It meant nothing other than a general state of siege, which had to be declared over the whole territory of the Church. And like every state of siege, it allowed the most extreme measures. This was based on one assumption, which we no longer share with those people: that

the truth was to be found in the Church, and that it had to be protected at any price and with any sacrifice, for the good of humanity. But today we do not so easily grant anyone that he has the truth. The strict methods of research have spread enough distrust and caution that anyone who pushes opinions with violence, in words or in deeds, is felt to be an enemy of our present culture, or at least someone who has been left behind. In fact, the proud, solemn feeling of having the truth counts for very little now. What counts far more is the quieter, gentler feeling of searching for the truth, a search that never grows tired of learning things over again and testing them anew.

634.

By the way, the careful, methodical search for truth is itself the result of those times when firm beliefs were at war with each other. If individual people had not cared about their "truth", meaning about being right, there would be no method of research at all. But as it was, different individuals kept fighting endlessly, each claiming to have the absolute truth. So people moved forward step by step, trying to find rock-solid principles by which these claims could be tested and the quarrel could be settled. At first, people decided by appealing to authorities. Later, they criticized each other's ways and means of finding the supposed truth. In between, there was a period when people worked out the consequences of their opponent's claim, and perhaps made them out to be harmful and a source of unhappiness. From this, everyone was supposed to conclude that the opponent's firm belief contained a mistake. In the end, the personal fighting among thinkers sharpened the methods so much that real truths could be discovered, and the wrong turns of earlier methods were laid bare for everyone to see.

635.

On the whole, scientific methods are at least as important a result of research as any other result. That is because the scientific spirit rests on understanding method. If those methods were lost, all the results of science and scholarship could not stop superstition and nonsense from taking over again. Clever, witty people may learn as much as they like from the results of science and scholarship. You can still tell from their conversation, and especially from the guesses they make in it, that they lack the scientific spirit. They do not have that instinctive distrust of the wrong paths thinking can take. In every scientific person, this distrust has put down roots in the soul after long practice. For these clever people, it is enough to find some guess or other about a matter. Then they are all fired up about it and think the job is done. For them, having an opinion already means becoming fanatical about it and holding it close to their heart from then on as a firm belief. When something has not been explained, they get worked up about the first idea that pops into their head and looks like an explanation. This keeps leading to the worst results, especially in politics. That is why everyone today should have learned at least one field of science and scholarship thoroughly, from the ground up. Then he will at least know what method means and how necessary the greatest care and calm thinking are. This advice should be given especially to women, who today are the helpless victims of every guess, above all when it seems clever, thrilling, lively, and strengthening. In fact, if you look more closely, you notice that by far the largest part of all educated people still want firm beliefs, and nothing but firm beliefs, from a thinker. Only a small minority want certainty. The many want to be powerfully swept along, so that they themselves gain more strength. The few have an interest in the matter itself, an interest that sets aside personal advantages, including that gain in strength just mentioned. Wherever a thinker behaves like a genius and calls himself

one, looking down like a higher being who deserves authority, he is counting on that much larger group. A genius of that kind keeps the fire of firm beliefs burning and stirs up distrust of the careful and modest attitude of science. To that extent, he is an enemy of truth, however much he may believe he is truth's suitor, courting her.

636.

There is, of course, a completely different kind of genius: the genius of fairness. And I simply cannot bring myself to rank it lower than any genius in philosophy, politics, or art. Its way is to avoid, with heartfelt dislike, everything that blinds and confuses our judgment of things. So it is an opponent of firm beliefs, because it wants to give everyone and everything what is rightly theirs, whether living or dead, real or imagined. To do that, it has to see each thing clearly and purely. So it puts every thing in the best light and walks all around it with a careful eye. In the end, it will even give its own opponent its due. That opponent is blind or short-sighted "firm belief", as men call it; with women it is called "faith". Fairness gives firm belief what belongs to it, for the sake of truth.

637.

Our opinions grow out of our passions. Then laziness of mind lets those opinions stiffen and harden into firm beliefs. But someone who feels that their mind is free and restlessly alive can keep that hardening from happening by changing all the time. And if such a person is, through and through, a thinking snowball, cold all the way to the core, then they will not have opinions in their head at all, only certainties and carefully measured likelihoods. But we are mixed creatures. Sometimes we are glowing hot with fire, and sometimes we are cooled down by the mind. So we want to kneel before fairness, the only goddess we accept as standing above us. The fire in us usually

makes us unfair and, as that goddess sees it, impure. When we are in that state, we may never take her hand, and her serious, approving smile never rests on us. We honour her as the veiled Isis of our lives, the hidden goddess whose face we never fully see. When the fire burns us and wants to eat us up, we feel ashamed and bring her our pain as a punishment we accept and as a sacrifice. It is the mind that saves us, so that we do not burn up completely and turn to charcoal. Now and then it drags us away from the altar where we are being sacrificed to fairness, or it wraps us in a fireproof cloth made of asbestos. Once we are rescued from the fire, the mind drives us on from opinion to opinion and from one side to another. We become noble traitors to everything that can possibly be betrayed, and yet we feel no guilt at all.

638.

The wanderer. Anyone who has reached even a little freedom of reason cannot feel like anything on earth except a wanderer. But they are not a traveller heading toward some final goal, because there is no such goal. Still, they want to watch, and to keep their eyes open to everything that is really going on in the world. So they must not tie their heart too tightly to any one thing. There has to be something wandering inside them, something that takes joy in change and in the way things pass away. Of course, bad nights will come to a person like this. They will be tired, and they will find the gate of the town that should have given them rest locked shut. Maybe, on top of that, the desert reaches right up to the gate, as it does in the East. Maybe wild beasts are howling, sometimes far off and sometimes close by. Maybe a strong wind rises, and robbers lead away the animals that carry their load. Then that terrible night probably sinks down on them like a second desert on top of the desert, and their heart grows tired of wandering. Then the morning sun rises, glowing like an angry god,

and the town opens its gates. But in the faces of the people who live there, they may see even more desert, dirt, cheating and uncertainty than outside the gates. And the day is almost worse than the night. That may well happen to the wanderer sometimes. But then, as a reward, there come the blissful mornings of other places and other days. On those mornings, even in the grey first light, they see swarms of Muses, the goddesses of art and thought, dancing past close by in the mountain mist. Later, as they walk quietly under the trees, with the calm and balanced mood of a morning mind, all kinds of good and bright things are thrown down to them from the treetops and from hiding places in the leaves. These are the gifts of all those free spirits who are at home in the mountains, the forests and in loneliness. Like the wanderer, these free spirits are wanderers and thinkers too, sometimes in a cheerful way and sometimes in a thoughtful one. They were born out of the secrets of early morning, and they think about how the day, between the stroke of ten and the stroke of twelve, can have such a pure, clear, light-filled, glowing and cheerful face. They are looking for the philosophy of the morning.

Among Friends.

An Afterword

1.

It is lovely to be quiet together, and lovelier still to laugh together. Lying back on the moss under a beech tree, beneath a sky as soft as a silk cloth, it is sweet to laugh out loud with friends and flash our white teeth at each other. If I did a good job, then let's be quiet. If I did a bad job, then let's laugh, and make it worse and worse: make it worse, laugh harder, until we climb down into our graves. Friends! Yes! Is that how it should be? Amen! And see you again!

2.

No excuses! No asking for forgiveness! You happy people, you people with free hearts, give this silly, unreasonable book your ears, your hearts and a place to stay! Believe me, friends, my lack of reason has never been a curse to me! What I find, what I search for: has that ever been written down in any book? Honour in me the whole tribe of fools! Learn from this book of fools how reason finally comes "to its senses"! So, friends, is that how it should be? Amen! And see you again!

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