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Friedrich Nietzsche

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Based on the English translation by J. M. Kennedy.

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Contents

Preface 5
Introduction 8

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Note from the person who typed up this text: Where the original book used hyphens unevenly, this has been left as it was. Greek words have been written out in English letters and marked +like so+. Clear printing mistakes have been fixed. A full list of these fixes is at the end of this document.

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THE COMPLETE WORKS

OF

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

The First Complete and Approved English Translation

EDITED BY

Dr. OSCAR LEVY

VOLUME THREE

ON THE FUTURE OF OUR SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

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FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

ON THE FUTURE OF OUR SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

TRANSLATED, WITH AN INTRODUCTION, BY J.M. KENNEDY

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Preface

(Read this before the lectures, even though it has nothing to do with them.)

I expect something from my reader, and that reader needs three qualities. First, he must be calm and read without rushing. Second, he must not keep pushing forward his own personality and his own special "learning." Third, he must not expect that, at the end of reading these pages, he will be handed a set of new rules or formulas. I am not planning to provide formulas or new study plans for grammar schools or any other schools. In fact, I am much more inclined to admire the amazing power of people who can travel the whole distance: from the bottom level of plain, hands-on experience, up to the heights of special questions about real learning, and then back down again to the level of the driest rules and the most neatly worded formulas. I will be happy if I can just climb a fairly high mountain, catch my breath at the top, and get a general view of the land below. In this book, I will never be able to satisfy the fans of rules laid out in neat tables. I do see a time coming when serious people will work together to serve a completely renewed and purified real learning. Then they may once again run a system of everyday teaching designed to support that learning. And they will probably be forced, once again, to write up sets of rules. But how far away that time seems now! And who knows what might happen in the meantime! It is quite possible that, between now and then, all grammar schools, and maybe even all universities, will be destroyed, or will have changed so completely that their very rules will look to future generations like leftovers from the age of cave-dwellers.

This book is meant for calm readers. It is for people who have not yet been pulled into the mad, headlong rush of our hurry-scurry age, and

who feel no worshipful joy in throwing themselves under the wheels of its speeding chariot. So it is for people who are not used to judging the worth of everything by how much time it saves or wastes. In short, it is for the chosen few. These people, we believe, "still have time." Without any guilty conscience, they can spend the most productive and energetic hours of their day thinking about the future of our education. When evening comes, they may even believe they have used their day in the most dignified and useful way, which is by "thinking about the generation to come." None of them has yet forgotten how to think while reading a book. Such a reader still knows the secret of reading between the lines. He brings so much of himself to his reading that he keeps thinking about what he has read, maybe long after he has put the book down. And he does this not because he wants to write a review of it, or even write another book, but simply because thinking is a pleasant way for him to pass the time. You carefree waster of time! You are just the kind of reader I love. You will be patient enough to follow an author as far as he goes, even when the author himself cannot yet see the goal he is aiming for. He only feels that he must, at any rate, honestly believe in a goal, so that some future generation, maybe a very distant one, can come face to face with the thing we are now feeling our way toward blindly, by instinct. Suppose a reader objects and says that all we need is quick, bold reform. Suppose he imagines that a new "organization" set up by the government is all that is needed. Then we fear he has misunderstood not only the author, but the very nature of the problem we are looking at.

The third and most important condition is this: the reader must never keep putting himself and his own "learning" forward as the right standard and measure for everything, the way most modern people do. We would like him to be so highly educated that he could even think little of his education, or look down on it completely. Only then

could he trust the author's guidance fully. After all, the author dares to speak up only because he knows nothing, and knows that he knows nothing. Finally, the author would like his reader to be fully aware of the special nature of our present crude ignorance, and of what sets us apart, as the barbarians of the nineteenth century, from other barbarians.

So now, with this book in his hand, the writer goes looking for everyone who may be wandering here and there, driven by feelings like his own. Let yourselves be found, you lonely people whom I believe really exist! You unselfish people, who suffer inside from the decay of the German spirit! You thoughtful people, who cannot flick your eyes quickly from one surface to the next with hasty glances! You high-minded thinkers, of whom Aristotle said that you drift through life, hesitating and doing nothing, as long as no great honor or glorious cause calls you to action! It is you I am calling! Just this once, do not run off to hide in your dens of loneliness and dark doubts. Remember that this book was written to be your messenger, the one who announces you. When you march out to battle in full armor, which of you will not be glad to look back on the messenger who called you together?

Introduction

The title I gave these lectures should have been, like every title, as clear, as simple, and as meaningful as possible. But now I notice that because I tried to be too exact, the title as it stands is too short, and so it can mislead people. So my first job will be to explain the title to you, along with the purpose of these lectures, and to say sorry for having to do this. When I promised to talk to you about the future of our schools and colleges, I was not thinking in particular about how our own schools here in Basel will develop. My general remarks may often seem to fit our local situation. But I personally have no wish to draw those conclusions, and I don't want to be blamed if anyone else draws them. The simple reason is that I still feel far too much like an inexperienced newcomer among you. I know your ways of doing things much too slightly to claim the right to judge any particular kind of school, or to predict how it is likely to develop. On the other hand, I know very well what an honor it is to give these lectures here. This is a city that is working to educate and enlighten its people on a scale so wonderfully large for its size that it puts much bigger cities to shame. Because of this, I think I am right to assume that in a place where so much is actually done for the things I want to talk about, people must also think about them a great deal. So my wish, and in fact my very first requirement, would be to join in spirit with those who have not only thought very deeply about the problems of education, but who also have the will to push forward what they believe is right, using every means they have. My task is difficult, and I have only a little time. So only listeners like these will be able to understand me. And even they will understand me only if they can guess what I can merely hint at, and fill in what I am forced to leave out. In short, they must need only to be reminded, not to be taught. So I do

not want to be seen as an advisor nobody asked for on questions about the schools and the University of Basel. And I reject even more strongly the role of a prophet standing at the far edge of civilization, claiming to predict the future of education and of how schools will be organized. I can no more see across such huge stretches of time than I can trust my eyes when they are held too close to the thing I am examining. When my title says "Our" schools and colleges, I do not mean the schools in Basel. Nor do I mean the countless other schools that exist across all the nations of the world today. I mean German schools and colleges of the kind we are glad to have here. It is their future that we will now look at, that is, the future of German elementary schools, secondary schools, grammar schools, and universities. As we talk about them, though, we will for once avoid all comparisons and all ranking. Above all, we will guard against the flattering illusion that our system should be seen as the model for all others and better than them. It is enough that these are our schools and colleges. They did not become part of us by mere chance, and they were not simply put on us like a piece of clothing. Instead, they are living monuments to important steps in the progress of civilization. In some ways they are even like the furniture of an earlier age. As such, they connect us with the past of our people. They are such a sacred and honored inheritance that I can only talk about their future in one sense: as the most likely way they might come closer to the ideal spirit that first created them. I am also convinced that most of the many changes made to these schools and colleges in recent years, meant to bring them up to date, are really just distortions. They have wandered away from the noble aims that were given to these schools when they were founded. And what we dare to hope for from the future here is very much a kind of renewal: a coming back to life and a purifying of the German spirit. As a result of that very process, our schools and colleges may also be reshaped and reborn indirectly, so

that they seem both old and new at once. Right now, by contrast, they only claim to be "modern" or "up to date."

So I only want to talk about the future of our schools and colleges in the spirit of the hope I just described. And this is the second thing I need to apologize for right at the start. Posing as a "prophet" is so arrogant that it seems almost silly even to deny that I mean to do it. No one should try to describe the future of our education, and the ways and methods of teaching that go with it, as if he were a prophet. He should only do so if he can prove that the picture he paints already exists today as a seed. Then all that is needed is for that seed to grow and develop, so that the needed changes can come about in schools and other places of learning. All I ask is to be allowed to act like a Roman fortune-teller, who read the future in the insides of animals. I want to catch glimpses of the future by looking into the very insides of the way things are now. In this case, that only means giving the prize of victory to one of the many forces trying to make itself felt in our present school system. That force may not be popular, or respected, or very widespread. But I firmly claim that it will win, because it has the strongest and mightiest of all partners: nature herself. And on this point, we would do well to remember that many of the most basic principles of our modern ways of teaching are completely artificial, and that the deadliest weaknesses of our time come from this artificiality. Some people feel perfectly comfortable with things as they are now, and accept them as something "obvious" and taken for granted. [1] We do not envy such a person his faith. Nor do we envy him that ridiculous word "obvious," or taken for granted, which is heard so often among fashionable people.

But the person who holds the opposite view, and so is in despair, doesn't need to fight anymore. All he has to do is give himself up to solitude, and soon he will be alone. Still, between the people who take everything for granted and these hermits, there stand the fight-

ers. By that I mean the people who still have hope. As the noblest and grandest example of this group, we can point to Schiller, as Goethe describes him in his poem "Epilogue to the Bell."

"Now his cheek glowed brighter, and brighter still, with that steady glow that never grows old. It was the courage that, in a hard fight, beats every enemy on earth sooner or later. It was the faith that rises up toward the light, sometimes pushing boldly ahead, sometimes bowing down low, so that good things can work, grow, and thrive with all their strength, and so that the noble may finally reach their day."

I'd like you to think of everything I've said so far as a kind of preface. Its purpose is to explain the title of my lectures, and to protect me from any misunderstanding and unfair criticism. Now I want to give you a rough outline of the ideas I'll use to judge our schools and colleges. So, before I share my views and move from the title to the main subject, I'll lay out a plan for you. Think of it like a coat of arms hung over a door. It warns every stranger who comes by what kind of house they are about to enter, so that, after looking at the sign, they can turn around and walk away if they want to. Here is my plan:

Right now, two forces are in control of our schools and colleges, even though these schools were first built on very different principles. The two forces seem to pull against each other, but both do equal harm, and in the end they work together to produce their results. On one side, there is a push for spreading schooling to everyone as widely as possible. On the other side, there is a push toward watering down education. The first force wants to spread learning to as many people as it can. The second force wants to make education give up its highest goals and its freedom, so that it becomes a servant of the government. Faced with these two opposing tendencies, we could only give up in despair, if we didn't see a chance to help two other forces

that fight against them. Luckily, these two are completely German, and they hold great promise for the future. I mean, first, the current movement toward limiting and focusing education, which is the opposite of the first force. And second, the movement toward making education stronger and able to stand on its own, which is the opposite of the second force. If we want proof that these last two movements will win in the end, we can find it here: both of the harmful forces go against the eternal purpose of nature. Focusing education on the chosen few fits with nature, and is true. The first two forces, by contrast, could only ever build a real learning that is false right down to its roots — in other words, fake learning.

FOOTNOTES:

[1] Selbstverständlich means "obvious," or taken for granted.

[2] From The Poems of Goethe, translated by Edgar Alfred Bowring (1853 edition).

The Future of Our Schools and Colleges

First Lecture

(Given on January 16, 1872.)

Ladies and gentlemen, the subject I want to think about with you today is very serious and important, and in a way it is quite troubling. Because of that, I would gladly turn to anyone, just as you would, who could give me some information about it. It wouldn't matter how young he was, or how unlikely his ideas seemed, as long as he could use his own mind to offer a good, solid explanation. Maybe he had the chance to hear sensible views spoken about the hard question of what will happen to our schools and colleges, and now wants to pass them

on to you. He might even have had excellent teachers who were fully able to predict the future. Like the Roman fortune-tellers, who looked at the guts of animals to see what was coming, these teachers could read the future by looking deep inside the present.

In fact, you may be expecting something like that from me. Once, in strange but completely harmless circumstances, I happened to overhear two remarkable men talking about this very subject. The most striking points of their discussion, and the way they handled the topic, are stamped so deeply in my memory that whenever I think about these things, I always find myself following their paths of thought. But I can't claim to have the same bold confidence they showed. They were bold in daring to speak forbidden truths, and even bolder in the hopes they imagined, which amazed me. So it seemed extremely important to me to make a record of this conversation, so that other people would be moved to judge for themselves the striking views and conclusions in it. And I had special reasons to believe that this series of lectures was the right chance to do that.

I know very well what kind of community I am asking to think seriously about that conversation. It is a community that works to educate and enlighten its people on such a grand scale, far beyond what you'd expect for its size, that it must put all larger cities to shame. Since that is true, I think I can safely assume that in a place where so much is done for the things I want to talk about, people must also think about them a lot. When I tell you about this conversation, the only listeners who will fully understand me are those who can guess what I can only hint at, who can fill in what I have to leave out, and above all, who only need to be reminded, not taught.

So listen, ladies and gentlemen, while I tell you about my harmless experience, and about the not-so-harmless conversation between the two gentlemen I haven't named yet.

Let's now picture ourselves in the place of a young student. That is a place which, in our time of confusing rush and nervous excitement, has become almost impossible to be in. You have to have lived through it yourself to believe that such carefree dozing, such cozy unconcern about the present moment, or about time at all, is really possible. In that state I, the narrator, and a friend about my own age spent a year at the University of Bonn on the Rhine. Looking back now, that year seems almost like a dream to me, because we had no plans and no projects for the future at all. It was a dream set, like a picture in a frame, between two stretches of growing up. The two of us stayed calm and peaceful, even though most of the young men around us were very different in mood. Every now and then we had real trouble fending off the rather too pushy attempts of fellows our own age to pull us into their ways. But now, when I look back at how we had to hold our ground against these forces, I can't help linking them in my mind with the kind of blocks we often meet in dreams. For example, sometimes we dream we can fly, and yet we feel ourselves held back by some strange power we can't understand.

My friend and I shared many memories, going all the way back to when we were boys. I must tell you about one of them, because it serves as a kind of opening to the harmless experience I already mentioned. One summer we took a trip together up the Rhine. On that trip, it happened that he and I, each on our own, came up with exactly the same plan, at the same hour and in the same spot. We were so struck by this unusual coincidence that we decided to carry out the plan right away. We decided to start a sort of small club, made up of the two of us and a few friends. Its purpose was to give us a steady, binding structure that would guide our creative urges in art and literature and make them more interesting. To put it more simply: each of us promised to bring an original piece of work to the club once a month. It could be a poem, an essay, a design for a building, or a piece

of music. Then each of the others, in a friendly way, had to give open and honest criticism of it.

We hoped that by correcting each other this way, we could both spur on our creative urges and keep them in check. And in fact the plan worked so well that both of us have always felt a kind of respectful fondness for the hour and the place where the idea first came to us.

This fondness soon turned into a yearly ceremony. We all agreed that, whenever we could, we would go once a year to that lonely spot near Rolandseck. That was where, on that summer day, as we sat together lost in thought, the same idea had suddenly come to both of us. To be honest, the rules we wrote when we started the club were never followed very strictly. But during our student year in Bonn we had many things we had failed to do on our conscience. So, being once again on the banks of the Rhine, and precisely because of that guilty feeling, we firmly decided to keep our rule this time. We would also satisfy our feelings and our sense of thankfulness by paying a respectful visit to that spot near Rolandseck on the agreed day.

But carrying out our plan turned out to be hard. On the very day we had picked for our trip, the big, lively student association, which always got in the way when we tried to slip off on our own, did everything it could to block us and hold us back. Our association had arranged a holiday outing for everyone to Rolandseck on the exact day my friend and I had chosen. The point of the outing was to gather all the members one last time at the end of the term, and to send them home with happy memories of their final hours together.

It was a wonderful day. The weather was the kind that, at least in our part of the world, we only get in late summer. Sky and earth blended together in harmony, and the fresh coolness of autumn, glowing beautifully in the sunshine, mixed with the wide blue sky above. We wore the bright, colorful, fancy outfits that only students are still allowed to

wear, now that dull, dark fashions rule everywhere else. Dressed like that, we got on a steamboat that had been cheerfully decorated in our honor, and we raised our flag on its mast. Every so often, from both banks of the river, came the boom of signal guns, fired on our orders to let our host in Rolandseck and the people living nearby know we were coming. I won't describe the noisy march from the landing dock through the excited little town that was waiting for us. I won't go into the private jokes we traded among ourselves either. I also won't mention the feast, which became wild and loud, or the strange musical performance that all of us, as soloists or in the chorus, ended up taking part in. As the club's music adviser, I had not only had to rehearse that piece but was then made to conduct it. Toward the end of the piece, which got wilder and wilder and was sung faster and faster, I signaled to my friend. Just as the last chord rang through the building like a scream, he and I disappeared, leaving behind us a roaring madhouse.

In a moment we were in the refreshing, breathless quiet of nature. The shadows were already getting longer. The sun was still shining steadily, though it had sunk quite low in the sky, and a cool breeze blew over our hot faces from the green, sparkling waves of the Rhine. Our solemn yearly ceremony only tied us to the very last hours of the day. So we decided to use the last moments of clear daylight by enjoying one of our many hobbies.

Back then, we both loved pistol-shooting more than almost anything. Years later, the skill we picked up as beginners turned out to be very useful to both of us when we served in the army. Our club servant knew the place we used as a shooting range. It was rather far away and high up, and he had carried our pistols there ahead of us. The spot was near the top edge of the woods that covered the lower hills behind Rolandseck. It was a small, bumpy, flat patch of high ground, close to a place we had made special to us because of the memories

tied to it. On a wooded slope next to our shooting range, there was a little patch of ground where the trees had been cut down. It made a perfect place to stop and rest. From there you could see the Rhine over the tops of the trees and bushes. The lovely, rolling outline of the Seven Mountains, and above all the peak called the Drachenfels, formed the edge of the sky beyond the trees. And in the middle of the curve made by the shining Rhine, the island of Nonnenwörth stood out, as if the river were holding it up in its arms. This was the place that had become sacred to us because of the dreams and plans we had shared there. We meant to go back to it later in the evening. In fact, we had no choice but to go back there if we wanted to end the day according to the rule we had set for ourselves.

At one end of that small, bumpy patch of ground, not very far off, stood the huge trunk of an oak tree. It stood out clearly, because behind it there were no trees at all, only low rolling hills in the distance. Once, working together, we had carved a five-pointed star into the side of this trunk. Years of rain and storms had made the grooves we cut a little deeper, and the star seemed like a perfect target for our pistol practice. It was already late in the afternoon when we got to our makeshift range, and our oak stump threw a long, thin shadow across the bare, empty heath. Everything was quiet. Because of the tall trees below us, we could not see even a bit of the Rhine valley down below. The calm of the place seemed to make our pistol shots sound even louder. I had barely fired my second shot at the star when I felt someone grab my arm. At the same moment I saw that my friend also had someone next to him, who had stopped him from reloading.

I spun around and found myself face to face with an old gentleman who looked very surprised. At the same time I felt what must have been a very strong dog jump at my back. The man who had come up to my friend was somewhat younger than the one who had come up

to me. But before we could say how surprised we were, the older of the two strangers burst out at us, angry and threatening. "No! No!" he shouted at us. "No duels are to be fought here, and you young students least of all must fight one! Put those pistols away and calm down. Make peace, shake hands! What? You are supposed to be the salt of the earth, the best of people, the bright minds of the future, the seeds of all our hopes. And yet you cannot even free yourselves from this crazy code of honour and its violent rules? I won't say anything bad about your hearts, but your heads certainly don't do you any credit. Your youth has been guided by the wisdom of Greece and Rome. With enormous effort, your young minds have been filled with the light of the wise men and heroes of the ancient world. And still you can't stop yourselves from making the code of knightly honour your rule for how to live? That code is really just a code of foolishness and brutality! Think about it sensibly, once and for all, and put it into plain words. Show how pitifully narrow it is, and let it be a test, not of your hearts, but of your minds. If you still don't feel sorry after that, it will only prove that your head is not suited to work in a field where you need a sharp ability to tell things apart, so you can break free of prejudice. In that kind of work you need a steady, balanced mind to tell right from wrong, even when the difference is buried deep and is not, as it is here, so ridiculously obvious. So if that's the case, my boys, try to make your way through life in some other honest way. Join the army, or learn a trade that pays its way."

This flood of words was rough, though we had to admit it was fair. We answered it with some annoyance, and we kept cutting each other off as we spoke: "First of all, you have the main point wrong. We are not here to fight a duel at all. We are here to practise shooting with pistols. Second, you don't seem to know how a real duel is done. Do you really think we would have faced each other in this lonely place like two robbers on the road, with no seconds, no doctors, and so on?

Third, when it comes to duelling, each of us has his own point of view. We don't need to be ambushed and caught off guard by whatever lecture you feel like giving us."

Our answer was certainly not polite, and it made the old man think badly of us. At first, when he heard we were not about to fight a duel, he looked at us more kindly. But when we got to the last part of what we said, he seemed so annoyed that he growled. And when we started talking about our point of view, he quickly grabbed hold of his younger friend, turned sharply around, and called out to us bitterly: "People should not have points of view, but thoughts!" Then the philosopher's younger friend added: "Show respect when a man like this one is wrong, even then!"

In the meantime, my friend had loaded his pistol again. He shouted, "Look out!" and fired a shot at the five-pointed star. This sudden bang behind his back made the old man furious. He turned around once more and gave my friend a sour look. Then he said to his younger friend in a weak voice: "What shall we do? These young men will kill me with all their shooting." The younger man turned to us and said: "You should know that your noisy games, as it happens this time, add up to an attack on the life of philosophy itself. You see this respected old man. He has every right to ask you to stop shooting here. And when a man like this asks..." "Well, people usually do what he asks," the old man broke in, looking at us sternly.

The truth is, we didn't know what to make of any of this. We couldn't see what our noisy games had to do with philosophy. We also couldn't see why we should give up our shooting range just to be polite. At that moment we probably looked rather unsure of ourselves and flustered. The philosopher's younger friend noticed that we were thrown for a moment, and he went on to explain things to us.

"We have to stay right around here for an hour or so," he said. "We are meeting someone here. A famous friend of this famous man is coming to meet us here this evening. We had actually picked this peaceful spot, with its few benches in the middle of the woods, for the meeting. It would be really unpleasant if your constant pistol practice gave us one shock after another, without end. Surely your own feelings will tell you that you can't keep on shooting once you hear who chose this quiet, out-of-the-way place to meet a friend. He is one of our greatest philosophers."

This explanation only made us more worried. We saw a danger coming that was even bigger than losing our shooting range. We asked eagerly, "Where is this quiet spot? Surely not over here to the left, in the woods?"

"That is exactly the place," the younger man said.

"But this evening that place belongs to us," my friend broke in. "We must have it," we both shouted together.

At that moment, the celebration we had been planning for so long seemed more important than all the philosophies in the world. We spoke up about our feelings so strongly and so excitedly that we must have looked a bit silly, since nobody could understand why we were making such a claim. In any case, the two philosophers who had walked in on us looked at us with amused, questioning faces, as if they expected us to offer some kind of apology. But we said nothing, because more than anything we wanted to keep our secret.

So we stood facing each other without a word, while the sunset turned the treetops a reddish gold. The old philosopher gazed at the sun. The philosopher's younger friend gazed at him. And we turned our eyes toward our little corner in the woods, which today we seemed so close to losing. A sulky anger took hold of us. What good

is philosophy, we asked ourselves, if it stops a man from being alone, or from enjoying the company of one chosen friend? In fact, what good is it if it stops him from becoming a philosopher? Because we saw our yearly ceremony as something truly philosophical. When we held it, we wanted to make plans and decisions for the future. Through quiet thinking we hoped to hit upon an idea that would once again help us shape and feed our minds in the years ahead, just as that earlier idea had done when we were boys. The whole serious event got its meaning from this one decision: nothing in particular was to be done. We were only to be alone, sit still, and think deeply, as we had done five years earlier, when the same thought had inspired both of us. It was meant to be a silent ceremony, made entirely of memories and of the future. The present was to be just a little dash joining the two together. And now fate, turned unfriendly, had just stepped into our magic circle, and we didn't know how to send her away. How very strange the whole situation was filled us with a mysterious excitement.

For a while we stood there in silence, split into two unfriendly groups. Above us the clouds grew redder and redder, and the evening seemed to turn more peaceful and gentle. We could almost imagine we heard nature breathing steadily as she added the last touches to her work of art, which was the wonderful day we had just enjoyed. Then, all of a sudden, the calm evening air was torn by a loud, jumbled shout of joy that seemed to come from the Rhine. We could hear a number of voices far away. They belonged to our fellow students, who by then must have gone out on the Rhine in small boats. It struck us that they would miss us, and that we would miss out on something too. Almost at the same moment, my friend and I raised our pistols. Our shots echoed back to us, and along with the echo, a familiar cry came up from the valley, a call our group used as a signal so we could recognize each other. You see, our love of shooting had

made us both famous and notorious in our club. At the same time, we realized that we had behaved very rudely toward the quiet pair of philosophers. They had been calmly watching us for some time, and when we fired, the shock made them huddle close together. We hurried over to them, and each of us in turn called out: "Forgive us. That was our last shot, and it was meant for our friends on the Rhine. They understood us, can you hear? If you insist on having that spot among the trees, at least let us sit there too. You'll find several benches there. We won't bother you. We'll sit very still and won't say a word. But it's already past seven o'clock, and we really must go there right now."

After a pause I added: "That sounds more mysterious than it really is. We made a solemn promise to spend this next hour on that spot, and we had our reasons for the promise. The place is sacred to us because of some happy memories, and it is also meant to mark the start of a good future for us. So we will try not to leave you with any bad memories of meeting us, even though we have done a lot to upset and frighten you."

The old philosopher said nothing. But the philosopher's younger friend said: "Unfortunately, our own promises and plans force us not only to stay here, but also to spend that very same hour on the spot you have chosen. It's up to us to decide whether fate, or maybe some spirit, is behind this strange coincidence."

"Besides, my friend," said the old philosopher, "I'm not nearly as annoyed with these fighting youngsters as I was. Did you notice how quiet they were a moment ago, while we were watching the sun? They didn't talk or smoke. They stood perfectly still. I even believe they were thinking deeply."

Turning suddenly toward us, he said: "Were you thinking deeply? Tell me about it as we walk toward the meeting place we now share." We walked a few steps together and went down the slope into the warm,

sweet-smelling air of the woods, where it was already much darker. On the way, my friend openly told the old philosopher what was on his mind. He admitted how much he had been afraid that today, for the first time, a philosopher was going to get in the way of his own philosophizing.

The wise old man laughed. "What? You were afraid a philosopher would stop you from philosophizing? That could easily happen. Haven't you had that experience yet? Has your time at university taught you nothing? Surely you go to lectures on philosophy?"

This question made us uncomfortable, because in fact there had been no philosophy at all in our education up to then. Also, back then we naively believed that anyone who held the job and the title of philosopher must actually be one. We were inexperienced and poorly informed. We openly admitted that we had not yet taken any philosophy course, but said that we would certainly make up for lost time.

"Then what did you mean," he asked, "when you talked about philosophizing?" I said, "We can't quite define it. But basically we meant that we wanted to think seriously about the best possible ways to become people of real learning." "That is a lot, and at the same time very little," the old philosopher grumbled. "Just think it over. Here are our benches. Let's go into the question thoroughly. I won't disturb your thoughts about how you are to become people of real learning. I wish you success, and also wish you points of view, like the ones you have about your duels: brand-new, original, enlightened points of view. A philosopher doesn't want to stop you from philosophizing. But at least don't startle him with your pistol shots. Try to copy the followers of Pythagoras today. As servants of a true philosophy, they had to stay silent for five years. Maybe you can manage to stay silent for five times fifteen minutes, as servants of your own future real learning, which you seem so worried about."

We had arrived, and our yearly ceremony began. Just as before, five years earlier, the Rhine was flowing below under a light mist, the sky looked bright, and the woods gave off the same sweet smell. We sat down at the far end of the most distant bench. Sitting there, we were almost hidden, and neither the old philosopher nor the philosopher's younger friend could see our faces. We were alone. When the old philosopher's voice reached us, it had blended so much with the rustling leaves and the buzzing hum of the countless creatures living on the wooded hill that it seemed almost like the music of nature. As a sound, it was most like a far-off, unchanging complaint. We really were left in peace.

Some time passed this way. As the glow of the sunset grew paler and paler, the memory of what we had started as boys for the sake of real learning grew clearer and clearer. We felt that we owed a huge debt of thanks to the little society we had founded. It had done more than just add to our grammar school education. In fact, it had been the only truly fruitful group we had ever belonged to. We even saw our grammar school life as just one part of it, a single separate piece that helped us in our overall effort to reach real learning.

We knew one thing for sure: thanks to our little society, we had never once thought, back in those days, about choosing any particular career. The government very often uses young people for its own ends. That is, it wants to raise useful officials as fast as it can, and it makes sure they will obey it without question by putting them through extremely harsh exams. But none of that had touched our education at all. And that day we were struck by a comforting thought, which showed how little we had been driven by thoughts of usefulness, or by the hope of getting ahead quickly and succeeding fast: even then, we still had not decided what we wanted to become. We had not even bothered to think about it at all. Our little society had planted the seeds of this happy carelessness in our hearts, and for that alone we

were ready to celebrate the day it was founded with deep thanks. I think I have already said that the present age cannot stand anything that is not useful. To people today, this kind of enjoying the moment for no purpose at all, this rocking ourselves to sleep in the cradle of the present, as if the present moment were a baby's cradle, must seem almost unbelievable, and certainly something to be blamed. How useless we were! And how proud we were of being useless! We even used to argue with each other about which of us deserved the honor of being the more useless one. We wanted to treat nothing as important, to hold strong opinions about nothing, to aim for nothing. We wanted to give no thought to tomorrow. All we wanted was to lie back comfortably, like a bunch of good-for-nothings, on the doorstep of the present moment. And that is exactly what we did. Bless us!

That, ladies and gentlemen, was how we saw things back then!

I was deep in these thoughts. I was just about to answer the question of the future of our own schools and colleges in the same self-satisfied way, when slowly I began to notice something. The "natural music" coming from the old philosopher's bench had changed. It no longer sounded like a gentle background noise. The voices were now reaching us much more sharply and clearly than before. Suddenly I realized that I was listening. I was eavesdropping, and I was intensely interested, with both ears catching every sound. I nudged my friend, who was clearly a bit tired, and I whispered: "Don't fall asleep! There's something for us to learn over there. It applies to us, even if it isn't meant for us."

For example, I heard the younger of the two men defending himself very eagerly, while the old philosopher scolded him more and more fiercely. "You haven't changed," the old philosopher cried to him, "sadly, you haven't changed at all. I simply can't understand how you can still be exactly the same as you were seven years ago, when I saw

you for the last time and left you feeling so worried about you. I'm afraid I'll have to strip you once again, though I don't want to, of the skin of modern culture that you've put on since then. And what do I find underneath it? The same unchangeable 'intelligible' character, as the philosopher Kant called it, the deep core of a person that never changes. Fine. But sadly, I also find the same unchanged 'intellectual' character, the same way of thinking. That may also be something that can't be helped, but it's not a comforting thought. I ask myself what was the point of my living as a philosopher, if all the years you spent with me have left no deeper mark on you, even though you have a good mind and a real hunger for knowledge. Right now you are acting as if you had never even heard the most basic rule of all real learning, the rule I worked so hard to drill into you when we were close. Tell me, what was that rule?"

"I remember," answered the scolded pupil. "You used to say that no one would try to reach real learning if he knew how unbelievably small the number of truly educated people really is, and always will be. And even this small number of truly educated people could not exist unless a huge crowd of others gave themselves to education, for reasons that go against their own nature, led on only by a tempting illusion. So it would be a mistake to show the public the ridiculous gap between the number of truly educated people and the enormous size of the whole education system. That is the whole secret of real learning: countless people struggle to reach it and work hard for it, supposedly for their own benefit, but deep down it is only so that the chosen few can actually reach it."

"That is the rule," said the old philosopher. "And yet you could forget yourself so badly as to believe that you are one of the chosen few? That thought has crossed your mind, I can see it. But that comes from how worthless modern education is. The rights of the great genius are being handed out to everyone, as if every person had them, so that

people can be spared the hard work of getting real learning, and spared from feeling that they need it. Everyone wants, if they can, to lie in the shade of the tree that the great genius planted, and to escape the hard but necessary job of working for him, so that great geniuses can keep being born. What? Are you too proud to be a teacher? Do you look down on the crowds of students? Do you sneer at the job of teaching? And, copying my way of life, would you like to live alone and shut away, cut off from that crowd and hostile to it? Do you think you can jump in one leap to what I only won for myself in the end after long, stubborn struggles, just to be able to live like a philosopher? And aren't you afraid that loneliness will take its revenge on you? Just try living the life of a lonely thinker. A person has to be gifted with overflowing riches of mind to live for the good of everyone using only his own inner resources! What remarkable young people! They felt it was their duty to copy exactly what is hardest and highest, what only a master can manage, when they of all people should know how hard and dangerous that is, and how many fine talents can be ruined by trying it!"

"I won't hide anything from you, sir," the philosopher's younger friend answered. "Over the years I have heard too much from you, here and there, and I have spent too long in your company to be able to give myself over completely to the way we teach and educate people today. I am painfully aware of the terrible mistakes and abuses you used to point out to me. At the same time, I know very well that I am not strong enough to hope for any success, no matter how bravely I might fight against them. A feeling of complete discouragement came over me. That is why I went off to be alone. It was not because I was proud or thought I was better than others. I would like to describe to you how I see the questions about education that everyone is now paying such huge and urgent attention to. It seemed to me that I could make out two main directions in the forces at work. These are two tenden-

cies that seem to pull against each other, but both do equal harm, and in the end they join together to produce their results. On one side there is a push for spreading schooling to everyone as widely as possible. On the other side there is a push for watering down education. The first wants, for various reasons, to spread learning to as many people as possible. The second would force education to give up its highest, noblest and loftiest aims, so that it can serve some other part of life instead, such as serving the government."

"I think I have already hinted at where the loudest calls for spreading schooling to everyone are coming from. This spreading is one of the favourite beliefs of modern economics, held almost like a religious creed. The formula goes like this: as much knowledge and education as possible; that leads to as much buying and selling as possible; and that leads to as much happiness as possible. In this view, the point and goal of education is usefulness. And by usefulness they mean profit, making as much money as possible. From this point of view, real learning would be defined as a kind of lookout point. From there you can 'stay at the front of your times.' From there you can see all the easiest and best roads to getting rich. And from there you can control all the ways that people and nations connect and deal with each other. Under this plan, the purpose of education would be to raise as many 'marketable' people as possible. The word is meant here the way we talk about coins that are accepted everywhere as money. The more of these people there are, the happier a nation will be. And this is exactly the purpose of our modern schools and colleges: to help everyone, as far as their nature allows, to become 'marketable.' They train each person so that whatever knowledge and science he has will bring him the most happiness and the most money. Everyone must be able to put some kind of price on himself. He must know how much he can reasonably expect to get out of life. This way of thinking claims there is a 'bond between intelligence and property,' and treats it

almost as if it were a moral law. People who think this way hate any kind of real learning that sets a person apart, that aims at something beyond gold and profit, and that takes time. They usually brush off such odd ideas about education by calling them 'Higher Selfishness' or 'Immoral Learning,' a life of mere pleasure-seeking. By the rules of right and wrong that rule here, the demands are completely different. What they want above all is 'fast education,' so that a money-making creature can be turned out as quickly as possible. They even want this education to be thorough enough to raise a creature who can earn a great deal of money. People are allowed exactly as much real learning as fits with making a profit, no more. But at least that much is expected of them. In short: people have a basic right to be happy on earth. That is why real learning is needed. But that is the only reason it is needed!"

"I must just add something here," said the old philosopher. "With the view you have described so clearly, there is a great and terrible danger. One day, ordinary people in great numbers may jump right over the middle classes and throw themselves headfirst into this happiness on earth. That is what people now call 'the social question.' These ordinary people in great numbers might come to feel that education for the largest number of people was just a tool for bringing happiness on earth to a privileged few. The 'widest possible spreading of education' weakens education so much that it can no longer give anyone special standing or earn anyone's respect. The most widespread kind of learning is simply crude ignorance. But I don't want to interrupt what you were saying."

The philosopher's younger friend went on: "Besides this favourite economic belief, there are other reasons why people everywhere are working so hard at spreading schooling to everyone. In some countries, people are so commonly afraid of being oppressed by religion, and so worried about what that leads to, that people in every class

long for learning. They eagerly take in the parts of it that are supposed to break up religious feelings. In other places, the government, for its part, now and then pushes for spreading schooling as widely as possible in order to protect itself. It does this because it always feels strong enough to bring even the boldest freedom that comes from learning back under its control, like an ox under a yoke. So it gladly supports anything that spreads learning, as long as that learning is useful to its officials or soldiers, but mostly to itself, in its competition with other nations. In this case, the foundations of the government must be wide and solid enough to hold up the complicated arches of learning that rest on it, like a building holding up its own roof. In the same way, in the first case, the marks of some earlier religious tyranny must still be felt before a people will be driven to such desperate measures. So whenever I hear ordinary people in great numbers calling for more spreading of education, I usually ask myself what is really behind it. Is it a greedy hunger for profit and property? Is it the memory of some earlier religious persecution? Or is it the careful, self-serving interest of the government itself?"

"On the other hand, it seemed to me that there was yet another trend. It was maybe not as noisy, but it was just as strong. It came from many different places, and it was driven by a different wish: the wish for watering down education."

"In all educated circles, people tend to whisper to each other something like this. They say it is a well-known fact that scholars today are being worked to the bone in the service of their science, and because of this, their real *education* gets more and more a matter of chance, and more and more shaky every day. The study of science has spread out so endlessly that a person of decent ability, though not of exceptional talent, has to give himself completely to one single branch and ignore all the others, if he ever wants to get anything done in his work. Now, if he does rise above the crowd thanks to his special subject, he still

stays one of the crowd in everything else. And that 'everything else' means all the most important things in life. So a science specialist ends up looking most of all like a factory worker who spends his whole life turning one particular screw or handle on one tool or machine, and who becomes extremely skilled at that one task. In Germany, we know how to dress up painful facts like this in the grand clothes of imagination. So here, this narrow specializing by our learned men is even admired. The fact that they keep wandering further and further from the path of real learning is treated as if it were a sign of good moral character. Phrases like 'faithful in small things' and 'stubborn loyalty' become the highest praise. And their lack of learning outside their own subject is shown off proudly, as a sign that they are noble enough to need nothing more."

"For hundreds of years, everyone took it for granted that when you spoke of educated people, you meant scholars and only scholars. But experience shows us that today it would be hard to find any real connection between the two groups. That is because right now, using up a man for the sake of science is accepted everywhere without the smallest second thought. Who still dares to ask what a science is really worth if it drains its servants dry, like a vampire? The splitting up of work in science is, in practice, pushing toward the same goal that some religions in certain parts of the world are aiming at on purpose. That goal is to shrink learning, and even to destroy it. For certain religions, given where they came from and their history, this is a perfectly reasonable aim. But when the same aim is carried over into the world of science, it can only mean science destroying itself. On every broad and serious question, and above all on the deepest questions of philosophy, we have already reached the point where the scientist, just as a scientist, is no longer allowed to speak. Meanwhile, there is a sticky, clinging layer that has now filled in all the gaps between the sciences. That layer is newspaper writing. It believes it

has a mission to carry out here. And it carries it out in its own particular way, which means, just as its name suggests, in the manner of a day-laborer who works only for today."

"It is exactly in newspaper writing that the two trends come together and become one. Spreading schooling to everyone and watering down education shake hands here. The newspaper actually takes the place of real learning. Anyone, even a scholar, who wants to speak up for education has to use this gluey layer of communication. It sticks together the cracks between all ways of life, all social classes, all the arts and all the sciences. And it is about as solid and reliable as newspaper paper usually is. The special educational goals of our time reach their peak in the newspaper. In the same way, the reporter, slave of the passing day, has taken the place of the great genius, the guide for all time, the one who frees us from the bullying of the present moment. So tell me, honored master, what hope could I still have in a fight against this general turning upside down of every true goal of education? With what courage can I, one single teacher, step forward, when I know that the moment any seeds of real learning are planted, they will be crushed without mercy by the heavy roller of this fake learning? Just picture how useless even the most energetic work of a single teacher must be. He would love to lead a student back into the distant, hard-to-reach world of the ancient Greeks, the true home of real learning. But in less than an hour, that same student will grab a newspaper, or the latest novel, or one of those learned books whose very style already carries the disgusting stamp of today's crude ignorance passing itself off as culture----"

"Now, quiet for a minute!" the old philosopher broke in, with a strong and caring voice. "I understand you now, and I should never have spoken to you so angrily. You are completely right, except in your despair. Now I am going to say a few words to comfort you."

Second Lecture

(Given on February 6, 1872.)

Ladies and gentlemen, some of you I have the pleasure of speaking to for the first time, and you only know about my first lecture from reports. I hope you won't mind being dropped into the middle of a conversation that I started describing last time. I now need to remind you of where it left off. The old philosopher's younger friend was pleading openly and honestly with his respected teacher. He was explaining why he had, for now, given up his job as a teacher in order to spend his days alone and unhappy. He had not made this decision out of any snobbery or arrogance.

"I have heard too much from you at different times," the honest student said, "and I have spent too long in your company, to hand myself over blindly to the way schooling and teaching are done today. I am painfully aware of the terrible mistakes and abuses that you used to point out to me. And yet I know I am nowhere near strong enough to succeed, no matter how bravely I might fight to smash the walls of this so-called culture. A deep gloom came over me. Going off to be alone was not arrogance or snobbery." Then, to explain why he had acted this way, he described the general nature of today's teaching methods so vividly that the old philosopher couldn't help cutting in, in a voice full of sympathy, and calling out words of comfort to him.

"Now, be quiet for a minute, my poor friend," the old philosopher cried. "I understand you better now, and I shouldn't have lost my patience with you. You are completely right, except in your despair. Now I'm going to say a few words to comfort you. How long do you think the state of education in today's schools, which seems to weigh so heavily on you, is going to last? I won't hide my opinion from you: its time is over; its days are numbered. The first person who dares to be completely honest about this will hear his honesty echoed back to

him by thousands of brave people. Because, deep down, there is an unspoken agreement among the more gifted and more warm-hearted people of our day. Every one of them knows what he has had to suffer from the state of real learning in schools. Every one of them would gladly protect his children from having to put up with the same problems, even though he himself was forced to put up with them. But if these feelings are never quite honestly spoken out loud, it's because of a sad lack of spirit among today's teachers and education experts. They have no real drive to start anything. There are too few practical people among them. By that I mean too few who happen to have good, new ideas, and who know that real great genius and a truly practical mind must always be found together in the same person. Meanwhile, the dull, so-called practical people have no ideas, and so they fail even at being practical."

"Let anyone look at what is being written about education today. Anyone who isn't shocked by how completely empty of spirit it is, and by its ridiculous, clumsy showing-off, is already so far gone that nothing could spoil him further. Here our thinking must not begin with wonder, as philosophy usually does, but with dread. Anyone who feels no dread at this point should be asked to keep his hands off questions about education. Of course, up to now it has been the other way round. Those who were frightened ran away, full of embarrassment, just as you did, my poor friend. Meanwhile, the dull and fearless ones laid their heavy hands on the most delicate skill that has ever existed in any art: the skill of educating people. But this won't be possible much longer. Sooner or later an honest man will appear. He will not only have the good ideas I'm talking about, but in order to work at making them real, he will dare to break with everything that exists now. Through a wonderful example, he may achieve something that the clumsy hands at work until now could not even copy. Then people everywhere will start making comparisons. Then they will at

least be able to see a contrast, and they'll be in a position to think about what causes it. Right now, on the other hand, so many people still honestly believe that heavy hands are a necessary part of teaching."

"My dear master," said the philosopher's younger friend, "I wish you could point to just one example that would help me see that the hopes you so warmly raise in me are well founded. We both know the grammar schools. Do you think, for instance, that in these schools anything can be done, through honesty and good, new ideas, to get rid of the stubborn, old-fashioned habits that are still around? It seems to me that here the battering-rams of an attacking army won't hit a solid wall. Instead, they'll run into the most deadly kind of dull, slippery principles. The guide of the attack has no visible, solid enemy to crush. Instead he faces a creature in disguise that can change itself into a hundred different shapes. In each of these shapes, it slips out of his grip, only to show up again and confuse its enemy by cowardly surrenders and fake retreats. It was exactly the grammar schools that drove me into despair and loneliness. That's simply because I feel that if the fight here ends in victory, all the other schools and colleges will have to give in. But if the reformer is forced to give up here, he might as well give up all hope on every other question about schooling. So, dear master, explain the grammar schools to me. What can we hope for when it comes to getting rid of them or reforming them?"

"I also think the question of grammar schools is as important as you do," the old philosopher replied. "All the other schools and colleges have to set their goals to match those of the grammar schools. Whatever mistakes in judgment the grammar schools suffer from, the others suffer from too. And if the grammar schools were ever cleaned up and made young again, the others would be cleaned up and made young again as well. The universities can no longer claim this kind of importance as centres of influence. As they stand now, they are, at

least in one important way, only a sort of extra wing attached to the grammar school system, as I'll soon show you. For now, let's think together about what I see as a very hopeful struggle between two possibilities. Either the patchy, slippery spirit of the grammar schools, which has been encouraged until now, will disappear completely, or it will have to be completely cleaned up and made young again. And so that I don't shock you with general statements, let's first try to remember one of those grammar school experiences that we have all had and all suffered from. If we look at it closely and strictly, what actually is the way German is taught in grammar schools today?

"First of all, I'll tell you what it ought to be. Everybody speaks and writes German about as badly as it's possible to do in an age of newspaper German. That's why a growing young person who happens to be both noble and gifted has to be taken by force and placed under a protective glass cover of good taste and strict language training. If that isn't possible, I would rather people spoke Latin from now on, because I'm ashamed of a language that has been so botched and spoiled."

"So what should a higher school be doing about this? Surely this: it should take young people who have been left careless about their own language, and, with authority and a firm, serious strictness, set them on the right path. It should call out to them: 'Take your own language seriously! Anyone who does not treat this as a sacred duty does not have even the first seed of higher real learning. We can tell from your attitude here, from the way you handle your native language, how highly or how lowly you value art, and how close you are to it. When you come across certain words and tricks of speech in our newspaper jargon, do you feel a bodily disgust? If you feel none, then stop trying to reach real learning. For right here, close beside you, at every moment of your life, whenever you speak or write, you have a testing stone. With it you can measure how hard, how enormous, the task of

the truly learned person is. And you can see how very unlikely it is that many of you will ever reach real learning.'"

"If he followed the spirit of this speech, the German teacher at a grammar school would have to point out thousands of small details to his pupils. With the complete sureness of good taste, he would have to forbid them to use certain words and phrases. For example: 'beanspruchen' (to lay claim to), 'vereinnahmen' (to take in), 'einer Sache Rechnung tragen' (to take something into account), 'die Initiative ergreifen' (to take the initiative), 'selbstverständlich' ("obvious", taken for granted), and so on, boringly, without end. This same teacher would also have to take our classic writers and show, line by line, how carefully and how exactly every word has to be chosen. That is what happens when a writer has the right feeling in his heart and sees clearly before his eyes everything he is writing about. He would have to push his pupils, again and again, to say the same thought better and better each time. And he would not let up on his strictness until the less gifted pupils in his class had picked up a deep, almost holy fear of their language, and the others had grown a great love and excitement for it."

"So here is a task for so-called mind-training. That means the kind of education meant to build up the powers of the mind, as opposed to 'fact' education, which only deals with learning facts, such as history, mathematics, and so on. And it is a task of the greatest value. But what do we find in the grammar school, which is supposed to be the headquarters of so-called mind-training? Anyone who knows how to apply what he has heard here will also know what to think of the modern grammar school as a so-called place of education. He will find, for example, that the grammar school, by its basic principles, does not educate for real learning, but for scholarship. And he will find, further, that lately it seems to have taken a path showing that it

has even dropped scholarship and made newspaper writing the goal of all its efforts. You can see this clearly from the way German is taught."

"There ought to be a purely practical way of teaching, in which the teacher trains his pupils to be strict with themselves in using their own language. Instead, we find everywhere the beginnings of a historical, bookish way of teaching the native language. In other words, people treat it as if it were a dead language, as if the present and the future owed it nothing at all. The historical method has become so common in our time that even the living body of the language is sacrificed so it can be cut up and studied, like a corpse in an anatomy class. But this is exactly where real learning begins: in knowing how to treat what is living as something alive. And this is also where the mission of the truly learned teacher begins: in holding back the loud demands of 'historical interests' wherever the main need is to do things properly, not just to know things properly. Our native language is exactly such a field, where the pupil must learn to do things properly. And it is only for this practical purpose that teaching German is essential in our schools. The historical method may well be a lot easier and more comfortable for the teacher. It also seems to need much less ability, and in general much less energy and willpower on his part. But we will find that this is true in every area of teaching: the simpler, more comfortable method always dresses itself up in grand claims and impressive titles. Meanwhile the truly practical side, the doing, which ought to belong to real learning and which is, deep down, the harder side, meets only with dislike and scorn. That is why an honest man must make it perfectly clear, to himself and to others, that one thing is being passed off in place of another."

"Now, apart from these scholarly reasons for studying the language, what else does the German teacher usually offer? How does he bring the spirit of his school into line with the spirit of the chosen few in Germany who truly have real learning, that is, with the spirit of its

great classic poets and artists? This is a dark and thorny area. You can hardly even carry a light into it without fear. But even here we will hide nothing from ourselves, because sooner or later the whole thing will have to be reformed. In the grammar school, the ugly stamp of our newspaper writing about art is pressed onto the still unformed minds of young people. Here, too, the teacher plants the seeds of that crude and stubborn misreading of the classics which later shows off as art criticism, and which is nothing but cocky crude ignorance. Here the pupils learn to talk about our one and only Schiller with the snooty air of little know-it-alls. Here they are taught to smile at the noblest and most German of his works, at the Marquis of Posa, at Max and Thekla. At these smiles the great genius of Germany grows angry, and a worthier future generation will blush with shame."

"The last area where the German teacher in a grammar school does any real work at all is so-called German essay-writing. People often see it as the high point of his job, and here and there it is even thought of as the very peak of grammar school education. In this area, it is nearly always the most gifted pupils who are the most eager. Because of that very fact, people should have seen clearly how dangerously exciting the teacher's task is, right here. German essay-writing speaks to the individual pupil. The more strongly a pupil is aware of his own various qualities, the more personally he will write his German essay. In some grammar schools, this 'personal writing' gets an extra push from the choice of topic. To my mind, the strongest proof of this is that even in the lower classes, a topic is set that has nothing to do with good teaching: the pupil is asked to describe his own life and how he has grown. Now, you only have to read the essay titles set in a large number of grammar schools to be convinced of something. Most pupils, probably, have to suffer their whole lives, through no fault of their own, because of this too-early demand for personal work. It is like forcing thoughts to be born before they are

ripe. And how often is everything a man writes later in life nothing but the sad result of this first sin that teachers commit against the mind!"

"Let us just think about what happens at that age when such work is produced. It is the young person's first creation of his own. His powers, still undeveloped, begin for the first time to take a firm shape, the way crystals form. He is suddenly told to rely on himself, and that dizzying feeling gives these early pieces of work a tempting charm. That charm is completely new, and it never comes back. All the boldness of his nature is dragged up from the depths. All his vanities, no longer held back by strong walls, are allowed for the first time to take shape in writing. From then on, the young man feels as if he has become complete, a being who is not only able to speak and discuss things, but is actually invited to. The topic he picks forces him to do one of several things. He may have to give his opinion on certain poems or works of literature. He may have to group historical figures together and describe their characters. He may have to discuss serious questions of right and wrong all on his own. Or he may even have to turn the searchlight inward, shine it on his own growth, and write a critical report about himself. In short, a whole world of thinking is spread out in front of this astonished young man, who until then had hardly been aware of any of it, and it is handed over to him to judge."

"Now let us try to picture how the teacher usually reacts to these first examples of original writing, which have such a strong effect. What does he think is most deserving of blame in this kind of work? What does he point out to his pupil? He points to every excess, in form or in thought. In other words, he points to everything that is truly typical and personal at that age. Because the pupils have been stirred up far too early, their truly independent qualities can only show up as clumsiness, roughness, and odd, grotesque features. In short, the teacher scolds and rejects their individuality, and prefers instead a

dull, respectable average with nothing original about it. On the other hand, work that is uniformly mediocre gets grudging, grumpy praise, because, as a rule, that is exactly the kind of work that bores the teacher completely."

"There may still be some men who see, in this whole farce of German essay-writing, one of the most absurd and most dangerous parts of the grammar school course. Here originality is demanded, but the only form in which it can show itself is rejected. And the so-called mind-training that the system takes for granted is reached only by a very small number of men, who finish it at a mature age. Here every single pupil, without exception, is treated as if he had a gift for literature, and as if he were able to hold opinions on the most important questions and people. Yet the one goal that proper education should work hardest to reach would be to stamp out all silly claims to independent judgment, and to teach young men obeying, under the royal rule of great genius. Here a showy, puffed-up way of speaking is taught, in an age when every spoken or written word is a piece of crude ignorance. Now let us also think about the danger of stirring up the self-satisfaction that wakes so easily in young people. Let us think how flattered their vanity must be when, for the first time, they see their own writing reflected back at them, as if in a mirror. Once someone has seen all these effects at one glance, could he still doubt it? Could he doubt that every fault of our public life, our literary life, and our artistic life is stamped onto each new generation by the very system we are examining? These faults are: hasty and vain writing; the shameful mass-production of books; a total lack of style; a crude, characterless, or sadly boastful way of expressing things; the loss of every standard of taste and beauty; and a greedy delight in disorder and chaos. In short, they are the literary habits of both our newspaper writing and our scholarship."

"Only a tiny handful of people realize this: out of many thousands, maybe only *one* has the right to call himself a writer. Everyone else who tries it, at their own risk, deserves to be met with roaring laughter, the kind the gods laugh in Homer, from every capable person, as payment for every sentence they have ever printed. Because it really is a sight fit for the gods to watch a writer limping forward like the lame god Hephaistos, pretending he can give us something useful. In this area, the highest goal of all training of the mind should be to bring people up with serious, strict habits and views. On the other hand, the general 'let it all go' attitude of the so-called 'fine personality' can only be the stamp of crude ignorance. From what I have said, though, it must be clear that, at least in the teaching of German, nobody is thinking about real learning at all. Something completely different is the goal, namely, producing the so-called free self-expression I mentioned before. As long as German grammar schools pave the way for shocking and careless scribbling, as long as they do not treat direct, practical training in speaking and writing as their most sacred duty, and as long as they treat the native language as if it were just a necessary evil or a corpse, I will not count these schools as belonging to real learning."

"When it comes to language, the thing you notice least of all is any sign that *classical examples* have had an influence. That is why, for this reason alone, the so-called classical education that our grammar school is supposed to give strikes me as something very doubtful and muddled. Think about it. How could anyone take even one look at those examples and fail to see how seriously the Greeks and Romans thought about and handled their language, from their youth onward? How could anyone get the lesson wrong on a point like this? That is, of course, assuming that the classical ancient Greek and Roman world really did stand before the planners of our grammar schools as the highest and most instructive model of all, which I very much tend to

doubt. The grammar schools' claim that they give a so-called classical education seems to be mostly a clumsy dodge. They pull it out whenever someone questions whether grammar schools are really able to pass on real learning and to educate. So-called classical education, indeed! It sounds so dignified! It confuses the attacker and fends off the attack, because who could see right through this baffling phrase all at once? And this has long been the usual tactic of the grammar school. Whichever side the battle cry comes from, the school writes on its shield, which does not carry many honours, one of those confusing slogans, such as 'so-called classical education,' 'so-called mind-training,' or 'so-called science training.' These are three glorious-sounding things. Sadly, though, each one contradicts itself, and they also clash with each other. If they were forced together, they would have to give birth to a monster of learning. You see, a so-called classical education is something so unheard of, so difficult and so rare, and it demands such complex talent, that only naivety or cheek could present it as a goal our grammar schools can actually reach. The phrase 'so-called mind-training' belongs to that crude, unthinking kind of jargon that we should do our very best to get rid of, because there is no such thing as 'the opposite of mind-training.' And anyone who thinks that so-called science training is the purpose of a grammar school throws away both so-called classical education and so-called mind-training in one blow. That is because the scientist and the person of real learning belong to two different worlds. Sometimes the two meet in the same person, but they never get along."

"Let us compare all three of these supposed goals of the grammar school with what we can actually see in the way German is taught today. Right away we see what they really amount to in practice: just excuses to use in the fight to make a living, and often simply tools for confusing an opponent. We cannot find a single feature of this German teaching that reminds us in any way of the example of the an-

cient world and its glorious methods of training in language. As for so-called mind-training, which this way of teaching German is supposed to produce, we have shown that it is left entirely to the whims of so-called free self-expression. That is as good as saying it is crude ignorance and chaos. And as for the preparation for science that is supposed to come out of this teaching, our German language scholars will have to judge fairly how little these learned first steps in grammar schools have added to the glory of their fields, and how much has been done instead by the personal gifts of individual university professors. To put it briefly: the grammar school has so far neglected its most important and most urgent duty toward the very starting point of all real learning, which is the native language. And by doing that, it has been missing the natural, rich soil needed for any further effort at real learning. Because only through strict, artful, careful training and habit in a language can we strengthen the right feeling for the greatness of our classic writers. Until now, whenever grammar schools have honoured these writers, it has been almost entirely because of the questionable artistic hobbies of a few teachers, or because of the powerful impact of some of their plays and novels. But each person should know the difficulties of the language for himself. He should have learned them through experience. After long searching and struggling, he must reach the path our great poets walked. Only then can he understand how lightly and beautifully they walked it, and how stiffly and showily the others trail along behind them."

"Only through this kind of training can a young man come to feel bodily disgust for the much-loved and much-admired 'elegant' style of our newspaper factories and novelists, and for the 'fancy style' of our writers. Only this training lifts him, in one stroke and for good, above a whole crowd of silly questions and doubts. For example, the question of whether Auerbach and Gutzkow are really poets. His disgust for both of them will be so strong that he will no longer be able to

read them, and so the problem will be settled for him. Let no one think it is easy to build up this feeling far enough to reach this bodily disgust. But also let no one hope to arrive at sound judgments about art by any road other than the thorny road of language. And by that I do not mean the research of language scholars, but training yourself strictly in your own native language."

"Anyone who takes this seriously will go through something like what a new army recruit goes through. He has walked nearly all his life as an amateur, just by trial and error, and now he is forced to learn how to walk properly. It is a hard time. You almost fear your tendons are going to snap. You stop hoping that these new, forced, carefully learned movements and foot positions will ever feel easy and natural. It is painful to see how clumsily and heavily you put one foot in front of the other. You start to dread that you will not only fail to learn the new way of walking, but forget how to walk at all. Then, suddenly, you notice that all this practice has given birth to a new habit, a second nature. The confidence and strength of your old way of walking come back, but now with a little more grace. At that point you begin to understand how hard walking really is, and you feel able to laugh at the untrained amateur who learned by trial and error, or at the stylish show-off. Our 'stylish' writers, as their style proves, have never learned 'walking' in this sense. And in our grammar schools, as our other writers prove, nobody learns to walk like this either. But real learning starts with moving correctly in your language. Once it has truly started, it produces a bodily feeling when you meet those 'stylish' writers, a feeling that goes by the name of 'disgust.'"

"We can see the terrible results of our grammar schools today. They cannot teach strict and genuine real learning, which should be built above all on obeying and on forming good habits. At their best, they much more often get results by stirring up and sparking an interest in science. The proof is the same hand we so often see writing both

scholarship and crude, tasteless work, both science and newspaper writing. In the vast majority of cases today, we can see how sadly our scholars fall short of the standard of real learning that Goethe, Schiller, Lessing, and Winckelmann worked so hard to set up. This falling short shows up exactly in the huge mistakes these men keep making. You find these mistakes among literary historians, whether Gervinus or Julian Schmidt, just as much as anywhere else. In fact, you find them everywhere men and women talk together. But it shows up most often and most painfully in the world of teaching, in the books written for grammar schools. It can be proved that for half a century nobody has even mentioned, let alone widely recognised, the only value these great writers have in a real school. Their value is to be the first guides into so-called classical education, the ones who lead you into its secrets. Only by holding their hands can you find the right road to the ancient world."

"Every so-called classical education can have only one natural starting point. That starting point is a skilled, serious, and exact familiarity with how to use your native language. But you can rarely reach this, along with the secret of good form, on your own. Almost everyone needs those great guides and teachers and has to place himself in their hands. And there is no such thing as a so-called classical education that could grow without this love of form that comes from them. When the power to tell good form from crude ignorance slowly wakes up in you, it is as if you grow wings. Those wings carry you to the only real home of real learning: ancient Greece. But if we tried to reach those far-off walls, studded with diamonds, around the fortress of ancient Greek life with only those wings to help us, we would certainly not get very far. So once again we need the same guides and teachers, our great German classic writers. We need to be lifted up as well by the beating wings of their past efforts, and carried to the land we long for: Greece."

"Not even a hint of this possible link between our German classic writers and so-called classical education seems to have got through the old walls of the grammar schools. Language scholars seem much more eager to introduce Homer and Sophocles to the young minds of their students in their own way. Then they call the result by a nice-sounding name that nobody questions: 'classical education.' Let each person ask his own experience what he actually got out of Homer and Sophocles from such eager teachers. This is the area where the greatest number of the deepest self-deceptions happen, and where misunderstandings are spread without anyone meaning to. In German grammar schools I have never yet found a trace of anything that could truly be called 'classical education.' That is not surprising when you think of how these schools have cut themselves loose from the German classic writers and from training in the German language. Nobody reaches the ancient world by jumping blindly into the dark. And yet the whole way ancient writers are handled in schools, the plain notes and rewordings our language-scholar teachers give, comes down to nothing more than a blind jump into the dark."

"In fact, a true feeling for ancient Greek life is such a rare result of the hardest fight for real learning and of artistic talent, that the grammar school could only have claimed to awaken it through a very crude misunderstanding. And in what age is it claiming this? In an age that is led around blindly by the most sensational cravings of the moment. An age that does not realise that once this feeling for ancient Greek life is awakened, it at once turns aggressive and has to show itself by fighting a never-ending war against the so-called 'culture' of today. For today's grammar-school boy, the ancient Greeks, as Greeks, are dead. Yes, he gets some enjoyment out of Homer, but a novel by Spielhagen interests him much more. Yes, he gulps down Greek tragedy and comedy with a certain pleasure, but a completely modern play, like Freytag's 'The Journalists,' moves him in a very different way. About

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all ancient writers he tends to talk like the art critic Hermann Grimm. At the end of a twisting essay on the Venus de Milo statue, Grimm once asked himself: 'What does this goddess's figure mean to me? What good are the thoughts she gives me? Orestes and Oedipus, Iphigenia and Antigone, what do they have to do with my heart?' No, my dear grammar-school boy, the Venus de Milo has nothing to do with you at all, and it has just as little to do with your teacher. That is the misfortune, that is the hidden secret of the modern grammar school. Who will lead you to the land of real learning, if your guides are blind and still act as if they were prophets who can see? Which of you will ever reach a true feeling for the sacred seriousness of art, if you are spoiled on purpose? You are taught to stammer on your own instead of being taught to speak. You are taught to play the art critic by yourself, when you ought to be taught to approach works of art almost with reverence, as if in prayer. You are taught to philosophise without help, when you ought to be made to *listen* to great thinkers. The result of all this is that you stay forever far away from the ancient world and become slaves to today."

"In any case, the healthiest thing about our modern schools is how seriously Latin and Greek are studied, year after year. This way, boys learn to respect grammar, dictionaries, and a language that follows fixed rules. In this part of grammar school work, everyone knows exactly what counts as a mistake. Nobody keeps trying to excuse himself every minute by pointing, as people do with modern German, to all sorts of odd and bad grammar and spelling habits. If only this respect for language didn't just float in the air like a theory, a burden people happily drop the moment they turn to their native language! Most of the time, the teacher of so-called classical education deals with the native language very quickly and carelessly. From the start, he treats it as a subject where you are allowed the same lazy ease with which Germans treat everything that comes from their own home soil.

Translating from one language into another is wonderful practice. It sharpens and enriches your artistic feel for your own language. But when it comes to German, this practice is never carried out with the firm, no-exceptions strictness and seriousness that an undisciplined language needs most of all. Lately, exercises like this have been happening less and less. People are happy just to *know* the old foreign languages. They would look down on being able to *use* them."

"Here we get another look at the scholarly leaning of grammar schools. It is something that shows us clearly what goal once drove them, namely the serious wish to give the pupil real learning. That goal belonged to the time of our great poets, those few Germans who truly had real learning. It was the time when the brilliant Friedrich August Wolf guided the new stream of classical thinking, which those poets had brought in from Greece and Rome, right into the heart of the grammar schools. Thanks to his bold beginning, a new kind of grammar school was founded. From then on, it was not meant to be just a breeding ground for scholarship. Above all, it was meant to be a true, sacred home for all higher and nobler real learning."

"This change brought about many necessary steps. Some of the most important have been carried over, with lasting success, into today's rules for grammar schools. But the most important step of all failed: the demand that the teacher, too, should be devoted to this new spirit. Because of that, the goal of the grammar school has meanwhile drifted far from Wolf's original plan, which was to give the pupil real learning. Wolf had defeated the old idea that scholarship and scholarly knowledge were the highest thing, valuable in themselves. But after a slow and lifeless struggle, that old idea seems to have pushed out the newer principle of real learning. Now it again claims the sole rights it once had, though not openly, but in disguise, with its face hidden. And why was it impossible to make grammar schools follow the grand plan of so-called classical education? Because these efforts in educa-

tion were un-German, almost foreign, belonging to no country in particular. They rested on the belief that you could pull a person's native ground out from under his feet and he would still stay standing. They rested on the illusion that people could leap straight into the strange ancient Greek world, without any bridges, by turning their backs on German and the German mind in general."

"Of course, you have to know how to track this German spirit down to its hiding place, under its many modern costumes, or even under piles of ruins. You have to love it enough that you are not ashamed of it when it looks stunted and small. And above all, you must be careful not to mix it up with what now shows off proudly as 'Up-to-date German culture.' The real German spirit is far from friendly with this up-to-date culture. In fact, the real German spirit has survived exactly in those places where this up-to-date culture complains that culture is missing, though perhaps not always with a graceful outside, and more often with an awkward one. On the other hand, the thing that now grandly calls itself 'German culture' is a sort of mixed heap from all countries. It relates to the German spirit the way newspaper writing relates to Schiller, or the way the composer Meyerbeer relates to Beethoven. The strongest force working on it is the civilisation of France, which is deeply and completely un-German. Germany copies it, but without talent and without taste. And this copying gives German society, the press, art, and literary style their fake, self-righteous character. Naturally, the copy never has the truly artistic effect that the original has. The French original grew out of the heart of Roman civilisation and can still produce that effect in France almost to this day. If anyone wants to see this contrast in full, let him compare our most famous novelists with the less famous ones of France or Italy. He will see the same questionable leanings and goals in both, and the same even more questionable methods. But in France he will find these joined with artistic seriousness, or at least with

correct grammar, and often with beauty. And in every feature he will hear the echo of a matching social culture. In Germany, on the other hand, these novelists will strike him as unoriginal and flabby, full of lazy, at-home-in-your-bathrobe thoughts and phrases, unpleasantly drawn out, and with no background of social manners behind them. At most, because of their scholarly habits and their showing off of knowledge, he will be reminded of something: in Latin countries it is the artistically trained man who becomes a journalist, while in Germany it is the failed scholar. With this pretend-German and thoroughly unoriginal culture, the German can never count on winning. The Frenchman and the Italian will always beat him at it. And when it comes to cleverly copying a foreign culture, the Russian above all will always do better than him."

"That is why we are all the more eager to hold on tight to the German spirit that showed itself in the German Reformation and in German music. It has proven its lasting, genuine strength in the huge courage and strictness of German philosophy, and in the loyalty of the German soldier, which was tested quite recently. From this spirit we expect a victory over the 'up-to-date' fake learning that is now in fashion. What we should hope for in the future is that schools will bring the true school of real learning into this fight. We hope they will light a fire of enthusiasm in the younger generation, especially in grammar schools, for what is truly German. In this way, so-called classical education will take back its natural place and find again the only starting point it can have."

"A complete reform and cleansing of the grammar school can only come about after a deep and powerful reform and cleansing of the German spirit itself. It is a very complicated and difficult job to find the boundary line where the heart of the German spirit meets the great genius of Greece. But the aim of so-called classical education in grammar schools will only take on any clear shape once certain things

happen. First, the noblest needs of the true German great genius must grab hold of the hand of this Greek great genius, the way a drowning person grabs a solid post in a raging flood of crude ignorance. Second, a hungry, all-consuming longing for this Greek great genius must take over the German great genius. And third, that view of the Greek homeland, which Schiller and Goethe were able to enjoy only after huge effort, must become the Mecca, the holy place of pilgrimage, for the best and most gifted people. Until then, at least those teachers will not be to blame who teach only a tiny amount of science and scholarship in grammar schools, so that they can keep a clear and, at the same time, ideal goal in view, and so that they can save their pupils from that shiny ghost which now lets itself be called 'culture' and 'education.' This is the sad state of the grammar school today: even the narrowest views are still right in a certain way, because nobody seems able to reach, or at least to point to, the place where all these views come together and turn out to be wrong."

"Nobody?" asked the old philosopher's pupil, his voice shaking a little. And both men fell silent.

FOOTNOTES:

[3] It is not possible to translate these German grammar mistakes by using similar examples of English grammar mistakes. Readers who are interested in the topic will find lots of examples in a book like the Oxford *King's English*.

[4] In German: *Formelle Bildung*, meaning so-called mind-training.

[5] In German: *Materielle Bildung*, meaning education in facts and content.

THIRD LECTURE

(Given on February 27, 1872.)

Ladies and gentlemen, at the end of my last lecture, the conversation I was listening to was broken off by a long and serious silence. That is the conversation whose main points, as I clearly remember them, I am now trying to share with you. Both the old philosopher and the philosopher's younger friend sat without speaking, sunk in deep gloom. The especially dangerous condition of that important school, the German grammar school, weighed on their minds like a heavy load. It was a load that one single person with good intentions is not strong enough to lift, and that the crowd, though strong enough, does not have good enough intentions to lift.

Our two lonely thinkers were troubled by two facts. On the one hand, they clearly saw that what could rightly be called "so-called classical education" was now only a distant ideal, a castle in the air, something that could never be built for real on the foundations of our present school system. On the other hand, they saw that what people now pointed to as "so-called classical education", using the usual polite and unchallenged nice-sounding label, was worth no more than a showy illusion. The best thing about it was that the phrase "so-called classical education" was still alive and had not yet lost its moving, emotional ring. These two good men could clearly see, from the way teaching was done at the time, that the moment had not yet come for a higher real learning, a real learning built on that of the ancient Greeks and Romans. They saw several signs. Language teaching was neglected. Students were pushed onto scholarly paths of history instead of being given practical training. And certain habits encouraged in grammar schools were tied to the unpleasant spirit of our newspaper writing and public chatter. All these easy-to-see features of how German was taught led them to a painful certainty. They were sure that the most

helpful of the forces handed down to us from the ancient world were still unknown in our grammar schools. These are forces that would train students for the fight against the crude ignorance of our present age. And perhaps one day they will turn the grammar schools once again into the weapon stores and workshops for this fight.

On the other hand, for now it looked as if the spirit of the ancient world, in its basic principles, had already been chased away from the doors of the grammar schools. It looked as if here, too, the gates had been thrown wide open to the flattered and spoiled kind of thing that today calls itself "German real learning." And if the two lonely speakers saw even one single ray of hope, it was this: things would have to get even worse. Then what only the chosen few could sense so far would soon be seen clearly by many people. And then the time would not be far off when honest, determined people would think seriously about how far the education of ordinary people in great numbers should really go.

After a few minutes of quiet thought, the philosopher's younger friend turned to him and said: "You used to give me hope, but now you have done more than that. You have opened up my mind, and with it you have given me strength and courage. Now I really can look at the battlefield more boldly. Now I really am sorry that I ran away too quickly. We want nothing for ourselves. It should not matter to us how many people fall in this battle, or even whether we ourselves are among the first to fall. Precisely because we take this cause so seriously, we should not take our own poor selves so seriously. At the very moment we fall, someone else will pick up the flag of what we believe in. I won't even ask myself whether I am strong enough for such a fight, or whether I can hold out well enough. It might even be an honourable death to fall while such enemies laugh and mock, enemies whose seriousness has often seemed ridiculous to us. When I think about how the people of my generation trained for the top jobs

in teaching, the way I did myself, I know how often we laughed at the very opposite thing, and became serious about something completely different----"

"Now, my friend," the old philosopher broke in, laughing, "you talk like someone who wants to dive into the water without knowing how to swim, and who is afraid of something worse than just drowning: of *not* drowning, but being laughed at. But being laughed at should be the very last thing we fear. We are working in an area where there are too many truths to tell, too many frightening, painful, unforgivable truths, for us to avoid being hated. Only here and there will anger turn into a kind of awkward laughter. Just think of the countless crowd of teachers who, in complete good faith, have taken in the school system that has ruled up to now, so that they can happily carry it on without thinking about it too much. How do you think it will feel to these men when they hear about plans they are shut out of *beneficio naturæ*, that is, simply because of how nature made them? When they hear of orders their average abilities can't possibly carry out? Of hopes that stir nothing in them? Of battles whose war-cries they don't understand, and in which they can only fight as dull, slow foot soldiers? Without exaggerating, that must be the situation of almost all the teachers in our higher schools and colleges. And we can't really be surprised, when we think about how such a teacher comes into being, how he *becomes* a teacher of such high rank. There are now so many higher schools and colleges everywhere that they will keep needing far more teachers than even a very gifted nation can naturally produce. So a huge flood of unsuitable people pours into these places. And because there are so many of them, and because of their instinct of 'similis simile gaudet,' meaning 'like enjoys like,' they slowly come to decide what these places are like. There may be a few people, who know nothing at all about teaching, who believe that our present overflow of grammar schools and teachers, which is clearly far

out of proportion, can be turned into a real overflow, an *ubertas ingenii*, a true richness of talent, just by a few rules and regulations, without cutting down the number of these schools. But surely we can all agree on this: by the very nature of things, only a tiny number of people are meant for a true education. A much smaller number of higher schools would be enough for them to grow further. But with the huge number of schools and colleges we have now, the very people these schools should really be set up for must feel that they get the least help in moving forward.

"The same is true of teachers. It is exactly the best teachers, the ones who, judged by a high standard, really deserve this honourable title, who are now perhaps the least suited, given the state of our grammar schools today, to teaching these unselected young people, all crowded together in a messy heap. Instead, these best teachers must, to some extent, keep hidden from them the best they could give. On the other hand, by far the greater number of teachers feel completely at home in these schools, because their average abilities fit nicely with the dullness of their pupils. It is from this majority that we hear the never-ending call to build new grammar schools and higher schools and colleges. We live in an age that keeps repeating its deafening, constant shout, so that you would surely think there was a thirst for real learning like never before, desperate to be satisfied. But this is exactly where we should learn to listen properly. This is where, without being thrown off by the thundering noise of these people who peddle education like goods, we must face those who talk endlessly about the educational needs of their time. Then we would run into a strange disappointment, one that we, my good friend, have often met. When you look closely at these loud announcers of educational needs, they suddenly turn out to be eager, even fanatical, enemies of real learning, that is, of everyone who holds on to the idea that the mind is by nature noble and ranked. Because, deep down, their goal is to

free ordinary people in great numbers from being led by the great chosen few. They want to overthrow the most sacred natural ranking of minds in the world of thought: the fact that ordinary people in great numbers serve, their humble obeying, their instinct to be loyal to the rule of great genius.

"For a long time now I have made a habit of being careful around people who are passionate about what they call 'educating the people,' in the usual sense of those words. Most of them, whether they realize it or not, want completely unlimited freedom for themselves. That kind of freedom is bound to turn into something like the wild, drunken festivals of savage times, and the sacred natural order of things will never allow them to have it. They were born to serve and to obey. Every moment their thoughts are at work, limping, crawling, or wheezing like a worn-out horse, we can plainly see what clay nature made them from, and what brand mark she burned onto them. So educating ordinary people in great numbers cannot be our goal. Our goal should be educating the chosen few, carefully picked, for great and lasting works. We know very well that fair-minded people in the future will judge the whole mental life of an age only by its few great, lonely figures. They will make their judgment based on how those figures were treated: whether they were noticed, encouraged, and honored, or whether they were snubbed, shoved aside, and held down. What people call 'educating the masses' is very hard to achieve. Even if you force every child into school by law, you can only touch people on the surface. There are deeper, lower levels where ordinary people in great numbers actually meet real learning: where the people feed their religious feelings, where they turn their old myths into poetry, where they hold on to their faith in their customs, their rights, their native soil, and their language. All these levels can hardly be reached directly, and if they can be reached at all, it is only by smashing them violently. And in serious matters like this, pushing

ahead faster with educating the people really just means putting off that violent smashing. It also means keeping the people in that healthy unawareness, that sound sleep. Without that sleep to balance it and heal it, no real learning could make any progress, because real learning wears itself out with its own tiring strain and excitement."

"But we know what the people who want to disturb this healthy sleep are after. They keep shouting at the people: 'Keep your eyes open! Be sensible! Be wise!' We know the aim of those who claim they will meet these overblown demands for education by hugely increasing the number of schools and colleges, which in turn creates a big, self-important crowd of teachers. These very people, using these very methods, are fighting against the natural ranking of minds. They are tearing up the roots of all those noble, lofty, shaping forces that grow out of the people's unawareness, forces whose proper end is to give birth to the great genius and then guide and train him properly. Only by comparing it to a mother can we understand what real education of the people means for the great genius, and what responsibility it carries. The great genius does not actually come from that education. His true source, his true home, is so to speak beyond this world. But think of what the great genius has to do: to appear; to rise up out of the people; to show, like a reflection, the dazzling brightness of that people's special colors; to picture a people's noble destiny in the form of one single person, in a work that will last forever, and so to make his nation itself eternal and rescue it from the constant flow of things that pass away. He can do all this only if he has been raised and has grown up under the gentle care of his people's real learning. Without this sheltering home, the great genius will usually not be able to rise high enough for his eternal flight. Instead, very early on, he will sneak away from that unfriendly land, like a stranger blown by storms onto a cold, snowy wasteland."

"You amaze me with this idea of the great genius coming from beyond this world," said the philosopher's younger friend, "and I only have a fuzzy idea of whether your comparison is right. But I fully understand what you said about there being too many grammar schools, and so too many high-level teachers. On this point I have gathered some facts myself. They convince me that the educational direction of the grammar school is bound to go wrong because of this very oversupply of teachers. These teachers really have nothing to do with education at all. They only exist, and only take up this path, because there is a demand for them. Think of any man who, in a sudden flash of insight, has become sure how unique and how hard to reach the ancient Greek world is, and who has fought off that certainty only after an exhausting struggle. Every such man knows that the door to this insight will never stay open to just anybody. He thinks it is ridiculous, even shameful, to use the Greeks like any other tool of his trade or his way of making money, shamelessly pawing with rough hands among the remains of those holy men. Yet this bold, vulgar attitude is most common in the very profession that supplies most of the teachers for the grammar schools: the profession of language scholars. So it will not surprise us that this attitude is copied and carried on in the grammar school."

"Just look at the younger generation of language scholars. How rarely we see in them that humble feeling that, compared with a world like the one the Greeks had, we have no right to exist at all! How coolly and fearlessly, compared with us, that young flock built its shabby little nests right in the middle of those magnificent temples! From every nook and corner, a mighty voice should ring in the ears of these people. From the day they first join the university, they wander wherever they like, so pleased with themselves and so shameless, among the awe-inspiring remains of that noble civilisation. The voice should cry: 'Get out, you outsiders, who will never be let into the

secret! Fly away in silence and shame from these holy rooms!' But this voice speaks for nothing. To understand a Greek curse that shuts you out, you have to be at least a little bit Greek yourself. And these people I am talking about are so crudely ignorant that they arrange these remains however it suits them. They bring along all their modern comforts and pet ideas and hide them among those ancient pillars and gravestones. Then there is great celebration when somebody finds, among the dust and cobwebs of the ancient world, something that he himself had secretly hidden there not long before. One of them writes poems and makes sure to look things up in Hesychius' Dictionary. Something he finds there at once convinces him that he is meant to follow in the footsteps of Aeschylus, the great Greek playwright. It even makes him believe that he 'has something in common with' Aeschylus. What a pathetic little rhymer! Another one peers, with the suspicious eye of a policeman, into every contradiction Homer was guilty of, even into the mere shadow of a contradiction. He wastes his life tearing Homer's rags into shreds and sewing them back together again. And these are rags that he himself was the first to steal from the poet's royal robe. A third one feels uneasy when he looks at all the mysterious, wild and frenzied sides of the ancient world. He decides once and for all to accept only the clear, sensible god Apollo without any argument. He chooses to see the ancient Athenian as a cheerful, clever, but still somewhat immoral follower of Apollo. And what a deep sigh of relief he lets out when he manages to drag yet another dark corner of the ancient world down to the level of his own understanding! For example, when he discovers that Pythagoras was a colleague who loved arguing about politics just as much as he does. Another one racks his brains over why fate condemned Oedipus to do such horrible things: killing his father and marrying his mother. Where is the blame? Where is the fair punishment that a story should deliver? Suddenly it comes to him. Oedipus was a hot-tempered fellow, without any Christian gentleness. He even

flew into an improper rage when the prophet Tiresias called him a monster and the curse of the whole land. So, he decides, what Sophocles was trying to teach was this: Be humble and gentle! Otherwise you will end up marrying your mothers and killing your fathers! Others again spend their lives counting how many lines of verse the Greek and Roman poets wrote, and they are thrilled with neat ratios like seven is to thirteen as fourteen is to twenty-six. Finally, one of them comes forward with his answer to some question, such as the poems of Homer looked at from the point of view of their prepositions. He thinks he has pulled the truth up from the bottom of the well using the little Greek words "ana" and "kata", which mean "up" and "down". But all of them, though their goals are as far apart as can be, dig and burrow in Greek soil with a restlessness and a clumsy awkwardness that must surely hurt anyone who truly loves the ancient world. And so it happens that I would like to take by the hand every man, talented or not, who feels a certain career urge pushing him toward studying the ancient world, and give him a speech like this: 'Young sir, do you know what dangers threaten you, with your small supply of school learning, before you become a man in the full sense of the word? Have you heard that, according to Aristotle, being killed by a falling statue is not at all a tragic death? Does that surprise you? Then know this. For centuries, language scholars have been trying, with strength that keeps failing, to set the fallen statue of ancient Greece back on its feet, but they have not succeeded. It is a giant, and single individual men crawl around it like tiny dwarfs. All the representatives of modern learning join together and use their combined force as a lever to raise it. But every single time, the huge column is barely lifted off the ground before it falls down again, crushing the unlucky souls underneath it. Now, that might be bearable, because every living thing has to die somehow. But who can promise that, during all these attempts, the statue itself will not break into pieces? The language scholars are being crushed by the Greeks, and perhaps

we can live with that. But the ancient world itself is in danger of being crushed by these language scholars! Think that over, you easy-going young man. And turn back, so that you too do not end up as a smasher of sacred images!'"

"It's true," said the old philosopher, laughing, "there are many language scholars who have turned back, just as you so badly want them to. And I see a big difference from what I knew when I was young. Whether they realize it or not, a great many of them have decided that it is hopeless and pointless for them to deal directly with the classical writers of the ancient world. So they tend to see that study as dry, replaced by something better, and out of date. This crowd has turned with much more eagerness to the science of language itself. Here is a wide stretch of untouched ground, where even the most ordinary talents can be put to use. Here a certain flatness and dullness is even treated as real talent. The methods are new and uncertain, and there is always the danger of making wild mistakes. Here, what is wanted is dull, army-style routine and discipline. And here the newcomer is no longer scared off by the grand, warning voice that rises from the ruins of the ancient world. Here everyone is welcomed with open arms. That includes even the person who never had any unusual feeling or worthwhile thought after reading Sophocles and Aristophanes. The result is that such people end up caught in a tangle of word origins, or get tempted into collecting scraps of obscure local dialects. Their time is spent linking things and separating them, gathering things and scattering them, and running back and forth looking things up in books. And now this busy, useful language scholar would love to be a teacher! He sets out to teach the boys in grammar school something about the ancient writers, even though he himself read them without being moved by them, let alone understanding them deeply! What a problem! The ancient world has said nothing to him, so he has nothing to say about the ancient world. Then a sudden thought hits him:

why else is he a trained language scholar at all? Why did these writers write in Latin and Greek, if not for this? So, without a care, he immediately starts tracing the origins of Homer's words. He calls on Lithuanian, or Old Church Slavonic, or, above all, holy Sanskrit to help him. It is as if Greek lessons were just an excuse for a general introduction to the study of languages, and as if Homer had only one flaw: that he did not write in the language that came before all the Indo-European languages. Anyone who knows our grammar schools today knows very well how wide a gap separates their teachers from the classics. And they know how, because these teachers sense what they are missing, the comparing of languages and related jobs have grown in numbers to a degree never seen before."

"What I mean is," said the philosopher's younger friend, "it would all depend on whether a teacher of the classics does not mix up his Greeks and Romans with the other peoples, the outsiders they called barbarians. It would depend on whether he could never treat Greek and Latin as equal to other languages. As far as his love of the classics goes, it does not matter at all whether the structure of these languages matches other languages or is related to them in any way. Such a match does not interest him at all. What he really cares about is what the two do not share. He cares about whatever shows him that those two peoples were not barbarians compared with the others. Of course, that is only true if he is a real teacher of real learning and shapes himself after the grand models of the classical writers."

"I may be wrong," said the old philosopher, "but I suspect that, because of the way Latin and Greek are taught in schools now, a solid grasp of these languages is being lost. The ability to speak and write them easily is disappearing. That was something my own generation was known for, though the few of us still alive have grown old by now. On the other hand, today's teachers seem to press on their pupils how important the subject is for tracing where words come from

and how they developed over history. They press it so hard that, at best, their students end up as little Sanskrit experts, hot-headed word-origin hunters, or careless guessers about lost texts. But not one of them can read his Plato or his Tacitus with enjoyment, the way we old folk can. The grammar schools may still be places of scholarship. But it is not the kind of scholarship that is a natural, unforced helper to real learning aimed at the highest goals. Instead, it is a kind of learning that is like the swollen, overgrown flesh of a sick body. The grammar schools are certainly the home of this unhealthy bloating, if they have not already sunk into being the home of that polished crude ignorance that people brag about as 'German culture of today!'"

"But," asked the philosopher's younger friend, "what will happen to that huge number of teachers who were never given a real gift for real learning? They became teachers only to make a living from the job, because there is a demand for them, because too many schools bring with them too many teachers. Where can they go when the ancient world firmly orders them to leave? Won't they have to be handed over to the powers of the present day? Those powers shout at them, day after day, from the endless columns of the newspapers: 'We are culture! We are education! We are at the very top! We are the tips of the pyramids! We are what all of world history was aiming for!' They hear these tempting promises. They see the shameful signs of no learning at all, the cheap, common publicity of the so-called 'interests of culture,' praised to them in magazines and newspapers as a completely new, fully grown, and best possible form of culture. Where can the poor fellows run when they get a feeling that these promises are false? Where else but into the dullest, most barren kind of science, so that the shrieking about culture can no longer reach their ears? Hunted like this, won't they end up like the ostrich, burying their heads in the sand? Isn't it real happiness for them, buried among dialects, word origins, and guesses about texts, to live a life like ants?

They may be miles away from real learning, but at least they can shut their ears tight and stay deaf to the voice of the 'polished' culture of their time."

"You are right, my friend," said the old philosopher. "But where does this pressing need for too many schools of real learning come from? That need, in turn, creates a need for too many teachers. And we can see so clearly that the demand for this oversupply comes from a world that is hostile to real learning, and that the results of this oversupply only lead to a lack of real learning. In fact, we can only talk about this harsh 'need' as far as the modern government is willing to talk about these things with us, and is ready to back up its demands with force. And when the government does that, most people feel as though they were hearing the eternal law of how things are. Beyond that, a 'state that runs culture,' to use the popular phrase of today, which makes such demands, is something rather new. It has only come to see itself as something 'taken for granted' in the last fifty years. That is, in a time when, to use the favourite popular word, so many things that are 'taken for granted' came into being, even though in themselves they are not 'taken for granted' at all. The most powerful of modern governments, Prussia, has taken this right to higher education so seriously that the bad principle it has adopted is a real threat. When you put it together with how bold and tough this government is known to be, you can see that it has a menacing and dangerous result for the real German spirit. For we see efforts being made there to lift the grammar school, neatly organised into a system, up to the so-called 'level of the times.' Here you find the whole machinery for pushing as many pupils as possible into grammar school courses. Here, in fact, the government has its strongest bait: it grants certain privileges about military service to those who attend. The natural result is this. According to the plain evidence of the government's own statistics officials, this, and this alone, explains why all Prussian grammar

schools are overcrowded everywhere, and why new ones are always urgently needed. What more could the government do to create too many schools and colleges? It ties all the higher posts in the civil service, and most of the lower ones too, the right to enter the universities, and even the most important military posts, closely to the grammar school. And it does all this in a country where both military service for everyone and the highest offices of government draw all gifted people toward them without their even noticing. So here the grammar school is seen as an honourable goal, and everyone who feels pushed toward a career in government will be found on the road to it. This is something new and quite original. The government takes on the role of a high priest who leads people into the secret rites of culture. And while it serves its own purposes, it forces every one of its servants never to come before it without carrying the torch of general government-approved education in their hands. And by the flickering light of that torch, they are meant to see the government once again as the highest goal, as the prize for all their efforts to get educated."

"Now this last development really ought to surprise them. It ought to remind them of a related trend in philosophy, one that people only slowly came to understand, and which was once pushed forward for the government's own reasons. I mean the trend of Hegel's philosophy. In fact, it may be no exaggeration to say this: by putting every effort at education under the needs of the government, Prussia has successfully taken over the main idea of Hegel's philosophy, the useful thing it left behind. Hegel treated the government almost like a god, and that worship reaches its peak in exactly this: making education serve the government."

"But," said the philosopher's younger friend, "what goals can the government have in mind with such a strange aim? It clearly has some goals of its own. You can see that from the way other countries ad-

mire Prussian schools, study them, and sometimes copy them. These other countries obviously believe there is something here that, if they took it over, would help keep the government strong and in power, just like our well-known and popular system of drafting everyone into the army. Here everyone proudly puts on his soldier's uniform at regular times. Here almost everyone has soaked up one single, uniform kind of national culture through the grammar schools. In such a place, people may well give excited, over-the-top speeches about the systems of earlier ages. They may praise a kind of all-powerful government that was only ever reached in the ancient world. And almost every young man, both by instinct and by training, believes that reaching such a government is the crowning glory and the highest goal of human beings."

"Such a comparison," said the old philosopher, "would be completely over the top, and it would limp on more than one leg. It would be wrong in many ways. The ancient government certainly did not take the narrow, practical view that only things directly useful to the government count as real learning. It had no wish to crush those urges and talents that did not seem to be of immediate use. That is exactly why the deep-thinking Greek felt such strong admiration and thankfulness toward the government, a feeling modern people find so unpleasant. He saw clearly two things. First, without the government's protection, the seeds of his culture could never have grown. Second, all his culture, which no one could copy and which lasts forever, had grown so richly because the government guarded it wisely and carefully. For his culture, the government was not a supervisor, a rule-maker, and a guard. It was a strong, muscular friend and companion, ready for battle. It walked beside its noble, admired, almost heavenly friend through the ugly parts of real life, and earned that friend's thanks for doing so. But that is not what is happening when a modern government demands the same warm gratitude, claiming it

serves German culture and art like a noble knight. In this matter, its past is just as shameful as its present. To prove it, we only have to think about how German cities honour the memory of our great poets and artists, and how little the government actually supports the highest goals of these German masters.

"So there must be something odd going on. Something odd about this goal the government is aiming at, the goal that always pushes forward what is here called 'education.' And something odd, too, about the kind of culture being pushed forward, which bows down to this goal of the government. This goal of the government is at war, secretly or openly, with the real German spirit, and with the education that comes from that spirit, which I have slowly sketched out for you. So the spirit of education that the government welcomes and encourages so eagerly, the one that makes this country's schools so admired abroad, must come from a place that never touches the real German spirit. I mean that spirit which speaks to us so wonderfully from the deep heart of the German Reformation, of German music, and of German philosophy. That spirit is like a noble exile, and the comfortable, well-fed education the government provides treats it with coldness and scorn. This spirit is a stranger. It walks past alone and sad. And far away from it, people swing the incense burner of fake learning back and forth, as if in worship. This fake learning, cheered on by 'educated' teachers and newspaper writers, takes the name and the rights of the real German spirit for itself, and treats the word 'German' with insult. Why does the government need such an oversupply of schools and colleges, and of teachers? Why educate ordinary people in great numbers on such a huge scale? Because the real German spirit is hated. Because people are afraid of the aristocratic nature of real learning, which belongs to the chosen few. Because in this way people try to push single great individuals into exile, so that the demands of ordinary people in great numbers for education can be planted and

carefully looked after, like a garden. In this way the many hope to escape the hard, strict training of the few great guides. In this way ordinary people are persuaded that they can easily find the path by themselves, simply by following the guiding star of the government!"

"Something new! The government as the guiding star of real learning! Meanwhile, one thing comforts me. This German spirit, which people are fighting so hard against, and which they have replaced with a flashy, dressed-up stand-in, is brave. It will fight, and it will free itself and rise into a purer age. Noble as it is now, and victorious as it will be one day, it will always feel a kind of pitying patience toward the government, if the government, in its hour of desperate need, takes on such fake learning as its partner. After all, what do we really know about how hard it is to govern people? That means keeping law, order, quiet, and peace among millions of human beings who are endlessly selfish, unfair, unreasonable, dishonest, envious, and spiteful, and therefore very narrow-minded and twisted. It also means protecting the few things the government has won for itself from greedy neighbours and jealous robbers. A government under that much pressure reaches out its arms to any partner and grabs at any straw. And when such a partner comes along with fancy, flowery speeches, when he declares, as Hegel did, that the government is 'an absolutely complete moral body,' the beginning and end of everyone's education, and then goes on to show how he himself can best serve the government's interests, who will be surprised if the government, without any more discussion, throws its arms around his neck and shouts in a crude, fully convinced voice: 'Yes! You are education! You truly are real learning!'"

Fourth Lecture

(Given on March 5, 1872.)

Ladies and gentlemen, you have now followed my story up to this point. Together we have taken in the lonely, out-of-the-way, and sometimes insulting two-person talk between the old philosopher and the philosopher's younger friend. So I truly hope that you, like strong swimmers, are ready to go on with the second half of our journey. I can promise you this much: a few more puppets will appear in the puppet show of my adventure. And if, so far, you have mostly just put up with what I have been telling you, the waves of my story will now carry you faster and more easily toward the end. In other words, we have reached a turning point. It would be wise to take a quick look back and see what we think we have gained from such a wide-ranging conversation.

"Stay where you are," the old philosopher seemed to tell the philosopher's younger friend, "because you have reason to hope. It is becoming clearer and clearer that we have no real schools and colleges at all, but that we ought to have them. Our grammar schools seem to have been set up for this high purpose. But they have either become breeding grounds for a shameful kind of learning, one that pushes away real learning with deep hatred. By real learning I mean a true, noble kind of learning, built on the chosen few, a small number of carefully picked minds. Or else these schools encourage a nit-picking, barren kind of scholarship. That scholarship is far from real learning, but it has at least one good point: it stays away from the shameful kind of learning as well as from real learning." The old philosopher had especially pointed out to his younger friend the strange rot that must have gotten into the heart of learning once the government believed it could bully learning and use it to get what it wanted. He also pointed out what happened when the government, teamed up with this kind of learning, fought against other enemy forces, and also against one particular spirit, which the old philosopher dared to call "the real German spirit." This spirit is tied to the ancient Greeks by

the noblest bonds. Its past history shows that it has been steady and brave, pure and high in its goals. Its gifts make it fit for the great task of freeing modern people from the curse of modern times. And yet this spirit is forced to live on its own, shut out from what belongs to it. But when its slow, painful cries of sorrow ring out across the empty desert of the present day, then the overloaded, brightly decorated caravan of learning stops short, struck with horror. The old philosopher's view was that we must not only amaze people but frighten them. His advice was not to run away in shame, but to go on the attack. Above all, he told his younger friend not to worry too much about the single person who, guided by a higher instinct, felt this disgust for today's crude ignorance. "Let that person die," he said. "The god of the oracle at Delphi had no trouble finding a new three-legged seat and a second priestess to speak for him, at least as long as the mysterious cold vapors kept rising out of the earth." In other words, the true spirit will always find new people to speak through, as long as its source is still alive.

The old philosopher began to speak again. "Be sure to remember, my friend," he said, "that there are two things you must not mix up. A person has to learn a great deal in order to live and to take part in the fight to make a living. But everything he learns and does for that purpose, as one individual, has nothing at all to do with real learning. Real learning only begins in a region that lies far above the world of need, poverty, and the fight to make a living. The question then is how much a person values his own self compared with other people's selves, and how much of his strength he spends trying to earn a living. Some people calmly keep their needs within narrow limits, like the ancient Stoics. Such a person will soon and easily reach the region where he can forget his own self and, so to speak, shake it off. There he can enjoy never-ending youth in a solar system of timeless things that do not belong to any one person. Another person stretches the

reach and the needs of his own self as far as he can. He builds a huge tomb for this self, as if he were ready to fight and defeat that terrible enemy, Time. In this urge, too, we can see a longing to live forever. Wealth and power, wisdom, quick thinking, fine speaking, an impressive appearance, a famous name: all of these simply become tools. Through them, a greedy personal will to live keeps demanding new life, and with that new life it longs for an eternity that in the end turns out to be an illusion.

"But even in this highest form of the self, in the swollen needs of such a puffed-up person who almost becomes a crowd in himself, real learning is never reached. If such a person goes after art, for example, he only notices the side of art that spreads and excites. That is the side least likely to produce pure and noble art, and most likely to produce low and cheap kinds of it. For in everything he does, however great and unusual it may look to people watching, he never manages to free himself from his own grasping, restless personality. That bright, airy region, where a person can look at things without his own personality getting in the way, keeps slipping further away from him. And so, no matter how much he studies, travels, and collects, he must always live like an exile, far away from a higher life and from real learning. Real learning would refuse to dirty itself with the needy and greedy individual. It knows very well how to slip away from the person who would like to use it as a tool for his own selfish goals. And if anyone believes that he has got a firm hold on it as a way to make a living, and that by working hard at it he can earn what he needs to live, then it suddenly sneaks away without a sound, with a look of scornful mockery.[6]

"So I ask you, my friend, not to confuse this real learning, this sensitive, choosy, airy goddess, with that useful maid who does all the chores. That maid is also called 'learning,' but she is only the mental servant and adviser for a person's practical needs, wants, and ways of

earning a living. Any kind of training that offers earning your bread as its final goal is not training for real learning as we understand the word. It is just a collection of rules and instructions showing how a person can keep himself safe and protected in the fight to make a living. It can be freely admitted that for most people such a course of teaching is extremely important. And the harder the fight is, the harder a young man must strain every muscle to use his strength in the best possible way.

"But let no one think, even for a moment, that the schools which push a young man into this fight and get him ready for it should be taken seriously as places of real learning. They are places that teach you how to take part in the battle of life. That is true whether they promise to produce government clerks, or merchants, or army officers, or wholesale traders, or farmers, or doctors, or people with technical training. The rules and standards in such places are different from those in true schools and colleges. In fact, something that is allowed in a true school, and even offered as often as possible, ought to be treated as a crime in the other kind."

"Let me give you an example. If you want to guide a young man along the path of real learning, be careful not to break his simple, trusting, direct and personal bond with nature. The woods, the rocks, the winds, the vulture, the flowers, the butterfly, the meadows, and the mountain slopes must all speak to him in their own language. In them he must, so to speak, come to know himself again, as if he were seeing himself in countless mirrors and pictures, in a colorful circle of changing sights. In this way, slowly and without noticing it, he will come to feel that all things are deeply one, as shown in the great picture of nature. At the same time, he will calm his soul by quietly gazing at how nature lasts forever and how everything in her has to be the way it is. But how many young men can be allowed to grow up so close to nature, almost as if she were a person they knew! The rest

must learn a different truth early on: how to make nature serve them. That is the end of this simple, deep sense of oneness. Instead, the study of how plants and animals work, the study of rocks and the earth, and the chemistry of non-living things force their students to look at nature from a completely different angle. What is lost with this new way of seeing is not just a poetic dream full of shifting images. It is also the natural, true, and one-of-a-kind way of seeing. In its place we get sharp, clever calculations and, you might say, ways of outsmarting and cheating nature. So the truly educated person is given a priceless gift: he can stay faithful, without a break, to the dreamy, wondering instincts of his childhood. That way he reaches a calm, a wholeness, a steadiness and a harmony that a man forced into the fight to make a living can never even imagine."

"But you must not think that I want to hold back all praise from our primary and secondary schools. I respect the schools where boys learn arithmetic, master modern languages, and study geography and the amazing discoveries made in natural science. I am even ready to say more. Young people who go through the better kind of secondary school have every right to make the same claims as a fully finished grammar school boy. And the day is surely not far off when such students will be freely let into the universities and into government jobs everywhere. Until now, only students from the grammar schools have had that right. From our present grammar schools, mind you! But I cannot stop myself from adding a sad thought. If it is true that secondary schools and grammar schools are, on the whole, working so eagerly together toward the same goals, and differ so little that the government can treat them as equals, then we are completely missing another kind of school: schools for growing real learning! At least the secondary schools cannot be blamed for this. Up to now they have followed, successfully and honestly, a lower kind of goal, but one that is still very necessary. In the grammar schools, however, there is much

less honesty and much less skill as well. There we find a kind of instinctive shame, a feeling people are not even aware of, that the whole institution has been disgracefully dragged down, and that the grand, booming words of wise but uncaring teachers clash with the dull, crude and barren reality. So there are no true places of real learning! And in the very places where people still pretend to offer real learning, we find people who are more hopeless, more shriveled inside, and more unhappy than in the secondary schools, where the so-called 'practical' or 'realistic' subjects are taught! Besides that, just think how immature and poorly informed you must become in the company of such teachers. They misunderstand the carefully defined philosophical words 'real' and 'realism' so badly that they think these words are about the opposite of mind and matter. They take 'realism' to mean 'the road to knowing, shaping, and mastering reality.'"

"For my part, I know of only two exact opposites: schools for real learning and schools for earning a living. All our present schools belong to the second kind. But I am speaking only about the first."

About two hours passed while the two thinkers, the old philosopher and the philosopher's younger friend, talked about these startling questions. Night slowly came on in the meantime. In the evening dusk, the old philosopher's voice had sounded like natural music through the woods. Now, in the deep darkness of night, it rang out whenever he spoke with excitement or even with passion. His voice hissed and thundered far down the valley and echoed among the trees and rocks. Suddenly he went quiet. He had just repeated, almost in a tone of sorrow, the words, "We have no true schools and colleges; we have no true schools and colleges!" Just then something fell right in front of him. It may have been a pine cone. His dog barked and ran toward it. Interrupted like this, the old philosopher lifted his head and suddenly noticed the darkness, the cool air, and how alone he and the philosopher's younger friend were. "Well! What are we doing!" he

burst out. "It's dark. You know who we were waiting for here, but he hasn't come. We have waited for nothing. Let's go."

*

Ladies and gentlemen, I must now tell you what my friend and I felt as we listened eagerly to this conversation, which we could hear clearly from our hiding-place. I have already told you that we had planned to hold a celebration at that place and at that hour, to remember something. And that something was about nothing other than our own education. In our young opinion, we had gathered a rich harvest of it during our lives so far. So we were in the mood to remember, with thanks, the little society we had once dreamed up for ourselves at that very spot. As I have already said, its purpose was for each of us to encourage the other's drive to learn and to keep an eye on it. But as we silently gave ourselves over to the old philosopher's fierce words, a sudden and unexpected light fell on our whole past. Picture a traveller walking carelessly over unknown ground who suddenly steps right over the edge of a cliff. That is how it felt to us now: we had been rushing toward the great danger instead of running away from it. And here, at this very spot that meant so much to us, we heard the warning: "Go back! Not one more step! Don't you know where your feet are taking you? Don't you see where this lying path is leading you?"

We felt that now we did know. Our thankfulness was so overflowing that it pulled us, as if we couldn't help it, toward this serious adviser, this faithful guardian who had warned us like the loyal Eckart of the old legends. Both of us jumped up at the same moment and rushed toward the old philosopher to hug him. He was just about to leave and had already turned to one side when we ran up to him. The dog spun round and barked. No doubt it thought, just like the philosopher's younger friend, that this was an attempt to rob them, not a joyful hug. It was clear that the old philosopher had forgotten about us. In

short, he ran away. When we did catch up with him, our hug was a miserable failure. The dog bit my friend, who let out a loud yell, and the old philosopher jumped away from me so hard that we both fell over. With the dog and the men all mixed up, there was a scuffle that lasted a few minutes. Then my friend began to shout loudly, making fun of the old philosopher's own words: "In the name of all real learning and fake learning, what does this silly dog want with us? Get away, you cursed dog! You outsider, who will never be let in on the secret! Hurry off, quiet and ashamed!" After this outburst, things were sorted out a bit, at least as far as anything could be sorted out in the dark of the woods. "Oh, it's you!" cried the old philosopher. "Our duellists! What a fright you gave us! What on earth makes you jump out at us like that at this time of night?"

"Joy, thankfulness, and deep respect," we said, shaking the old man's hand, while the dog barked as if it understood. "We can't let you go without telling you that. And if you're going to understand everything, you mustn't leave just yet. There are so many things weighing on our hearts that we want to ask you about. Stay a little longer. We know every step of the way, and we can walk with you afterwards. The gentleman you're waiting for may still show up. Look over there on the Rhine. What's that we can see so clearly floating on the water, as if lit up by lots of torches? That's where we should look for your friend. I'd even dare to say that it's him, coming toward you with all those lights."

We bombarded the surprised old man with so many pleas, promises, and wild imaginings that we talked the old philosopher into walking up and down with us on the little flat hilltop. As my friend put it, quoting a line from a play, we could walk there "undisturbed by heaps of learned junk."

"Shame on you!" said the old philosopher. "If you really want to quote something, why pick Faust? Still, I'll give in to you, quote or no quote, as long as our young friends here keep still and don't run off as suddenly as they turned up. They are like flickering marsh lights: we are amazed when they are here, and amazed again when they are gone."

My friend at once recited a few more lines, the words the flickering marsh lights speak in Faust:

"I hope that out of respect we'll learn how to keep our light and flighty nature under control. As a rule, we only ever move in zig-zags."

The old philosopher was surprised, and he stopped walking. "You amaze me, you flickering marsh lights," he said. "We are not standing on a swamp now. What good is this ground to you? Why would you want to be near a philosopher? The air around him is sharp and clear, and the ground is dry and hard. You will have to find some stranger, dreamier place for your zig-zag wandering."

"I think," the philosopher's younger friend broke in at this point, "these gentlemen already told us that they had promised to meet someone here at this time. But it seems to me that they listened to our little play about education like the chorus in an old Greek drama. They were truly 'ideal spectators,' because they didn't interrupt us at all. We thought we were alone with each other."

"Yes, that's true," said the old philosopher. "We have to give them that praise. But it seems to me that they deserve even higher praise——"

At this point I, the narrator, grabbed the philosopher's hand and said: "A man would have to be as dull as a reptile, crawling on its belly with its head buried in the mud, to listen to a talk like yours without becoming serious and thoughtful, or even stirred up and angry. Some people might get angry because they blame themselves, or because

they feel annoyed. But that's not how it affected us at all. The only thing is, I don't know exactly how to describe it. This hour came at just the right time for us, and our minds were so ready for it, that we sat there like empty jars. Now it feels as if we have been filled to overflowing with this new wisdom. I don't know what to do with myself anymore. If someone asked me what I plan to do tomorrow, or what I've decided to do with my life from now on, I wouldn't know what to say. It's easy to see that, up to now, we have been living and teaching ourselves the wrong way. But what can we do to cross the deep gap between today and tomorrow?"

"Yes," my friend agreed, "I feel something similar, and I'm asking the same question. But on top of that, I feel almost scared away from German learning, because you've given such a high, noble picture of what it's meant to do. It's as if I'm not worthy to help it reach its goals. All I can see is a shining line of the very finest people marching toward that goal. I can imagine the deep drops and the temptations this procession has to pass through. Who would be bold enough to join it?"

Then the philosopher's younger friend turned to him again and said: "Please don't be angry with me when I tell you that I have a somewhat similar feeling too, which I haven't told you about before. When I talk with you, I often feel pulled out of myself, so to speak. I'm fired up by your passion and your hopes until I almost forget who I am. Then a calmer moment comes. A cutting wind of reality brings me back down to earth. And then I see the wide gap between us—a gap that you yourself, as if in a dream, pull me back across again. At those times, what you call 'real learning' just wobbles around me without meaning, or it sits heavily on my chest. It's like a suit of chain armor that weighs me down, or a sword that's too heavy for me to swing."

As we argued with the old philosopher like this, we were all of one mind. We cheered each other on and fired each other up, and we slowly walked back and forth with him across the open space that we had used as a shooting range earlier that day. And then, in the quiet night, under the calm light of hundreds of stars, we all burst out into a long speech that went something like this:

"You have told us so much about the great genius," we began, "about his lonely, tiring journey through the world. You talk as if nature never showed anything but complete opposites. In one place there are ordinary people in great numbers, stupid and dull, acting only on instinct. And then, on a much higher and more distant level, there are the chosen few, the great thinkers, born to create works that last forever. You call these chosen few the peaks of the pyramid of the mind. But surely, between the wide, heavily loaded base and the highest free and open peaks, there must be countless steps in between. Here we should remember the old Latin saying, 'nature does not make jumps.' So where does what you call real learning begin? Where do we draw the line between the areas that are run from the bottom up, and the areas that are run from the top down? And if we can only talk about real learning when we talk about these lofty people, how can anyone build schools for people whose very existence is so uncertain? How could we design schools and colleges that would only help this select few? It seems to us, instead, that such people know how to find their own way. Their full strength shows in the fact that they can walk without the school crutches that other people need. And so they can make their way, untroubled, through the storms and struggles of this rough world, just like a ghost."

We kept arguing like this. We didn't speak with any great skill, and we didn't put our thoughts into any special shape. But the philosopher's younger friend went even further, and said to him: "Just think of all these great geniuses we're usually so proud of. We look at them as

tested, trusted guides of the real German spirit. We honor their names with statues and festivals, and we proudly hold up their works for other countries to admire. So how did they get the education you demand for them? How far do they show that they were fed and grown by soaking up the sunshine of a national education? And yet we can see that they were possible. They still became men we have to honor. In fact, their works themselves prove that the way these noble minds developed was right. Their works even excuse a certain lack of education, which we have to forgive because of the country and the time they lived in. How could Lessing and Winckelmann have gained anything from the German learning of their day? They gained even less from it—or at least just as little—as Beethoven, Schiller, Goethe, or any of our great poets and artists. Maybe it's a law of nature that only later generations get to find out what heavenly gifts an earlier generation was blessed with."

At this point the old philosopher could not hold back his anger any longer, and he shouted to the philosopher's younger friend: "Oh, you innocent little lamb when it comes to knowledge! You are all like gentle baby doves! Do you really call those twisted, clumsy, narrow-minded, awkward, crippled things 'arguments'? Yes, I have just been listening to what some of today's so-called real learning produces, and my ears are still ringing with all those historical things that are 'taken for granted,' with too-clever and heartless historical reasoning! Listen to this, you pure, untouched Nature: you have grown old, and for thousands of years this starry sky has stretched over you, but you have never yet heard such vain and, deep down, harmful chatter as the talk of our own day! So you are proud of your poets and artists, my good Germans? You point to them and boast about them to other countries, do you? And because it cost you no effort to have them among you, you have come up with the comfortable idea that you don't need to bother about them any further? Isn't that right, my

naive children: they just turn up on their own, the stork brings them to you! Who would dare to mention a midwife, someone who actually has to help them be born! You deserve a serious lesson, don't you? Are you supposed to be proud that all the noble and brilliant men we have named were choked too early, worn out, and crushed because of you, because of your crude ignorance? You think without any shame of Lessing, who died fighting, because of your stupidity, against your ridiculous gods and idols, the faults of your theaters, your scholars, and your church thinkers. He never once dared to rise to the great, lasting heights he was born to reach. And how do you feel when you think of Winckelmann? To get away from the sight of your absurd silliness, he went begging for help from the Jesuits. His shameful change of religion falls back on you, and it will always be a stain on you that can never be washed away. You can even say Schiller's name without blushing! Just look at his portrait! Those fiery, flashing eyes looking at you with contempt, those flushed cheeks that already look close to death: can't you learn anything from all that? In him you had a beautiful, godlike toy, and you broke it. And if you had been able to take Goethe's friendship away from Schiller's sad, rushed life, which was chased toward an early death, you would have crushed him even sooner than you did. You have not helped a single one of our great geniuses, and now you want to use that fact to build a theory that none of them should ever be helped in the future? Yet for every one of them, right up to this moment, you have always been 'the stupid world's resistance' that Goethe talks about in his 'Epilogue to the Bell.' Toward each of them you acted like dull people who did not care, or small-hearted people full of envy, or spiteful selfish people. They created their lasting works in spite of you. They aimed their attacks at you. And because of you they died so early, with their work only half done, worn down, dulled, and broken in the fight. Who knows what these heroic men might have achieved if only the real German spirit had gathered them together and protected them inside the walls of a

strong institution? That spirit, without some institution like that, drags on a lonely, lowered, and humiliated life. All those great men were completely ruined. Only a crazy belief in Hegel's idea that 'everything that happens is reasonable' could clear you of any blame for this. And not only those men! Charges against you are pouring in from every field of the mind. Whether I look at the talents of our poets, philosophers, painters, or sculptors, and not only at the very greatest gifts, everywhere I see people who never grew to full ripeness, nerves pushed too far, energy used up too early, abilities wasted and killed before they could bloom. Everywhere I feel 'the stupid world's resistance,' in other words, your guilt. That is what I mean when I say we lack proper schools and colleges, and that is why I think the ones that claim that name today are in such a pitiful state. If someone likes to call this an 'ideal wish,' and calls it 'ideal' as if he could get rid of it by praising me, he deserves this answer: the present system is a scandal and a disgrace. A man who asks for warmth in the middle of ice and snow has every right to get angry if he hears that called an 'ideal wish.' What we are talking about now has to do with clear, urgent realities you can practically touch. Anyone who knows anything about this question feels that there is a need here that must be dealt with, just like cold and hunger. But the man who is not moved by this at all certainly has a measuring stick for how much real learning he himself has. From that he can tell what I mean by 'real learning,' and where the line should be drawn between what is ruled from the bottom up and what is ruled from the top down."

The old philosopher seemed to have been speaking with great heat. We asked him to walk around with us again, because he had said the last part of his speech while standing near the tree stump that we had been using as a target. For a few minutes, nobody said another word. Slowly, deep in thought, we walked back and forth. We did not feel so much ashamed of having put forward such foolish arguments. In-

stead, we felt as if we had somehow got our sense of ourselves back. After the old philosopher's angry speech, which was very unflattering to us, we seemed to feel closer to him, as if we now even had a personal connection with him. For human beings are so pitiful that they never feel so close to a stranger as when that stranger shows some sign of weakness, some flaw. The fact that our philosopher had lost his temper and used insulting words helped to bridge the gap that our shy respect for him had created between us. And for any reader who feels annoyed at this idea, let me add that this bridge often leads from admiring a hero from far away to personal love and pity. After we felt that we had got ourselves back, this pity slowly grew stronger and stronger. Why were we making this old man walk up and down with us among the rocks and trees at that hour of the night? And since he had given in to our pleading, why couldn't we have thought of a more modest, humble way of being taught by him? Why did the three of us have to contradict him in such clumsy words?

Because now we saw how thoughtless, unprepared and groundless all our objections had been. We saw how loudly they echoed the present day, the very voice the old man wished he did not have to hear when it came to real learning. Still, our objections were not purely about ideas. Our reasons for arguing against the old philosopher's words seemed to come from somewhere else. Perhaps they came from a gut-level worry: if the old philosopher's ideas were ever put into practice, would we ourselves end up in the higher group or the lower one? That worry pushed us to hunt for arguments against a way of thinking that took away the claims to real learning we had given ourselves. But people should not argue with companions who take an argument so personally. Or, as the lesson in our case would have been: such companions should not argue, and should not contradict at all.

So we walked on beside the old philosopher, feeling ashamed, sorry for him, unhappy with ourselves, and more sure than ever that the old

man was right and that we had treated him badly. How far away our youthful dream of our own little school now seemed! How clearly we now saw the danger we had escaped until then only by good luck. That danger was giving ourselves up, body and soul, to the school system that had pushed itself on us so temptingly from the day we entered grammar school up to that very moment. So how had it happened that we had not joined the crowd singing its praises? Perhaps only because we were real students. We could still pull back from the rough-and-tumble, the shoving and struggling, the restless, endlessly crashing waves of public life, and take shelter in our own little learning society. Yet time would soon have swallowed that up too.

Caught up in these thoughts, we were just about to speak to the old philosopher again when he suddenly turned to us and said, in a gentler voice:

"I am not surprised that you young men act hastily and without thinking. After all, you have probably never seriously thought about what I have just told you. Don't rush. Carry this question around with you, but at least think about it day and night. Because you are now standing where the road splits, and now you know where each path leads. If you take the first path, your age will welcome you with open arms. You will not lack honours and medals. You will be single soldiers in a huge marching army, with just as many like-minded people behind you as in front of you. And when the guide gives an order, it will be shouted back down the lines, row after row. On this path your first duty is to fight in line with everyone else. Your second duty is to wipe out everyone who refuses to fall in line. On the other path you will have very few fellow travellers. It is harder, more winding and steeper. Those who take the first path will make fun of you, because your progress is slower and more tiring, and they will try to tempt you over into their ranks. And whenever the two paths happen to cross, you

will be treated roughly and shoved aside, or else avoided and left alone."

"Now take these two groups, which are different from each other in every way, and tell me what a school would mean to each of them. That enormous mob, pushing forward along the first path toward its goal, would understand a school as a place that properly trains each of its members to take his spot in the marching lines. It would clean out of him anything that might make him reach for higher and more distant goals. Of course, I don't deny that they can find grand, puffed-up words to describe their aims. For example, they talk about 'the all-round development of so-called free self-expression on a firm social, national and human foundation.' Or they announce that their goal is 'to found the peaceful rule of the people on reason, education and justice.'"

"But a school for the other, smaller group would be something completely different. They would use it to keep from being split apart and crushed by that first huge crowd. They would use it so that their chosen few would not lose sight of their splendid, noble task by growing tired too early, or be pulled off the true path, spoiled, or turned against it. These chosen few must finish their work. That is the whole reason their shared school exists. And it is a work that must, so to speak, be free of any personal marks. It must also rise above the passing events of future times, as a clear reflection of the eternal, unchanging heart of things. Everyone who has a place in that school must work together toward one goal: to bring forth men of great genius, by clearing away the merely personal and by creating works of great genius. Quite a few people, even those whose talents are only second- or third-rate, are fit for this kind of teamwork. And only when they serve in a school like this do they feel that they are truly doing their life's work. But it is exactly these talents I am speaking of that are being pulled away from the true path, and whose natural in-

stincts are being turned against it, by the constant temptations of this modern so-called 'real learning.'"

"These few chosen minds have their selfish feelings, their weak spots and their vanity. And these are under constant attack, because the spirit of the age keeps whispering temptations into their ears, without ever stopping: 'Come with me! Where you are now, you are servants, hired helpers, tools. You are overshadowed by greater people. Your own special qualities never get room to show themselves. You are tied down and chained up like slaves. In fact, you are like machines. But here, with me, you will enjoy being free to be yourselves, the way masters should. Your talents will shine on you and nobody else. With their help you can get right to the top. A huge crowd of followers will come after you. And the cheering of public opinion will give you more pleasure than any honest, noble praise handed down from a great genius above you.' Today even the very best people give in to these temptations. And you can't say that what decides it is how talented a person is, or whether they listen to these voices or not. No, what decides it is how far a person rises in a certain kind of moral greatness. It is the urge toward heroism and toward sacrifice. And finally, it is a real, settled need for real learning, a need that has been prepared by the right kind of education. And that education, as I said before, means above all obeying and giving yourself over to training under great minds. But the institutions we have today, which people politely call 'schools and colleges,' know nothing at all about this training and this giving yourself over. Even so, I have no doubt that the grammar school was first meant to be a place for planting the seeds of real learning, or at least for getting people ready for it. I also have no doubt that these schools took their first brave steps in the amazing, exciting times of the Reformation. And later, in the age that produced Schiller and Goethe, people wanted real learning more and more once again. It was like the first bump of a growing wing, the wing Plato

talks about in his book the Phaedrus. Every time that wing touches something beautiful, it lifts the soul up into the higher places, where the gods live."

"Ah," began the philosopher's younger friend, "when you quote the godlike Plato and his world of ideas, I don't think you are angry with me anymore, even though what I said before may well have earned your disapproval and your anger. As soon as you talk about it, I feel that wing Plato described rising up inside me. Only now and then, when I am steering my soul like the driver of a chariot, do I have any trouble. The trouble comes from the stubborn, unwilling horse that Plato also described to us. He called it 'a crooked, clumsy animal, thrown together any old way, with a short, thick neck. It is flat-faced and dark-coloured, with grey eyes and bloodshot skin. It goes along with rudeness and pride. It has shaggy ears and is deaf, and it hardly obeys the whip or the spur.'[8] Just think how long I have lived far away from you. Think how all those temptations you talk about have tried to lure me away. Maybe they even had some success, though I may not have noticed it myself. Now I see more clearly than ever that we need an institution that lets us live and mix freely with the chosen few who have real learning, so that they can be our guides and our guiding stars. I feel so strongly how dangerous it is to travel alone! And when I had the idea that I could save myself by running away from any contact with the spirit of the times, I found out that the running away was just an illusion. All the time, with every breath we take, a bit of that air flows through every vein and artery in our bodies. No lonely place is lonely enough or far enough away for us to escape its fog and clouds. Whether it shows up looking like hope, or doubt, or profit, or goodness, the ghost of that fake learning floats around us. And we were fooled by its tricks even here, right in front of a true lonely thinker. How firmly and loyally the few followers of real learning must always stay on guard, since they are almost like a

small separate sect! How they must strengthen and support each other! How harshly any mistakes would be judged here, and how kindly they would be forgiven! And so, teacher, I ask you to forgive me, after you have worked so hard to set me on the right path!"

"You are using a kind of language I don't like, my friend," said the old philosopher. "It reminds me of a church meeting of priests. I want nothing to do with that. But I do like your Plato's unruly horse, and because of it, you are forgiven. I'd be happy to swap my own animal for yours. But it's getting cold, and I don't feel like walking around any more right now. The friend I was waiting for is actually silly enough to come up here even at midnight, if he promised to. But I've waited for the signal we agreed on, and it hasn't come. I can't guess what's held him up. Normally he is on time, the way we old men usually are, which you young people today think is old-fashioned. But this once he has let me down. How annoying! Come along with me! It's time to go!"

Just then, something happened.

FOOTNOTES:

[6] These words show clearly that Nietzsche is still under the influence of Schopenhauer. (Translator's note.)

[7] This prediction has come true. (Translator's note.)

[8] From Plato's dialogue Phaedrus, in Jowett's translation.

Fifth Lecture

(Given on the 23rd of March, 1872.)

Ladies and gentlemen, if you listened kindly to what I told you about the old philosopher's passionate argument in the quiet of that unfor-

gettable night, you must have felt as let down as we did when he grumpily said what he meant to do. You will remember that he had suddenly told us he wanted to leave. First, his friend had failed to show up and left him stranded. Second, the things that the philosopher's younger friend and the two of us had said to him, as we walked back and forth on the hillside, had bored him rather than stirred him up. So now he clearly wanted to end what seemed to him a pointless discussion. He must have felt that his whole day had been wasted. He would have liked to wipe it from his memory, along with any memory of ever meeting us. So we were getting ready to leave, rather against our will, when something else suddenly stopped him in his tracks. The foot he had just lifted came down again to the ground, unsure.

A coloured flame, crackling for a few seconds, caught our eye from the direction of the Rhine. Right after that we heard a slow, musical call, perfectly in tune, though clearly sung by many young voices. "That's his signal!" cried the old philosopher. "So my friend really is coming, and I haven't waited for nothing after all. This will truly be a midnight meeting. But how can I let him know I'm still here? Come on! Your pistols! Let's see your skill one more time! Did you hear the strict rhythm of that tune greeting us? Pay close attention to it, and answer it with a series of shots in the same rhythm."

This was a job that suited our tastes and our skills perfectly. So we loaded up as fast as we could and aimed our guns at the bright stars in the sky, while the echo of that sharp cry faded away in the distance. The first, second, and third shots rang out sharply in the silence. Then the philosopher shouted, "Wrong rhythm!" because our beat had suddenly broken. You see, right after the third shot, a shooting star had ripped across the clouds like a flash of lightning, and almost without meaning to, we fired our fourth and fifth shots after it, in the direction it had gone.

"Wrong rhythm!" the philosopher said again. "Who told you to shoot at stars? They can fall perfectly well without your help! People should know what they want before they start handling weapons."

Then once again we heard that loud tune coming from the waters of the Rhine, sung by many strong voices. "They understand us," said the philosopher with a laugh. "And really, who could hold back when such a dazzling ghost of light comes within reach?" "Quiet!" his friend broke in. "What kind of group could it be that answers our signal like that? I'd say there are between twenty and forty strong, manly voices in that crowd. And where would so many people come from to greet us? They don't seem to have left the far bank of the Rhine yet. Anyway, we must get a look at them from our side of the river. Come on, quickly!"

As you may remember, we were standing near the top of the hill at that moment, and a dark, thick wood blocked our view of the river. But, as I told you before, from the quiet little spot we had left, we could see better than from the small flat area on the hillside. From there, anyone peering over the treetops could just make out the Rhine, with the island of Nonnenwörth in the middle. So we hurried off toward that little spot, though we were careful not to go too fast for the old philosopher's comfort. The night was pitch black. As we walked down with the philosopher between us, we seemed to find our way more by instinct than by actually seeing the path.

We had hardly reached our side of the hill facing the river when a wide, fiery light shot up, though it was dim and flickering. It clearly came from the far side of the Rhine. "Those are torches!" I cried. "I'm absolutely sure my fellow students from Bonn are over there, and your friend must be with them. They're the ones who sang that strange song, and no doubt they've come along with your friend.

Look! Listen! They're setting off in little boats. The whole torchlight parade will be here in less than half an hour."

The philosopher jumped back. "What did you say?" he burst out. "Your fellow students from Bonn? Students? Can my friend really have come here with students?"

This question, spoken almost angrily, annoyed us. "What have you got against students?" we asked. But he gave no answer. Only after a pause did the old philosopher slowly begin to speak, not really talking to us, but to someone far away: "So, my friend, even at midnight, even on top of a lonely mountain, we won't be alone. And you yourself are bringing a pack of troublemaking students with you, even though you know very well how glad I am to keep away from that whole crowd. I don't really understand you, my friend. It must mean something when, after a long time apart, we agree to meet in such a remote place and at such a strange hour. Why would we want a crowd of witnesses, and witnesses like these? The last thing that brings us together today is some soft, sentimental need. Both of us learned early in life to live alone, apart from others, with dignity. We didn't decide to meet here for our own sakes, or to show each other tender feelings, or to put on some spontaneous show of friendship. We came here, to the very place where I once came upon you suddenly as you sat alone like a king, so that we could talk seriously together like knights of a new order. Let those who can understand us listen. But why bring along a crowd of people who don't understand us? I don't know what you mean by this, my friend!"

We didn't think it would be right to interrupt the unhappy old grumbler. And when he finished on that gloomy note, we didn't dare tell him how much his suspicious rejection of students upset us.

At last the philosopher's younger friend turned to him and said: "This reminds me of something. Even you, at one time, before I got to know

you, held jobs at several universities. People still tell stories about how you got along with the students back then and how you taught them. From the tired, given-up tone you just used about students, many people might think you had some strange experiences there that you didn't like at all. But I myself rather believe that you saw and lived through in those places exactly what everyone else saw and lived through. The difference is that you judged what you saw and felt more fairly and more strictly than anyone else. Because in the time I have known you, I have learned something. The most important, most eye-opening, and most life-changing experiences and events are the ones that happen every single day. The greatest riddle, sitting in plain sight of everyone, is the one that the fewest people notice as the greatest riddle. These problems lie scattered everywhere, right under the feet of people walking by, waiting for the few real philosophers to pick them up carefully. From then on they shine like diamonds of wisdom. We have only a little time left before your friend arrives. Perhaps you would be kind enough to tell us something about what you went through in university life. That would round off the circle of thoughts we found ourselves pushed into, without meaning to, about our schools and colleges. May we also remind you that earlier in your talk you promised me you would do this? You started with the grammar school, and you said it was hugely important. All the other schools and colleges, you said, must be judged by its standard, depending on what goal it has been given. And if its goal happens to be wrong, all the others suffer too. The universities cannot now be used as such a standard. The way they are set up today, they would be nothing more than places where grammar school students go to take finishing courses. You promised me you would explain this in more detail later. Perhaps our student friends here can back me up on that, if they happened to overhear that part of our conversation."

"We can vouch for that," I, the narrator, cut in. The old philosopher then turned to us and said: "Well, if you really were listening carefully, maybe you can now tell me what you understand by the phrase 'the present aim of our grammar schools.' Besides, you are still close enough to that world to test my opinions against your own impressions and experiences."

My friend answered right away, quick and clever as usual. He said: "Up to now we always thought that the only purpose of the grammar school was to get students ready for the universities. But this preparation should make us able to stand on our own enough to handle the amazingly free position of a university student. Because it seems to me that a student, more than any other person, has to decide and settle things for himself. For many years he must find his own way along a wide path that is completely unknown to him. So the grammar school must do its best to make him able to stand on his own."

I picked up the argument where my friend stopped. "It even seems to me," I said, "that everything you rightly blamed the grammar school for is just a necessary tool. It is used to fill the young student with some kind of standing on your own, or at least with the belief that such a thing exists. German essay-writing must serve this standing on your own. The young person must enjoy his own opinions and carry out his own plans early on, so that he can walk alone, without crutches. That way he will soon be encouraged to produce original work, and even sooner to take up criticism and analysis. Maybe Latin and Greek lessons are not enough to make a student a passionate admirer of the ancient world. But the way those subjects are taught is at least enough to wake up a scientific way of thinking: the wish to know exactly what causes what, and the passion for discovering and inventing things. Just think how many young men may be pulled away for good into the attractions of science, all because of some new reading of an old text that they grabbed with young hands at grammar school!

The grammar school boy has to learn and gather a great deal of different information. Because of that, an urge slowly grows in him, and with it he will keep learning and gathering on his own at the university. In short, we believe the aim of the grammar school is to prepare the student, and get him used to, always living and learning on his own later on, just as before that he has to live and learn under others' control at grammar school."

The old philosopher laughed, and not entirely in a friendly way. He said: "You have just given me a fine example of that standing on your own. And it is exactly this standing on your own that shocks me so much, and makes it so unpleasant for me to be anywhere near today's students. Yes, my good friends, you are perfect, you are fully grown. Nature has cast you like statues and then smashed the moulds, and your teachers must surely gloat over you. What freedom, what certainty, what independent judgment! What new and fresh insight! You sit as judges, and the cultures of every age run away from you. The scientific spirit catches fire in you and rises out of you like a flame. People had better watch out, or you'll set them on fire! And if I look further and examine your professors, I find the same standing on your own again, even bigger and even more charming. There was never a time so full of grand, independent people. Never was slavery more hated, including the 'slavery' of education and real learning."

"But let me measure this standing on your own by the standard of real learning, and look at your university as a place of education and nothing else. Suppose a foreigner wants to know something about how our universities work. The first thing he asks, very firmly, is: 'How is the student connected to the university?' We answer: 'Through the ear, as a listener.' The foreigner is amazed. 'Only through the ear?' he repeats. 'Only through the ear,' we answer again. The student listens. When he talks, when he looks around, when he spends time with his friends, when he takes up some kind of art, in

short, when he actually lives, he is on his own. That means he does not depend on the school at all. Very often the student writes something down while he listens. And it is only in those rare moments that he hangs on to his university like a baby attached by its umbilical cord. He can choose for himself what he listens to. He doesn't have to believe what is said. He can shut his ears if he doesn't feel like hearing. This is called the 'by-ear-only' method of teaching.

"Now the teacher speaks to these students who are listening. Whatever else he thinks and does is hidden from the students by a huge gap. Often the professor is reading aloud while he speaks. As a rule he wants as many listeners as he can get. He is not happy with just a few, and he is never satisfied with only one. One mouth talking, many ears listening, and half as many hands writing: that, as far as anyone can see, is the outward machinery of a university. That is the university's engine of real learning, switched on and running. On top of that, the owner of this one mouth is cut off from, and does not depend on, the owners of all those ears. And this double standing on your own is cheerfully called 'so-called student freedom.' And to stretch this freedom even further, the one may say whatever he likes, and the others may listen to whatever they like. Except that, behind both of them, standing back politely, is the government, watching closely like a supervisor. From time to time it reminds the professors and the students that *it* is the real purpose, the goal, the be-all and end-all, of this odd business of talking and listening."

"We must be allowed to look at this thing only as one of our schools and colleges. So we will tell the curious foreigner that what is called 'real learning' in our universities simply travels from the mouth to the ear. Every kind of training for real learning is, as I said before, only 'by-ear-only.' But the student is free-minded and open, and it is left up to him to decide not only whether to listen, but also what to listen to. And he can also refuse to believe or respect anything he hears. So all

training for real learning, in the true meaning of the words, falls back on the student himself. The standing on your own that the grammar school thought it was good to aim for now shows itself off with the greatest possible pride as 'student self-training for real learning.' It struts around like a bird in its bright feathers."

"What happy times, when young people are clever enough and learned enough to teach themselves how to walk! What unbeatable grammar schools, which manage to plant standing on your own where earlier generations planted dependence, discipline, taking orders, and obeying! Those earlier generations thought it was their duty to drive out all the cocky pride of standing on your own. Do you see clearly now, my good friends, why I, looking at it from the point of view of real learning, think of today's university as nothing more than a tail stuck onto the grammar school? The learning poured in by the grammar school walks through the university gates as something finished and complete, with its own special demands. *It* gives orders, it makes the rules, it sits as judge. So do not let yourselves be fooled about the so-called learned student. As far as he believes he has soaked up the blessings of education, he is just the grammar school boy shaped by his teacher's hands. And since he has been cut off at university, and since he left the grammar school, he has lost all further guidance toward real learning, so that from now on he can start to live by himself and be free."

"Free! You who study human nature, take a close look at this freedom! It is built on the sandy, crumbling foundation of today's grammar school learning, and so the building leans to one side, shaking in front of the storm wind. Look at the free student, the one who announces self-made learning. Try to guess what his instincts are. Explain him by what he needs! What does his learning look like to you when you measure it on three measuring scales? First, by his need for philosophy. Second, by his instinct for art. And third, by Greek and Roman

ancient world, which is like the living, absolute command that all real learning must obey."

"People are surrounded on all sides by the most serious and difficult questions. So when these questions are shown to a person in the right way, he is pushed early on toward a lasting kind of deep wonder about life. Only from that wonder, as if from rich soil, can a deep and noble real learning grow. Most often, a person's own experiences lead him to think about these questions. This happens especially in the stormy years of youth. Then every personal event shines with a double light. It is an example of something ordinary, and at the same time an example of a question that is forever surprising and needs an explanation. At this age, a young person sees his experiences as if they were circled by rainbows of deep meaning beyond the everyday world. And at this age he needs a guiding hand more than ever. That is because, suddenly and almost by instinct, he has become sure that life is unclear and can mean more than one thing, and he has lost the firm support of the beliefs he had held until then."

"This natural state of great need must, of course, be seen as the worst enemy of that beloved standing on your own that the learned youth of today is supposed to be trained for. All these children of the present day have raised the flag of what is 'taken for granted.' So they are trying as hard as they can to crush these youthful feelings, to cripple them, to lead them astray, or to stop them growing at all. Their favourite method is to freeze that natural urge toward philosophy by using so-called 'historical learning.' A fairly recent system of thought, [10] which has earned a scandalous reputation all over the world, has found the recipe for this self-destruction of philosophy. Now, wherever the historical way of looking at things turns up, we see such a careless, simple-minded rush to make the unreasonable look 'rational' and 'reasonable,' and to make black look white, that one is tempted to make fun of Hegel's famous phrase and ask: 'Is all this unreason-

able stuff real?' Ah, today only the unreasonable seems to be 'real,' that is, actually doing anything. And bringing forward this kind of reality to explain history is counted as true 'historical learning.' This is the cocoon that the philosophical urge of our time has wrapped itself in. And the strange philosophers of our universities seem to have plotted together to strengthen the young students in it and keep them there."

"So this is what has happened. Instead of a deep explanation of the questions that keep coming back forever, our education has been taken over by historical, and even word-scholar, weighing and questioning. What did this or that philosopher think, or not think? Did he really write this essay or that dialogue, or not? Or even: should this way of reading an old text be preferred over that one? These are the kinds of neutral, harmless ways of dealing with philosophy that our students in philosophy classes are pushed toward. Because of that, I have long been used to thinking of this kind of science as just a side branch of language study. And I judge its experts by whether they are good or bad language scholars. So it has turned out that *philosophy itself* has been thrown out of the universities. And with that, our first question about the worth of our universities, from the point of view of real learning, has been answered."

"And how do these universities relate to *art*? I'm ashamed to admit the answer: they don't relate to it at all. In them we find not a single trace of artistic thinking, artistic learning, artistic effort, or comparing one work of art with another. And nobody would seriously expect the universities ever to speak up and help push forward any of the nation's bigger plans for art. It makes no difference whether some single teacher thinks he personally has a gift for art, or whether a professor's post has been set up to train literary historians who like to talk about beauty. None of that matters here. The fact is that the university has no way to guide the young student with strict artistic training. It

simply has to let whatever happens happen, like it or not. And that is the sharp answer to the universities' boastful claim that they are the highest schools and colleges of all."

"So we see our university 'independents' growing up with no philosophy and no art. How, then, could they possibly feel any need to 'take up' the Greeks and Romans? After all, we no longer have to pretend, the way our grandfathers did, that we deeply respect Greece and Rome. Besides, Greece and Rome sit high on their thrones, in a loneliness that is almost impossible to reach, grand and far removed from us. So today's universities pay no attention to these old tastes in education, which have nearly died out. Instead they set up posts in language study only to train new, closed-off generations of language scholars. These scholars, in turn, give the same kind of narrow language training in the grammar schools. It is a vicious circle. It does no good to the language scholars or to the grammar schools. Above all, it accuses the university for the third time of not being what it so proudly claims to be: a training ground for real learning. Take away the Greeks, along with philosophy and art, and what ladder do you have left to climb up to real learning? Because if you try to scramble up that ladder without these aids, let me tell you this: all your knowledge will sit on your shoulders like a heavy load, instead of giving you wings and lifting you up high."

"Now suppose you honest thinkers have stayed faithfully with these three steps of understanding. Suppose you have seen that, compared with the Greeks, the modern student is unfit and unready for philosophy, that he has no real artistic instincts, and that he is just a crude, ignorant person who believes he is free. Even so, you will not turn away from him in disgust because of this, though of course you will keep him at a bit of a distance. For, as he is now, *he is not to blame*. As you have come to see him, he is the silent but terrible accuser of the people who really are to blame."

"You ought to understand the secret language spoken by this blameless victim who still does wrong. Then you too would learn to understand what is really going on inside that standing on your own which he shows off so proudly on the outside. Not one of these fine, gifted young men has escaped that restless, tiring, confusing, and weakening hunger for real learning. During his time at university he seems to be the only free man in a crowd of servants and officials. But he pays for this huge illusion of freedom with inner doubts and beliefs that keep growing. He feels he can neither guide himself nor help himself. So he throws himself, without hope, into the everyday world of work and tries to push these feelings away by studying. The pettiest busywork grabs hold of him, and he sinks under his heavy load. Then, all of a sudden, he pulls himself together. He still feels some of that strength inside him which could have kept his head above water. Pride and noble plans rise up and grow in him. He is afraid of sinking, so early in life, into the narrow walls of a small, limited profession. So now he grabs at posts and railings along the river bank, so that the current won't sweep him away. It's no use! Those supports give way, and he finds he has grabbed at broken reeds. Feeling low and hopeless, he watches his plans vanish like smoke. His state is humiliating, even terrible. He swings back and forth between two extremes: working himself to the bone, and sinking into a gloomy, drained weakness. Then he grows tired, lazy, afraid of work, afraid of anything great, and he hates himself. He looks inside his own heart, picks apart his abilities, and finds he is only staring into an empty, messy void. And then, once again, he falls from the heights of the self-knowledge he wanted so badly into a mocking kind of doubt about everything. He strips his struggles of their real meaning and feels ready to take on any sort of useful job, no matter how low. Now he looks for comfort in rushed, nonstop activity, so that he can hide from himself. And so his helplessness, and the lack of a guide toward real learning, drive him from one way of life to another. Doubt, high hopes, worry, hope, despair:

everything tosses him this way and that. It all proves that every star above him, the stars he could have steered his ship by, has gone down below the horizon."

"There you have the true picture of this wonderful 'standing on your own' of yours, this so-called student freedom. Look at how it shows up in the best minds, the ones who truly need real learning. Next to them, that other crowd of dull, uncaring people does not count at all. Those people enjoy their freedom in a way that is pure crude ignorance. Their low, self-satisfied attitude and their narrow focus on their future jobs show that this kind of life suits them just fine, and there is nothing more to say about them. But all their comfort does not make up for the suffering of even one single young man who longs for real learning and needs a guiding hand. In the end, in a moment of frustration, he lets go of the reins and starts to hate himself. He is the blameless victim who still does wrong. After all, who loaded him with the impossible burden of standing alone? Who pushed him into standing on his own at an age when one of the most natural and urgent needs of young people is to give themselves over to great guides, and to follow eagerly in the footsteps of the masters?"

"It is disgusting to think about where it can lead when such fine young people are crushed so violently. Look at the biggest supporters and friends of today's fake learning, which I hate so much. Far too often you will find among them exactly these ruined would-be thinkers, these shipwrecked minds. Inner despair has driven them into bitter hatred of real learning, because at their moment of desperation there was nobody around to show them how to reach it. The people we later find working as reporters and newspaper writers, after despair has changed them, are not the worst or least important people. In fact, you could fairly describe the spirit of some famous writers as the spirit of students who went wrong. How else, for example, can we explain the link between the once-famous 'Young Ger-

many' movement and the ruined followers it has today? Here we find a hunger for real learning that has, so to speak, turned rebellious, and that finally bursts out with the angry cry: 'I am real learning!' There, outside the gates of the grammar schools and universities, we can see the real learning that was chased away from those places like a runaway. It is true that this kind of learning lacks the scholarship of those schools, yet it still acts like a king. So, for example, the novelist Gutzkow could be held up as the best example of a modern grammar school boy who turned into an art-loving dabbler. A ruined would-be thinker like this is a serious matter. And it horrifies us to see that everything our scholars and newspapers put out in public carries the mark of this same ruin. How else can we be fair to our learned men, who pay tireless attention to the way newspaper writing corrupts the people, and even help with it? The only fair explanation is this: their scholarship must fill a need in them, just as novel-writing fills that need in others. That need is to run away from themselves, to strictly root out their own desire for real learning, and to make a desperate attempt to wipe out who they really are. Out of our ruined literature, and out of the urge to scribble that has now spread so alarmingly among our learned men, comes the same sigh: 'Oh, if only we could forget ourselves!' But the attempt fails. Their memory is buried under mountains of printed paper, yet it has not been smothered yet. From time to time it keeps saying: 'A ruined would-be thinker! Born for real learning, and raised for the opposite! A helpless savage, slave to today, chained to the present moment, and thirsty for something, always thirsty!'"

"Oh, these poor blameless victims who still do wrong! They are missing something, and every one of them must have felt that need. They are missing a real school or college, one that could give them goals, masters, methods, and fellow students. From the heart of such a place, the fresh and uplifting breath of the real German spirit would

inspire them. Because they lack it, they die in the wilderness. Because they lack it, they turn into enemies of that very spirit, which deep down is closely related to their own. Because they lack it, they pile mistake on mistake, higher than any generation before them. They dirty what is clean, they spoil what is holy, and they treat what is false and fake as if it were sacred. You can judge how well our universities educate by looking at these people. Ask yourselves, quite seriously: what cause did you actually help through them? Think of the German gift for invention, the noble German hunger for knowledge, and the German ability to work hard and give of oneself. These are splendid and beautiful things that other nations envy you for. Indeed, they would be the finest and grandest things in the world, if only the real German spirit spread over them like a dark thundercloud, heavy with the blessing of rain about to fall. But you are afraid of this spirit. And so it has happened that a different kind of cloud has wrapped your universities in a heavy, stifling air, where your noble-minded scholars can only breathe with tired effort."

"In this century, someone made a tragic, serious, and very instructive attempt to break up that stifling cloud I just mentioned, and to turn people's eyes upward toward the high sky of the German spirit. In the whole history of our universities, you cannot find any sign of a second attempt like it. Anyone who wants to show clearly what we need now will never find a better example. I mean the old, original patriotic student league.[11]"

"When the war of liberation was over, the young student of those days came home with an unexpected prize, the most worthy prize of the whole battle: the freedom of his homeland. Crowned with this honor, he began to think of something even nobler. When he went back to the university, he noticed he was breathing heavily. He became aware of the heavy, polluted air that hung over learning at the university. Suddenly, with wide, horrified eyes, he saw the un-German crude ig-

norance that was hiding behind all sorts of dry, old-fashioned scholarship. Suddenly he realised that his own fellow students, who had no guide, had given themselves over to a disgusting kind of youthful drunkenness. And he became furious. He stood up with the same look of proud anger that Schiller may have had when he read his play The Robbers aloud to his friends. Schiller had put on the front of his play a picture of a lion with the motto 'Against tyrants.' Well, this follower of his was himself that very lion, getting ready to pounce, and every 'tyrant' started to shake. Yes, if you looked at these angry young men only on the surface, and with fear, they would seem to be little more than Schiller's robbers. Their talk sounded so wild to a nervous listener that ancient Rome and Sparta seemed like quiet convents compared with these new spirits. In fact, the alarm these young men caused spread much wider than the alarm once caused in royal circles by Schiller's 'robbers.' About that play, according to Goethe, one German prince is said to have remarked: 'If he had been God, and had known in advance that The Robbers would appear, he would not have created the world.'"

"So where did this strange, overwhelming alarm come from? After all, those young men were the bravest, purest and most gifted of the whole group, both in how they dressed and how they lived. They stood out for a big-hearted boldness that didn't count the cost, and for a noble plainness. A command that felt holy tied them together, pushing them to aim higher and to live more devoutly. What was there to fear from them? How much of this fear was just a mistake, or put on for show, or really felt, we will probably never know for sure. But a strong gut feeling spoke through this fear, and through the shameful, senseless hounding that came out of it. This gut feeling hated the patriotic student league with a burning hatred, for two reasons. First, because of the way it was organised: it was the first attempt to build a true school for real learning. And second, because of the spirit behind

it: that serious, manly, strict and daring German spirit. It was the spirit of Luther, the miner's son, which has come down to us unbroken since the time of the Reformation."

"Keep in mind what *happened* to the patriotic student league when I ask you this: did the German university of that time understand that spirit, the way even the German princes seem to have understood it, in their hatred? Did the university, that 'nourishing mother' of students, bravely and firmly throw her protecting arms around her noble sons and say, 'You will have to kill me first before you touch my children'? I can hear your answer. And from that answer you can judge for yourselves whether the German university is a place of real learning or not."

"Back then, the student knew how deep the roots of a true school for real learning have to go. They must reach down into a renewal and awakening, deep inside a person, of their purest moral powers. This must always be said again and again to the student's credit. On the battlefield he may have learned the very thing he could least learn in the world of so-called student freedom: that great guides are needed, and that all real learning starts with obeying. And in the middle of victory, with his thoughts on his freed homeland, he swore that he would stay German. German! Now he finally understood his Tacitus, the Roman writer who praised the old Germans. Now he grasped what Kant's 'categorical imperative', his rule that duty must be obeyed without conditions, really meant. Now he was carried away with joy by Weber's songs set to 'Lyre and Sword'.[12] The doors of philosophy, of art, and yes, even of the ancient world, swung open for him. And then came one of the most unforgettable bloody deeds: the murder of the writer Kotzebue. With it, the student took revenge, seeing sharply in one way and yet blinded by his own enthusiasm, for his one and only Schiller. Schiller had been worn out too early by 'the stupid world's resistance'. Schiller could have been his guide, his

master and his organiser, and the student now mourned losing him with deep, heartfelt anger."

"Because that was the terrible fate of those promising students: they never found the guides they longed for. Little by little they grew unsure, unhappy, and began to quarrel among themselves. Unlucky, careless acts showed all too soon that the one thing they could not do without was missing among them: strong, powerful minds. And while that mysterious murder showed amazing strength, it showed just as clearly the serious danger that comes from having no guide. They had no guide, and so they were destroyed."

"Because I say it again, my friends! All real learning begins with the exact opposite of what is so highly praised today as so-called student freedom. It begins with obeying, with taking a lower place, with discipline, with submitting yourself. And just as guides need followers, followers need a guide. In the natural ranking of minds, each side is already made to fit the other, a kind of built-in harmony. This everlasting ranking, which all things naturally lean towards, is always under threat from the fake learning that now sits on the throne of our times, ruling over everything. Fake learning tries either to drag the guides down to its own level of slavery, or else to throw them out completely. It leads the followers astray while they are searching for the guide they were meant to have, and it overpowers them with the fumes of its drugs, numbing them. But when, in spite of all this, guide and followers do finally meet, hurt and aching, there comes a passionate feeling of joy, like the echo of a lyre that never stops sounding. I can only help you guess at this feeling by giving you a comparison."

"Have you ever been to a music rehearsal and looked at the odd, wrinkled, kindly sort of men who usually make up a German orchestra? What changes and ups and downs we see in that fickle goddess

called 'looks'! What noses and ears, what clumsy movements, like a dance of skeletons! Just imagine for a moment that you were deaf. Imagine you had never even dreamed that sound or music existed, and that you were watching the orchestra as a group of actors, trying to enjoy their show as a play and nothing more. With no sound to make it all seem beautiful, you could never get enough of watching the stiff, old-fashioned, wood-chopping motions of this funny show. It would look like a parody of the human race, only one that happens to be in harmony."

"Now, on the other hand, suppose your sense of music has come back and your ears are open. Look at the decent, honest conductor at the front of the orchestra, doing his job in a dull, lifeless way. You no longer think about how funny the whole scene looks. You listen. But it seems to you that a spirit of boredom spreads out from the honest conductor to all the players around him. Now all you see is sluggishness and limpness. All you hear is the trivial, the off-beat, and tunes that are stale and worn out. You see the orchestra only as a careless, grumpy, and even tiresome crowd of players."

"But now put a great genius, a real great genius, in the middle of this crowd, and at once you notice something almost unbelievable. It is as if this great genius, moving like lightning from body to body, had entered into all these mechanical, lifeless bodies, and as if one single, fiery, spirit-like eye now shone out of all of them. Now look and listen. You can never listen enough! When you watch the orchestra again, sometimes storming grandly, sometimes crying out with deep feeling, and when you notice every muscle quickly tightening and every movement falling exactly into rhythm, then you too will feel the built-in harmony that exists between guide and followers. You will feel how, in the natural ranking of minds, everything pushes us towards setting up an organisation just like this. From my comparison

you can guess what I mean by a true school for real learning, and why I am very far from seeing one in the university as it is today."

[A few handwritten notes that Nietzsche wrote in the spring and autumn of 1872, still kept in the Nietzsche Archives at Weimar, make it clear that at one point he planned to add a sixth and a seventh lecture to the five given here. These notes are included in the newest edition of Nietzsche's works, but they are completely lacking in interest and do not flow together. They are only titles and sub-titles for sections of the planned lectures. In fact, they take up no more than two printed pages, and they were judged too broken and incomplete to be translated in this edition.]

FOOTNOTES:

[9] The reader may want to remember that a German university student has very few rules to follow, and that he is given much more freedom than English students are. Nietzsche did not approve of this unusual amount of freedom. In his view, it led to a kind of lawlessness of the mind, where anything goes in thinking.—Translator's note.

[10] That is, Hegel's.—Translator's note.

[11] This was a German student club with liberal ideas. It was founded at the town of Jena in 1813 to serve patriotic goals.

[12] The composer Weber set one or two of the poet Körner's "Lyre and Sword" songs to music. The reader should remember that Nietzsche gave these lectures when he was only twenty-seven years old. Like Goethe, he later broke free from all the chains and biases of patriotism, and aimed instead at a real learning shared by all of Europe. Luther, Schiller, Kant, Körner, and Weber did not stay the people he looked up to for very long. In fact, he later attacked them fiercely. A careless student might call this inconsistent. That student may be

reminded of a line Nietzsche wrote in verse 12 of the closing poem of his book Beyond Good and Evil: "Nur wer sich wandelt, bleibt mit mir verwandt." That means: only the people who keep changing have anything in common with me.—Translator's note.

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Typing mistakes fixed in the text: On page 124, "neigbourhood" was changed to "neighbourhood." On page 130, "universites" was changed to "universities."

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