

THE MIND OF POST-WAR GERMANY.¹

By C. H. HERFORD, LITT.D., F.B.A.

HONORARY PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH LITERATURE IN THE
UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER.

Prefatory Note.

EVERY serious student of international affairs will appreciate the extreme hazardousness of that which the present essay attempts. To chart the prevailing currents in the intellectual life of a complex contemporary civilization is difficult at any time ; much more under the stormy conditions which follow a great war, one in which both the nation observed and that of the observer were engaged, on opposite sides. But it has seemed to the writer so important to make more generally accessible to English readers some characteristics of present-day Germany which war- and post-war mentality has largely obscured, and which in justice to her ought to be known, that he has faced the risk. He is himself less afraid of having been influenced by war-bias in his reading of Germany than of having been led by his profound faith in her future to interpret equivocal symptoms too confidently in the better sense. But he would emphasize the limits expressed in his title. This essay is primarily a study of the post-war *mind* of Germany, and only incidentally or by implication a study of her *mœurs*. In Germany, as everywhere else, the war removed barriers and loosened ties. The post-war years added, for her, physical suffering and nervous tension which called out in some heroic endurance and energy, but sapped in others every ethical impulse and resource. Much, if not most, of the thinking adumbrated in the following pages was done under conditions which demanded the exercise of such heroism in a high degree.

¹ An amplification of the lecture delivered in the John Rylands Library, 10th February, 1926.

Such literature of the subject as I have used is specified in the notes. But I should like specially to acknowledge Dr. Gooch's admirable chapters on 'the German Mind' in his *Germany*, and to thank Dr. William Rose of King's College, London, and Professor J. G. Robertson of University College, for the loan of books. Dr. Rose has also kindly read the proofs.¹

C. H. H.

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I.

Few modern nations have suffered a catastrophe which subjected all the bonds of national cohesion to so terrible a strain as Germany, between November, 1918 and June, 1919, suffered from the military

¹Owing to the absence of the writer abroad, it was unfortunately impossible for him to avail himself of Dr. Rose's suggestions.

overthrow, the blockade, the revolution, and the dictated Peace. Up to the eve of the Armistice the mass of the people were confident of victory. Suddenly, they had to face the problem not merely of recovery, but of continuing to exist.

Let us consider for a moment how extraordinary the problem was. In the first place, Germany, so recently the mightiest of European powers, was no ancient, consolidated realm, welded together by centuries of proud and conscious nationhood ; no commonwealth united by ages of common action, in war and peace, in the making of laws, the founding of colonies, the building of empire. As a race she was ancient, and clung with tenacity to her ancient traditions ; but as a nation she was new and raw, and her venerable traditions made but poor cement for the too freshly baked bricks of her fifty-years empire. What did it avail that she had destroyed the legions of Augustus at the beginning of the Christian era, centuries before England became a kingdom ; or that her Franks had given their name to her future rival beyond the Rhine, together with a ruler of legendary grandeur, the German Cæsar of a new Roman empire, Charles the Great ? or that the German emperor of the Middle Ages was in theory God's Vicegerent of the universe in temporal things, as the Pope in spiritual things ? All this did not prevent the mediæval German empire from being a phantom, which did penance at Canossa, was shattered to pieces in the wars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and finally expired by the fiat of Napoleon in 1802.

The new Germany had to be built up afresh out of a mere fragment of that empire, the mark Brandenburg ; only reaching in the Prussia of Frederick the Great, in the middle of the eighteenth century, the coherence of a nation. But Frederick's Prussia occupied not more than one-third of the Germany of to-day ; and the remaining two-thirds, including most of the Rhine lands and the whole of the South, formed a loose aggregate, in part forcibly annexed, like Hanover, in part reluctantly bought by large concessions, like Bavaria ; states for the most part inveterately 'particularistic' in their political sentiments, and only in crises of intense enthusiasm or peril, willing to set aside their 'state' patriotism and to think and act as members of a German nation.

No doubt this loosely-knit political aggregate, to which the genius of Bismarck had for a generation given a semblance of greater

structural coherence than it possessed, had an inner, spiritual nexus of great tenacity. It had the bond of a common language, one not very flexible or graceful, but unsurpassed in 'home-felt' sincerity, and unmatched in subtle profundity, among the tongues of Europe; of a common literature of poetry and philosophy which had changed the currents of European thought and compelled the nineteenth century to reinterpret its own experience; it had in the *Nibelungenlied* the noblest epic of the middle age; it had a scarcely comparable wealth of folk-song, still ringing out to-day in every corner of the land; and it had an entirely incomparable wealth of musical creation.

But neither these spiritual bonds, nor the stress of common national peril, availed to overcome the disruptive effect of the sudden shattering of the fabric of empire. Bavaria, always resentful of its subordination to Prussia in the Reich, became immediately a seat of violent tension; the Rhinelands, fervently Catholic, and still acutely mindful of Bismarck's *Kulturkampf*, temperamentally, too, more akin to their French neighbours than to their Prussian fellow-countrymen, might even have claimed autonomy, had not the incredible folly of those French neighbours, by their paid and manufactured figment of separatism, fanned the sparks of German patriotism into a flame of national passion.

And to these political and religious sources of division must be added two others, not less formidable, derived from the economic ground-work of the national life. There is, first, the division between agriculture and industry. East of the Elbe Germany is a land of peasants and great estates; while West Prussia is the seat of the most intense and concentrated manufacturing activity in Europe. And these two populations are in reality what the agricultural and industrial areas of Great Britain were called by the authors of *Coningsby* and *North and South*, but can only by a bold figure be said to be—two 'nations': the peasant, a hundred years behind the artisan in political intelligence, still subject to the feudal tyranny of Junkerdom, bound by customary ways prescribed by his lord, and in other respects showing the dint of the manacles from which he had been nominally released little more than a hundred years ago.

But the industrial 'nation' is itself divided into two not less alien elements by the standing antagonism between social democracy and capital. Each, before the war, had reached a point of intellectual

equipment and productive fertility unequalled in Europe. The Social democrats had a powerful, if ultimately fallacious, reasoned creed, a philosophy of economics elaborated with all the resources of Hegelian logic by the masterful brain of Karl Marx. They alone consistently opposed in the Reichstag not only the government but the imperial system itself, and their party, alternately persecuted and courted by Bismarck, steadily grew in numbers and power. No other country possessed a socialist party comparable in diffused ability to that of Germany. There if anywhere the Marxian doctrine that wealth is the product of labour seemed destined to make headway. But it was Germany, too, that in those same years of the Bismarckian empire gave the most dazzling demonstration of the ability of capital, armed with science, invention, and organizing technique, to create fabulous wealth for the individual capitalist and a livelihood at least for armies of workers. The generation before the war saw the building up of the colossal enterprises which, under men like Krupp, Siemens, and Ballin, won for their country hegemony in metal work, electricity, and ocean shipbuilding.

II.

We can now appreciate the effect of the sudden, and for almost the entire nation unexpected blow of November, 1918. Disasters far more complete and decisive than this have welded the defeated nation into a heroic unity like that of Rome after Cannæ. But Germany, her normal looseness of cohesion aggravated by prolonged suffering of body and mind, could not emulate the tribal simplicity which sinks all dissension at the cry 'the enemy is at the gates!' On the contrary, for perhaps half the nation, defeat was a release; and for a large section the humiliation of the army was a triumph. They hailed it as the fall of militarism. The army itself was permeated by a temper which prompted it to side with the revolution rather than to suppress it.¹

¹ The account which follows is largely based upon the authoritative though communistically biased book of Mr. Philips Price, *Germany in Transition*. Mr. Price witnessed the whole 'transition' in Berlin, from the end of Nov., 1918. The demeanour of the returning army in the streets of Berlin is vividly described by R. Schickele, *Der Neunte November*. Bernhard Kellermann's novel of the same title paints the final reactions of the war in Berlin society on a larger canvas with impressive power.

There was little open disorder, and almost no bloodshed, but the inner control of a state dominated more and more by military power was suddenly removed. A people deliberately left untrained in politics, and accustomed to think in terms of provincial, class, or occupational, rather than of national, interests, found itself thrown back upon its own intellectual, moral and cultural resources if it was to be saved from complete disintegration and anarchy. Those intellectual, moral, and cultural resources were, however, immense, and they were finally destined, we may venture even now to say with assurance, not merely to save Germany's integrity but to restore her greatness. But the immediate effect of the catastrophe was, none the less, an explosion of conflicting wills. The mind of Germany was in those first years more clearly than ever a function of many minds, each equipped in varying degree with the tenacity, the passion for system, and the temerity, of German mentality at large. Leaving aside the disruptive forces which threatened the adhesion of certain states,—of Bavaria, Saxony, Rhineland,—we will glance only at the aspect which the old political antagonisms assumed under the conditions, at once provocative and emancipating, brought about by the Armistice and the Revolution.

Conspicuous above all is a move of the centre of gravity to the Left. The Social-democrats, who had consistently opposed or reluctantly accepted the dominance of the military state, now became the strongest party in the country. And the great middle-class parties, including the Catholic Centre, though as little as ever disposed to socialism, shared to the full the socialists' loathing for war, and very largely their demand for arbitration, as a solution of international differences. It is reckoned that five-sixths of the first Constituent Assembly, elected early in 1919, were united in this temper. They were to be the nucleus of the new Germany. But this outward unity covered an extraordinary diversity of aims, interests, and principles, precariously allied rather than reconciled. And at either extreme there was explosive material. At the one stood the body of Communists, encouraged by the triumph of Bolshevism, organized on its model in 1917, and determined to bring about by revolution the overthrow of the capitalist system. At the other extreme stood the mass of the officers of the defeated armies and whatever remained of feudal Germany in the castles and manor-houses of Junkerdom ; with a multitude of the

elderly and the once well-to-do in all parts of the land who had grown up and thriven in the glories of the Kaiserreich, and could not believe that these had gone for ever.

Both these extreme parties were in violent antagonism to the government, and to the spirit of the republic as embodied, a few months after the armistice, in the Weimar Constitution ; both attempted to make themselves masters of the state by violence. But in moral and intellectual weight, if not in political importance, the two 'revolutionary' parties are by no means comparable. The nationalist reaction has been, and still remains, the more dangerous. Its principal seat, Bavaria, has been the focus of monarchist agitation, fostered by political jealousy of Prussia, by the peasants' hatred of industry, by the Catholic hatred of Protestants, and by the insidious intrigues of France. And nationalism had a base ally—the dregs of its heady cup—in the anti-semitism excusable only in ignorant peasants exploited by the economically capable Jew ; a hideous superstition, fomented by an illusory race-consciousness, which was to strike down at the height of their powers and of their service to their country, one of the few men, and one of the fewer women, of commanding genius in the war period, Walther Rathenau and Rosa Luxemburg. Had not the policy of the Allies drawn over to Nationalism thousands who saw in an appeal to arms the only means to the security of the German state, we might find the post-war mind of Germany not so much reflected as refracted in a Nationalist mentality which at its highest was a Romantic dream, at its lowest a foul and inhuman passion.

The Communist extreme had its share of weakness and illusion. But the creed which it attempted, occasionally by violence, to impose upon the country, was rooted in a philosophy, and based upon a closely argued interpretation of economic facts. In common with the whole body of German socialists, it derived from Marx, and shared to the full with them the Marxian heritage of logical method and range of sociological ideas in which German socialist literature is so much richer than that of any other country. The controversy of the communist party with the socialists sprang from their divergent theory of the destiny of the 'surplus product' of industry under the capitalist regime, and their consequently divergent attitude towards that regime itself. Whereas the 'Revisionist' and 'Centrist' groups of Socialists led by an Eduard Bernstein and an Otto Bauer,

believed that the accumulated products of a prosperous industry were ultimately diffused among the workers, and could thus make at least *ad interim* terms with capitalism, the communists insisted that these accumulations would always seek an outlet in foreign markets, thus inducing attempts to capture trade, to win colonies, in other words, imperialism and ultimately war. For them therefore capitalism was the enemy, to be tolerated only for the moment, and to be overthrown if necessary by revolution.

The communist argument, which this is not the place to examine, probably took too little account of the openings abroad for capital and its 'accumulated products' otherwise than by the capture of colonies. But it was driven home by the passionate conviction and brilliant argumentative power of a remarkable woman. Rosa Luxemburg had, from her first emergence in the nineties, attempted to recall German socialists from quasi-alliances, so alluring in that golden heyday of German industry, with 'bourgeois' capital, to a strict following of the social gospel of their common master, Marx. An upper layer of skilled workers might profit by the capitalist regime, but for the labouring masses there was no prospect of relief save by the overthrow of capitalism, and its instrument and safeguard, the military state. Against these enemies she wrote and spoke with fearless vehemence and unflagging brilliance. The crisis of 1914, in which the majority of Socialists reluctantly supported the national cause, found Rosa Luxemburg intransigent, and she passed most of the war years in prison. The letters which she wrote during this enforced leisure reflect the rich gifts of cultured interest, of delicate and eager insight into art and nature underlying the white-hot passion of the revolutionary leader. The premature and hopeless revolt against the republican government, in January, 1919, in which she lost her life, tragically closed a career which must remain memorable in the history both of German communism and of German womanhood.¹

It was from these two extremes that the only dangerous disturbances came,—the communist risings, chiefly in Berlin and Munich, and the Kapp Putsch and the Hitler Putsch in the same cities. All were frustrated by the resisting and resilient power of the solid mass between. But in spite of momentary checks, both these currents of

¹ Philips Price, *u.s.*, Part iv., Rosa Luxemburg, *Briefe*.

extremer German thought and will held on. Both were sustained and reinforced by external influences. The spectacular triumph of the state in which Trotzky and Lenin had realized the doctrines of Marx, was a standing summons to Marx's countrymen to emulate them. Far graver was the effect upon military nationalism of the continuation of the war by the Allies in the dictated Peace of Versailles, the brutal circumstances of the Rhineland occupation, and the invasion of the Ruhr. These experiences, only mitigated by Locarno and the Dawes report to-day, converted the remnant of cashiered officers and out-of-date Junkers, who originally formed the insignificant right-wing of the new Republic, into that full half of the German nation which saw only in another war, led perhaps by another Kaiser, a relief from their intolerable conditions and the way back to their old greatness. Last year nationalism even seemed to have won control of the German ship of state when Hindenburg, the most commanding figure among her generals, was chosen, by a narrow majority, president of the Republic. But if the nationalists expected him to lead the way back to empire they mistook both the situation and the man. This heroic old soldier has served the bourgeois and socialist republic as faithfully as he served the Kaiser.

We must not ascribe this solely to the tact, prudence and sagacity of a very simple character. Forces deeper and stronger than personal ties or military prepossessions, and among them the inbred German instinct of fidelity to a trust, have made him one of the elements making for stability in the difficult equilibrium, as yet successfully maintained, of the new German Reich.¹

Neither of these two disruptive movements, therefore, in spite of the force both of sentiment and reason, which in various proportions each had behind it, has made decisive headway in post-war Germany.

In this massive power of resistance we must recognize a first aspect of her post-war mind in politics. The political mind of the new Germany is clearly distinguishable from that of the generation which, if with less docility than is often thought, yet did on the whole prove malleable in the giant hands of Bismarck. And she has done

¹ This remains true notwithstanding the momentary failure in tact which permitted him to write the famous Letter before the Volks-Entscheid, in June last.

much more than resist attack. Bülow's *politischer Esel* has handled the new instrument of autonomous government under the overwhelming difficulties of the post-war and post-peace situation, not without grave errors certainly, but on the whole with singular discretion and tact, and once at least, in the Locarno pact, with a magnificent surrender of national to European interests which not one of the Allies has even affected to approach. The Constitution of 1919 was a piece of bold constructive legislation, which has stood both the terrific shock of the Versailles treaty and six years of unexampled stress. By that instrument Germany renounced, explicitly or implicitly, autocracy and militarism, and the unqualified national egoism of the imperial regime.

It is easy certainly to discover in the private life of the nation, in its industry, its art, its literature, symptoms which bore more equivocal witness to the health and vitality of Germany's post-war mind. Years of inanition, of irregular employment, of insecure existence, of moral slackening, had taken their toll in character, in quality of brain and hand. For some time after the war German manufacture declined month by month both in execution and in output. 'We produce nothing now but what is cheap and easy,' complained Walther Rathenau bitterly in 1920.¹ On the other hand, invention in the industrial arts had never been more fertile or resourceful than in this time of extreme need. In post-war literature and art a febrile brilliancy has been similarly but more intimately associated with a failure of nerve and stamina.

But if we look beyond these partial and passing phenomena, a more vital and significant fact emerges. The German people was, under new forms and conditions, recovering the liberty to be itself. It was in some important ways resuming a past with which it had lost touch. Poor and spare-living, relieved of empire, of militarism, and of the banal sumptuousness of a court, it was thrown back upon the enduring values and virtues of German civilization, patient resource, genius for order, and faith in the power of mind. And it was precisely these enduring values and virtues which, by the momentum of their persistence, enabled the nation successfully to resist the scarcely paralleled onset of forces making for its disintegration. What then were the constituents of this specifically German *Kultur* whose

¹ *The New Society*.

inherited efficiency thus contributed so largely to the stability both of Germany's post-war polity and of her post-war mind ?

III.

I shall confine myself here to three.

First, Administration. Germany was the first state to carry out consistently the idea that good government demands a highly trained and educated civil service. Her civil administrators have not been exempt from the customary failings of bureaucracy ; they have often been harsh and unsympathetic ; but they were incorruptible ; they understood the technique of government ; and the best of them were living illustrations of the great saying of Goethe that the only way to possess freedom is by the daily doing of duty. To do full justice, however, to the quality of German administration we must look to the City ; for the German city, and particularly the provincial capitals, as well of course as quasi-republics, like Hamburg and Bremen, enjoy a power and freedom of self-government much beyond that of any English city ; and it was well-known before the war how high a level of efficient organization, under the guidance of enlightened and progressive *Bürgermeisters*, very many of them had reached. German administration undoubtedly lost something of its efficiency and even of its integrity under the terrible strain of the first post-war years. Impoverishment and inanition lowered executive quality, party passion not seldom warped the justice of the courts. But the great traditions of a profession are not easily overborne, and the steady functioning of the highly articulated machine of government in the hands of highly trained civil servants has powerfully contributed to the gradual recovery of the country.

Secondly, what I may most conveniently call Technology : the brilliant application of science, especially chemistry, to industry, which had before the war built up new industries on German invention, and transferred to Germany entire industries founded on discoveries made elsewhere. I am not here concerned with the sensational achievements of a Stinnes in making huge fortunes, even on the morrow of the Armistice, by adroit manipulation of capitalistic groups. But underlying such successes, and a more durable factor in them than mere financial cunning, was the mastery of industrial technique based upon elaborate scientific equipment. Thus it was that Walther Rathenau,

equally eminent in business and in politics, began his career with a notable discovery in the chemical laboratory. In this field German Kultur operates at once with sustaining and with creative power, as acquired momentum and as initiating energy, nourished by the inexhaustible resource and patience of the German mind.

Thirdly, organised 'culture' in the narrower sense ; including the elaborate provision for education in the public schools, for scholarship and research in the universities, for music and drama in state and civic theatres and opera-houses.

In each of these aspects of civilization, applied to the full compass of national life, Germany before the war stood, and probably still stands, first. In each, if not a pioneer, she may claim to have bettered all precedent, and what she did not invent she carried out with a thoroughness which gave it a new meaning for national life. Each has an eventful history in pre-war Germany, of longer or more recent date. The first is the creation of the Prussia of Stein and Hardenberg ; the second of the Germany of Bismarck ; the third has its roots in the later middle ages, but owes most of its immense resilient and recuperative power to the structural and spiritual renaissance which evolved the first. No effectual study of the demeanour of post-war Germany can neglect these determining antecedents. In the present fragmentary sketch it is possible to touch only upon the most vital passages in the history of a single section of the third.

Universal education was a corollary of Protestantism, and the country of Luther was the first to reach it. The stubborn Germanic faith in the worth of the individual spirit which, three centuries after Luther, impelled the Tory Wordsworth to his demand in the *Excursion* that every English child should be taught, was at work long before in obscure little German states of the seventeenth century. Amid the turmoil and devastation of the Thirty Years' War, State governments were laying down the principle of compulsory school attendance as a civic duty.¹ In the middle of the eighteenth century Germany acclaimed with rapture the educational gospel of Rousseau, and Kant evolved under the impact of Rousseau's individualism his own great doctrine that every human being is to be treated as an

¹ Sir M. Sadler in *Germany in the Nineteenth Century: Education*, p. 107 (Manchester Univ. Press, 1913).

end, and never as a means. When the catastrophe of Jena destroyed the Prussian state, the building up of the German nation out of the ruins became the supremely urgent need. In another country such a catastrophe might have swept away all spiritual ideals in order to produce a maximum of drilled battalions. But Fichte and Stein and Hardenberg did not so conceive their task. They meant to fashion a state outwardly strong and capable of resisting any attack by military power. But they knew that that outward strength must be based upon internal coherence, upon the individual quality of its citizens, and their opportunity for free development within the limits of law. Hence the most immediate and direct outcome of Fichte's famous lectures was not the building of barracks but the founding, in 1810, of the University of Berlin, followed within the next ten years by that of Breslau and Bonn. Nor was it only the higher stages of culture that were to be pursued, or the élite of the nation's manhood that was to be allowed the privilege of pursuing it. Precisely that belief in the universal capacity for, and right to, intellectual life inspired an equally thoroughgoing provision for elementary and secondary schools. Pestalozzi's ideas for the educational unfolding of the child, allied themselves with Fichte's conception of the preparation of the future citizen. Opportunity for the highest education was open to all, but there was no degradation of educational ideals to the lowest common measure. The Gymnasias gave, as they have ever since given and give to-day, a secondary education nowhere surpassed in range or strenuousness. Technical schools were founded, which were to play a vitally important part in the technological development of which I have spoken. Other special capacities were provided with their opportunities of training, or had it imposed on them. The service of the state, in particular, or that of a city, had as its necessary preliminary an elaborate and exacting course of study. And before these special preliminary studies could be entered on, a university standard of culture had to be attained. A man's soul, in short, had to fulfil itself, before he could be permitted to specialize as a citizen, and as the condition of his becoming a truer citizen when he did.

IV.

How then was this wonderful educational organism affected by the catastrophe of 1918? It suffered severely, without doubt. Of the two million Germans who fell, a far larger proportion than with us was drawn from the students and the younger professoriate of the universities. When the war was over ruin fell most grievously upon precisely that cultivated middle class, from whose homes the scholars, lawyers, physicians and clergy of the next generation would normally have been drawn. The enormous cost of printing, paper, binding, handicapped all publication of research, restricted the number, the compass, and the circulation, of the host of learned reviews.

Nevertheless, decay or decline is the last word that will occur to any observer of the German universities since the war. Suffering, scanty means, spare diet, do not necessarily mean, in things of the mind, diminished vitality. A century ago Germany was still a poor country, and Carlyle could contrast the fastidious, leisurely scholarship of Oxford with Heyne working fourteen hours a day in a garret at his edition of Vergil. The old Stoicism, the old resourcefulness, were not effaced by a generation or two of easier conditions. Some aid flowed in from England and America for the struggling university students, but this was trifling compared to what Germany herself did and to what the students did for themselves. I cannot pause here to dwell on the large-scale provision of meals at cost price, or on moving but typical stories like that of the Hamburg students who spent the morning from six to two in the heavy and dirty toil of unloading oil ships in the harbour, in order to attend lectures at the university from three to six.

And if we look to the actual output of German scholarship, one must measure by a high standard indeed to find it, in the departments of which the present writer can judge, meagre or slack. Fewer dissertations doubtless are printed, but the intellectual atmosphere is alive with ideas, and the stream of *Zeitschriften* continues to flow on with vigour, at least, unabated. Some departments of learning, such as archæology, suffered by the virtual exclusion of German scholars from many sources of new material. Her Egyptologists and Assyriologists could no longer excavate on the spot. The German school of Athens, where Dörpfeld had for a generation worked at the constructive interpretation of the Acropolis, was only after much delay

re-opened, and all intercourse with the English School there remained still longer in abeyance.¹ Worse than this, the fine international comity of scholars, which before the war had put French or English drawings or casts at the service of German colleagues, was, with such rare exceptions as that mentioned below, for the time at an end. But the immense treasures of the German libraries, public and private, remained, and the task of constructing and re-interpreting the past, in which each generation has to continue or revise the work of its predecessors, called as imperiously as ever on the masters of historical science. Some of these masters had shared the war fury to the full ; and ever and anon it still blazed out. But they could put aside these distracting memories, and with something of the sublime detachment of the East, in Arnold's poem, 'let the legions thunder past and plunge in thought again.' And if most of them were passionate nationalists, their chosen subjects reflected the cosmopolitan impartiality of science herself. Davidsohn continued his great monograph on the history of Florence, with yet more elaboration of critical method than his countryman Gregorovius had bestowed, a generation before, on the history of the City of Rome. In every quarter of the land the Babel of erudite discussion of the Bible and its problems continued with little abatement. In the capital, where the limbs of the embryo republic were being slowly and tentatively moulded, Eduard Meyer and Hans Delbrück, Adolf Harnack and Alois Brandl, who had all signed the famous manifesto of the Ninety-three Intellectuals in 1914, were now engaged in enriching scholarship with more enduring contributions to our knowledge of the history of the ancient world, or of the art of war, the Acts of the Apostles, or the work of Shakespeare. Still greater power of detachment was shown when Germany's recent enemies and conquerors were subjected, even it might seem with a special predilection, to the limelight of a relatively objective and dispassionate historical study. The history and institutions of England in particular, were surveyed and scrutinized with keen and often admiring interest, as if to discover the secret of the strength which had made the little island in the North Sea so inexplicably formidable.

¹ The old comradeship of their heads has long since been resumed. A first step to renewed intercourse was taken in 1919-20 by a student of the English school, who had introductions to a distinguished Berlin scholar at the German school.

One young historian examined in a massive volume the relations of English Puritanism to the classical learning of Humanism.¹ Another traced the gradual transformation of Protestantism in its relations to literature in the English eighteenth century.² And a distinguished Berlin professor, who during the war discharged the duties of censor of letters there, has published a comprehensive and elaborately documented treatise on the polity and civilization of England as a whole, which promises to become a classic on both sides of the North Sea.³ More recently, in a brilliant but slighter *aperçu*, Karl Wildhagen has diagnosed the 'natural and historical foundations of the English national character,' which he discovers to be impulse and will.⁴

But it would give a very inadequate notion of the fertility of the post-war universities—even in the historical sciences alone—if we mentioned only specialist monographs on particular fields, however vast. The deepest and most masterful instinct of the German scientific brain is not specialism, in the sense of the minute investigation of a limited field. It is the intimate alliance of the gift of specialism with the gift for synthesis; of the eye which sees with precision every detail in a restricted field with that which presents masses of apparently alien fact in illuminating relation. We need but recall some of the giants of German scholarship, not one of them without this organic union of faculties; Jakob Grimm, equally a master of folklore, philology, folktales and primitive law; Lachmann, revolutionizing single-handed the study both of the Nibelungen and of Lucretius; Welhausen, overthrowing the traditional and now obsolete view of the Old Testament, and confounding its supporters because he knew not only Hebrew, as they did, but all the Semitic languages and Egyptology; Lotze, welding metaphysic and science together in a new 'microcosm of Nature and Spirit.' Nor has this fruitful union of specialism and synthesis grown obsolete in the German scholarship of our time. Two great scholars and thinkers, one of whom died only the other

¹ W. Schirmer: *Puritanismus und Renaissance*.

² H. Schöffler, *Protestantismus und Litteratur*, 1922.

³ W. Dibelius, *England*, 2 vols.

⁴ K. Wildhagen, *Die . . . Grundlagen des engl. Volkscharakters*, 1925. A more directly comparative study is G. Luddermann's *Entgegengesetzte Denk-Welten, eine philosophisch politische. Studie über d. grundsätzliche verschiedenheit der engl. u. deutschen Denkart* (Halle, 1925).

day, have transformed both the theory and the conclusions of sociological history by bringing politics, morals, art, science, economics, religion,—so often treated as autonomous and self-sufficing domains,—into illuminating contiguity, and eliciting those profound affinities and responses which in reality interpenetrate human society. The older of the two, Max Weber, who died shortly before the war, inherited from Karl Marx the recognition that history can be explained neither by the evolution of ideas, as Hegel believed, nor by the play of political forces, but that the rise and fall of states was sometimes conditioned by man's hunger and greed. Thus he showed how the greatness and decline of Rome is illuminated by the history of her land tenure and of her towns. But he did not, like Marx, find in man's hunger the solution to the entire evolution of his past. His rich mind was sensitive to spiritual as well as economic values; he rethought the thought of Hegel as of Marx in ways of his own and with enormously enhanced material. And his ultimate aim was to justify the belief, of which he never lost hold, that mind is the ultimate and underlying fact in history, because purpose, even to win a livelihood, is itself a form of reason.

The younger of the two, Ernst Troeltsch, is probably the most impressive figure in the post-war world of German learning and thought. Unlike Weber, he approached sociological history from the side of religion, beginning his career as a Protestant clergyman. Religion, he wrote in the fascinating autobiographical retrospect, prefixed to his latest work,¹ 'Religion was my first love'; and he looked to it as the ultimate goal of his thought. But if religion was the supreme problem, it was only one factor in the complex evolution of society; and the task of interpreting this evolution, and the incessant resulting creation of new values, economic and spiritual, became his central preoccupation. Protestant orthodoxy was soon too narrow for him; he resigned his orders, played a dominant part in the Senate of Baden, and when appointed professor, during the war, at Berlin, joined the Philosophical, not the Theological faculty. He seized eagerly upon the work of Marx and Weber,² saw at once

¹ *Meine Bücher*, introd. to *Historismus*, 1923.

² For the relation between the work of Weber and Troeltsch, see the latter's penetrating appreciation and criticism of the former in his *Historismus*, p. 367 f.

that the history of Christian doctrine cannot be explained, as Harnack sought to do, from within theology, by the impact of theological forces and influences alone. As little could it be explained as a conflict of spiritual truth with the passions and blindness of 'the world.' For Troeltsch's large social vision 'the world' with its hunger, its ambitions, its secular ardours and idealisms, had a law, an ethic of its own, which could claim to be weighed and valued along with the ethic of Christianity.¹ More than that, these two ethics, the secular and the religious, had not grown up in isolation, but each had, in the historic upbuilding of modern society, penetrated and moulded the other. To trace this process was the task attempted in his epoch-making book, 'The social bases of the Christian Churches.' There is no question here of resolving the progress of Christianity into the pressure of worldly interests. But just as the early church had to provide for its needs as well as for its teaching, so all through its later history dogma reacts upon the customs and the ethic of secular society, and is itself reacted upon by these. The relief of the poor is an accepted Christian duty, but pure Christianity seeks rather to idealize their condition than to relieve it. The financial vigour and success of many devout Englishmen is apt in the eyes of foreign observers to convict them of hypocrisy. But Troeltsch, after Weber, finds in modern Capitalism the direct product of Puritanism, its strenuous and ascetic genius creating industrial England with one hand, and destroying 'merry England' with the other.²

I have dwelt upon the work of this great scholar and thinker, not only because of interesting sidelights such as these upon our own history, nor because of the deep interest he has excited in England,—he was about to give a course of lectures here, in response to a

¹ It was not for nothing that he described his ideal as 'thought saturated with reality' (*Wirklichkeitsgesättigtes Denken*); or that he contributed a series of powerful letters, as an 'onlooker' (*Spektatorbriefe*), to the discussion of the war.

² The Weber-Troeltsch account of the matter has, however, been lately shown by Mr. R. H. Tawney to rest upon too simple an analysis of Puritanism. 'The heart of man holds mysteries of contradiction, which live in vigorous incompatibility together. There were different elements in the Puritan spirit: a sober prudence which would gather the fruits of this world, and a divine recklessness which would make all things new': *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, p. 212.

pressing invitation, at the moment of his death early in 1923 ; but because, with Weber and Simmel, he stands out as the most expressive embodiment of the modern German spirit in the interpretation of man and the world, and of those deeper strains in the mind of contemporary Germany which the present essay seeks to define. That Troeltsch never reached finality—he died at fifty-seven—may make his works less satisfactory as text-books (which they were never meant to be), but it makes him only the truer example of the German spirit. He wrestled, like Faust, with fundamental problems which ceaselessly solicited him but which he never conclusively solved. To discover the inner bond which holds the world together (*‘Dass ich erkenne was die Welt Im innersten zusammenhält’*) was the problem that tormented Faust. The riddle which the whole import of his own life-work forced incessantly upon Troeltsch was how to reconcile religion and history ; the absolute values which faith postulates, with the relativity involved in an evolutionary process, where every successive phase embodies some element of truth.¹

The career of Ernst Troeltsch, upon which I have deliberately lingered, was no isolated phenomenon, even in the war- and post-war years of Germany. If he was the most eminent worker in his field, and had few equals among contemporary scholars in any country, his mind, his life, his ideals, and it must be added his thought-packed and difficult writing, were in the great tradition of German scholarship. The authority of that tradition the war and its sequel, gravely as

¹ This dilemma was already implicit in his *Die Absolutheit des Christentums und die Religionsgeschichte*, 1902. ‘Das Buch,’ he wrote in 1923, ‘ist der Keim Alles weiteren’ (*Meine Bücher*). The tentative solution which he had reached at the end of his life is given in the lectures which he was to have delivered here. ‘The stream of historical life [with its ceaseless change] may be dammed and controlled from two sides : Firstly, by the morality of individual conscience, which for us Europeans is founded upon Stoic-Christian ideas, and leads to the idea of the Rights of Man, Humanity, and the duty of Solidarity, . . . and secondly, by the ethic of cultural values, which for us Europeans is most decisively formed by Plato and the Neoplatonists.’ I quote the lucid summary of Baron v. Hügel in his Introduction to the translation of these lectures. How deeply Troeltsch’s mind was penetrated by the apparent implications of ‘historicity’ is shown by his doctrine that truth itself is ‘polymorphous.’ Cf. the interesting discussion of this by Professor C. Webb, in Needham’s *Science, Religion, and Reality*, p. 336.

they have embarrassed its upholders, have as yet done nothing to impair. In this domain, at least, the great catastrophe which withdrew from Germany's grasp the ephemeral signs and splendours of empire had only emphasized her inalienable possession of some eternal things. The tramp of soldiers is silent in the spacious linden avenue upon which faces her leading university now barely 120 years old ; the royal palace opposite is a museum. But you pass through the university gates into a quiet quadrangle, an academic grove cool with the shade of trees which have only grown ampler during the years of conflict ; hard by stands the statue of Hegel, symbol if we will of the discarded dreams of absolutism and the shattered Prussian state, but also of the unresting intellectual passion which takes all knowledge for its province, and of the unconquering power and daring of human thought. Yet of that intellectual passion, of that daring human thought, even those illustrious interpreters of the evolution of history may one day be held less impressive examples than another Berlin worker in a widely different domain of knowledge,—the man who has loosened time and space from their moorings, shown gravitation to be a corollary, and measured the compass of the universe ;—the man who not only refused to share the war fury himself, but for a moment at least, on the very morrow of the war, suspended it in others.¹

V.

Such in outline were some of the stabilizing forces which post-war Germany derived from her inherited Kultur. But we should gravely misconceive her temper if we imagined that to be stable meant to be inert, or that millions who rejected and resisted revolutionary violence did not dream ardently of transforming change. The Constitution worked out at Weimar six months after the Armistice provided a legal framework for the social structure which has till now withstood the terrific strain of the dictated Peace and its consequences. But it was a compromise, effected by give and take, which completely satisfied no party in the state. And no transformation of legal and social structure alone would have appeased the ferment in the host of eager and prolific brains which did not think in terms of politics at all,

¹As is well known, the English expeditions sent out in 1919 to test Einstein's theory of gravitation by observation of eclipse phenomena, reported that the evidence confirmed it.

—still so recent and unfamiliar a form of German experience,—or of any merely external and material betterment of society. With a passion of idealism which is apt to excite only the ironical comments of the foreign observer, they declared, in an infinity of tones and accents, that the supreme need of the ruined fatherland was a spiritual renewal; a new birth of the German soul. The prayer uttered in the prefatory poem prefixed to Fritz Liebhards's Alsatian novel 'Westmark' found response in thousands of hearts: 'The empire without a soul broke in fragments; before the whole world we stand in shame. Now it is our place to build up out of light an empire of the soul which cannot be shattered. Here, German youth, lies your path! Give the new Germany a soul!'¹

No one knew better than the man who uttered that appeal that that 'path' to 'soul' was not more easy because the 'soulless' empire had fallen; that the war which overthrew it had left moral wreckage as well as material ruin in its train; and that if horror and indignation and hope had bred a quicker idealism in the finer spirits of 'German youth,' licence and disillusion and the relaxation of moral standards had drawn others into lower depths of cynical degradation. Their voices were not always articulate. But it was with the idealists that the future of Germany lay.

We may distinguish two groups among them. M. Fernand Baldensperger, who has lately described with his customary brilliance and amplitude of research the 'movement of ideas' among the *émigrés* of the first French revolution, finds that the 'idea' which preoccupied them all, the remaking of France after their return, took two principal forms. One group ('Prophets of the Past') like the Bourbons, thought only in terms of restoration; the other thought in terms of reform. The German people was not, like the French *émigrés*, expatriated. But their *patria*, their national home, was none the less obscured and defaced, and a like cleavage divided the future of their dreams. In some it was shaped by memory and old-world pieties, in others by imagination and hope.

The first group corresponds roughly to that of the Nationalists in politics. It is not always the transient glories of the Reich that allure them. To many eyes the great creative age of German mind

¹ Quoted by Hewell-Thayer, *The Modern German Novel*.

beacons across the intervening century, and the national uprising of her youth against Napoleon symbolizes the visionary Germanism of Fichte rather than the blood and iron of Bismarck. 'The war has shown us where our spirit lies,' cries Dr. Hans Jaeger of Eisenach, as a preface to a flaming proclamation of what he calls 'the Gothic Mind in German poetry.'¹ 'The war has brought us again the consciousness of being deeply Gothic in heart and blood. It is not classical or French culture that inspires our truest and greatest work, but the spirit enshrined in Strassburg minster and the *Nibelungenlied*.' It was a half truth, which neither the mature Goethe nor Nietzsche would have accepted; but like other half truths it could intoxicate and inflame the brain. The young Goethe had proclaimed it in his rapturous hymn of praise to that same minster of Strassburg, his essay 'Of German architecture,'² and at the beginning of the nineteenth century the German Romantic School founded a new art gospel upon the supremacy of the Gothic spirit. For Otto Spengler, whose "*Ruin of the West*" was the furore of the early 'twenties, "the West" was not only Germanic but an embodiment of the soul of Faust. It was thus no accident that in 1920 and the following years a series of elaborate studies of Romanticism attested how keenly the call of that Gothic spirit of old Germany was 'felt in the heart and felt along the blood' in the tragic depression which followed the war.³

But the old Germany had less equivocal titles to renewed discipleship. I do not speak of the great musicians, nor of Goethe, for their supremacy was never in question. But she had also, in Leibniz, Kant and Hegel, three of the supreme figures in the history of philosophy, almost the only modern thinkers worthy to be ranked with, or near, Plato and Aristotle. The 'return to Kant' had begun years before the war; but the later volumes of '*Kant-Studien*,' the organ of this movement, betray an intensified consciousness of the value of this immense asset of Germany and of the modern world. The universal genius of Leibniz is in a yet more

¹ 'Der gotische Geist in der deutschen Dichtung,' 1925.

² *Von deutscher Baukunst*, 1770.

³ Strich, *Deutsche Klassik u. Romantik*, 1922; Nadler, *Die Berliner Romantik*, 1920; Körner, *Romantiker und Klassiker*, 1924; Tumarkin, *Die romantische Weltanschauung*, 1920; Stefanski, *Das Wesen der Romantik*, 1923.

peculiar sense a German asset ; he, more than any other thinker, must rank as the metaphysical interpreter (though he wrote mainly in French and Latin) of the deepest instincts of the German mind,—the union of individualism and totality, of the faith that the individual has infinite worth, which yet can only be realized by it as a member of a living organism. It is again no accident that the complete works of Leibniz are shortly to be edited by the Berlin Academy, his own creation.

VI.

It will be seen that the appeal to the past did not, in Germany, tell solely on the side of reaction. The reformer and the idealist also drew inspiration and support from history, and the cleavage between the two groups, between the advocates of Restoration and of Reform, was therefore less clear-cut than it had been among the less historically minded *émigrés* of France.

Some of Germany's greatest memories told not as reactionary but as revolutionary forces. They were too potent to engender mere emulation ; they summoned, trumpet-tongued, if only in majestic verse and vibrating prose, to a national life redeemed from the idols of the Bismarckian Reich, to a richer and more powerful ideal of manhood, purged from the fetish of the servile state. Thus Goethe, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and Nietzsche at the end, polar opposites in cast of genius, helped alike to formulate the new ideals for the upbuilding of German character and the policy of the German state.

What, now, was the nature of these new ideals ? They were, in the first place, not simply aspirations for improvement in something already tolerably good ; they were based on a passionate repudiation of some vital constituent of the existing, or recently existing, order. And it will be clearest to group them on the lines of these repudiations.

First, in sharp antagonism to the first group, is the repudiation of the whole complex of ideas and passions embraced in the 'imperialism' of the fallen Reich : in particular, aggressive nationalism, and its accompaniments, racial arrogance and militarism. The repudiation of aggressive nationalism does not mean that every German does not bitterly resent the wrongs done by the Treaty, and subsequently, in

Poland and Silesia : it does not mean a surrender of the hope of recovering them, or of the desire to make Germany again in outward things, as she is in inner, the equal of the other nations of the European comity. But it does mean, firstly, the adoption of international goodwill, of loyalty, not only to 'king and country,' but to humanity ; the recognition that 'patriotism is not enough,'—as the completion and crown of national citizenship, not as its contradiction. It may seem a small matter that in the section of the Constitution which deals with education, it is expressly laid down that school books must inculcate international goodwill as well as (quite properly) patriotic pride. That German school-books have been produced animated by a very different temper, especially towards France, is beyond doubt ; but it is much that they have not, like the venomous fare provided for French and Belgian school children, implicit or explicit government sanction. More impressive to us is perhaps the emphatic internationalism of those bodies of young men and women, of all creeds and ranks of society, who constitute what is known as the 'Movement of Youth.' Of this remarkable movement I shall say more later : I will here only mention one touching instance,—the fund collected among its members at the worst period of German impoverishment, and mostly from very slender purses, towards the restoration of ravaged France. And it is needless to recall once more the triumph of European over the national mind which dictated the offer now embodied in the Treaty of Locarno.

The second aspect of the reaction from imperialism is the abandonment of the arrogance of race ; the naïve idolatry of Teutonicism, which saw in the 'Germanic race' not only the ethnological basis of medieval and modern Europe, but the source of all the solid excellences of national character. This is at bottom a question of scientific fact, and the reaction has found its most important support in the workshop of science. The bible and text-book of this belief, before the war, was, as is well known, the work of an Englishman, whose brilliantly-written rhapsody of pseudo-science, *The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*, used to be read aloud, we are told, with fervent admiration by the Ex-Kaiser to his sons. It took the mind and heart not only of uninstructed Germany captive. But its own 'foundations,' always unsound, have been shattered by German scholars since the war, and in the name not only of science but of

internationalism. In particular I mention the remarkable recent book of Hertz—*Rasse und Kultur* which riddles the whole conception of 'race' as an article of national faith and with it one of the chief provocatives of national animosity. Behind the important question of theory lies a yet more momentous question of action and practice. What Hertz and his school have done is not merely to demolish with the trumpet blast of ethnological science Chamberlain's paste-board Jericho of racial superstition. They have sapped the authority of one of the most dangerous of the illusions that lead to war ; and his book was dedicated, significantly, to the memory of Jaurès, the great Frenchman murdered, in August, 1914, like Rathenau eight years later, by Chauvinists who could not forgive the man who did not share that illusion.¹

Thus, Germany's repudiation of national egoism, and of national racialism, had as its natural, if not necessary accompaniment, the repudiation of militarism. The naive policy which thought to compel that repudiation by disarming her, while the rest of the world remained armed, notoriously made it far more difficult, by deeply wounding, together with her pride, her hope of security and her sense of justice. Nevertheless, the hope, widely entertained, of one day redressing her wrongs even by force, is not a return to the spirit of a Tirpitz or even of a Treitschke. Over a far wider area the overwhelming sufferings of the war, culminating in the final débâcle which rendered all those sufferings and all the magnificent pretensions which involved them, futile, have produced a profound abhorrence of war itself.

We shall presently hear how clear a cry rang out from poetry, even during the war, for human brotherhood,—'the word that eternally unites us,—Man.'² No less clearly rings the abhorrence of the ruin and savagery of war,—the vehement demand 'to annihilate

¹ Other happy signs of recovery, on both sides of the frontier, are the policy deliberately pursued by Professor Vermeil and others at Strassburg of making this frontier university a focus of French and German intellectual intercourse and mutual understanding, the foundation of the Paris review *Evolution*, and the international conference held at Paris on 20 January, 1926, under the presidency of M. H. Lichtenberger, when Thomas Mann gave a luminous survey of German Kultur.

² Heynicke, *Freundschaft*.

the annihilation so that the healing power may unfold.’¹ It had begun long before the great war, and the menace of an armed Europe was nowhere more poignantly felt or uttered than in the country commonly regarded as the capital of militarism. The outbreak of war itself seemed to be received by the German people with a universal burst of enthusiasm. But not all the finer spirits shared that temper. This was what Franz Werfel, one of the most gifted of her contemporary poets, wrote on the Fourth of August, 1914, in the chaotic images, abrupt phrases, and rhymeless verse of the new day : it is an outcry to “Time” :

‘Born on a tempest of false words,
Thy head wreathed about with idle thunder,
Sleepless with lying,
Girdled with deeds that were never done,
Boasting of sacrifices
Hateful and loathsome to heaven,
So marchest thou on, O Time,
Into the roaring Dream
Which God, with awful hands
Plucks from his slumber and casts away,’²
‘Cease,’ [cries another], ‘to call on the God who hears not !
Ye have not understood,
A little under-devil is ruling the world,
His servants are Unreason and Madness.’³

With more direct and moving art, militarism was assailed and exposed in novel and drama. Conspicuous among the former are the two ‘war-novels’ of Clara Viebig, *Das Rote Meer* and *Töchter der Hekuba*, powerful and moving pictures of the tragic reflexion of the war in sorrow and passion, crime and vice, in a Berlin suburb ; Latzko’s deliberately horrible exposure of war horrors in *Friedensgericht*, Leonhard Frank’s *Der Mensch ist gut*, and Herbert von Eulenberg’s *Das Bankrott Europas*.⁴ In drama the most powerful anti-war voices were those of the now well-known trio, Ernst Toller, Georg Kaiser, and Fritz von Unruh. Toller’s work has been in part translated and acted in England, and is well known here. Kaiser’s lurid drama *Gas* is a grim *reductio ad absurdum* of war carried on,

¹ Pinthus, *Menschkeits-dämmerung*, p. xii.

² F. Werfel, *Der Krieg*. ³ A. Ehrenstein, *Der Kriegsgott*.

⁴ An excellent account is given of those and other anti-war novels in Hewart-Thayer : *The Modern German Novel* (1924), ch. VIII.

as it threatens to be in future, by scientific methods so deadly that they will destroy civilization itself. Unruh, who has also written a powerful series of war stories, *Opfergang*, is the least known but the most remarkable of the three; he is also the one who most forcibly illustrates the anti-militarist revulsion brought about in Germany by the war. For Kaiser and Toller are Socialists, and the Socialists had always as a party opposed militarism, and took part reluctantly or under protest in the Great War. But Unruh is a Prussian officer of noble birth, and composed before the war several plays inspired by the deepest reverence for the old Prussian spirit of loyalty to duty. 'As law is above the stars,' he wrote in his *Louis Ferdinand, Prince of Prussia* (1911), 'so above man stands Duty great and stern.' 'But what duty?' His experience as a commander in the rush upon France in 1914 tragically shattered his old faith, and gave him a new and totally different answer. In his one-act tragedy *Before the Decision*, he shows us in its pitiless horror what an invasion, carried out, not by a wild soldiery but with strict observance of military rules, really means. The central figure, a commanding officer of a German battalion, has to order the execution of the men of a French household for the death of some German soldiers. When it is over he goes out in fierce revulsion against the hideous perversion of Duty: 'Down with the lying gods!'¹ I can only refer to Unruh's more comprehensive presentment of his thought in his Trilogy, still (1926) incomplete, which will lead us from the war-horror of the First Part,² through the confused and ineffectual pullulation of the new humanity in a society still a prey to sensual and military lusts, depicted in the Second Part, 'Platz.' The yet unpublished Third, 'Dietrich,' will presumably show us the Hamlet-like hero of the Second Part finally overcoming his doubts and united with Irene, the one pure and lofty spirit of peace, as Prometheus with Asia.

A similar revulsion is described by Ernst Toller in his piece

¹ *Vor der Entscheidung*, cf. also Diebold, *Anarchie des Dramas*, on Unruh's plays at large. A useful summary of his chief dramas is given by Engel in *Schneider's Bühnenführer*.

² According to the author's description quoted by Diebold, *u.s.* Unruh has given a brief, vehement "Confession" of his poetic faith in Edschmid's little collection *Schöpferische Confession* (*Tribüne der Kunst und Zeit*), 1919. Creation is for him the essence of life, faith its instrument, and the solidarity of humanity its end.

entitled *Die Wandlung*, where a young sculptor, disgusted with his useless life as an artist, throws it up to go and fight in the African Colonial War. But war experience brings his sculptor's hammer into use again, to shatter the statue of the Fatherland's military Might.

VII.

Militarism, race-arrogance, imperialism, are unmistakeable phenomena, the repudiation of which is equally unmistakeable. I turn, lastly, to a repudiation no less real, but less easy to limit or define : the revolt against what may be comprehensively called the spirit of mechanism. The term denotes, in general, the obstructive or inhibitory effect of rigid forms or traditional habits upon the spontaneous energies of life and thought. Of mechanism in this sense, the soldier, the schoolmaster, and the capitalist, with their characteristic ethos of discipline and system, had made German society, in emancipated eyes, a crying example. They saw there the mechanism of a rigid social order, the stiff middle-class conventions which Ibsen, fifty years before, had exposed in the remorseless mirror of his art ; the mechanism of an educational machinery meant not merely, like the divine Potter's, to 'give a bent,' but to mould completely ; the mechanism, more literally, of the industrial machine which in Kaiser's drastic phrase makes money but uses up men. Or again, they saw the mechanism of the mind ; the dogmas of rigid mental habits inaccessible to influence and growth, characteristic of what Bergson calls the *closed man*.

Not every German who thus diagnosed his country's plight saw the remedy with the simple faith of the emancipator, or imagined that when 'the machine,' in Mann's phrase was 'broken, the stifled soul would breathe free.' In the eyes of one German whose stern prognostic filled the entire country for a year with excited discussion, the German soul itself was stricken with decay and nearing its doom. Actually completed just before the war, in the heyday of imperial pride, when 'ruin' was the last destiny that Germany imagined for herself, Oswald Spengler's book, 'The Ruin of the West,' seemed like the writing on the wall to a people trembling on its verge. The more so as this was no sensational pamphlet, but a vast survey of universal history, imposing in its architectonic, in its sweep of imagination, in its immense

and many-sided, if far from impeccable, learning. History, as here portrayed, was the development of four independent, but only partially contemporary civilizations, each with its regular sequence of spring, summer, autumn and winter, its birth, maturity, and death. India, classic antiquity, the semitic Arabs and Jews, had long vanished or left only effete traces of themselves. And now the fourth and latest, which he calls the Germanic because it began with the succession of the Germanic tribes to the Roman Empire of the west, was also verging on its close. It had been very glorious ; for the soul of the West is identified with that Gothic soul towards which, as we saw, the new medieval Romantics were looking back with longing eyes. Its spring had created the Eddas, it had reached its summer culmination in the Gothic cathedrals, in Shakespeare ; its autumn was still glorious, as the season of Goethe and the great idealists Kant and Hegel. The fundamental mark of the Germanic spirit (of the 'Soul of the West' therefore) was, for Spengler, the pursuit of the infinite, whether in the upward soaring of Gothic choirs, in Faustus's repudiation of the finite logic of the schools, or in Leibniz's infinitesimal calculus. But now, the 'soul of Faust' is flagging, and in decay. Its creative power is gone, it can only mechanize, observe a technique, follow regulations ; its art, its science, its citizenship, its outlook upon the world, are permeated and controlled by mechanism. A materialist socialism has displaced the constructive philosophies. Spengler, it is true, refused to be called a pessimist,¹ as his title led those who had not read his book, and many who had, to suppose ; but his last word was a kind of grim Stoicism, the temper of a heroic but hopeless spirit confronting a welter of universal decay.

Spengler and his ideas faded swiftly into the background, and it is needless here either to discuss these ideas, or to describe the storm of criticism which, after a moment of awed wonder, his book evoked. Many of the shafts struck home, for Spengler exercised his amazing gift of intuition, of comparison, of discovering analogies, with singularly little critical control, and it ran riot in the brilliant but often fantastic pages of his book. Specialists in every province of its encyclopædic domain exposed errors and oversights without number in their particular spheres ; metaphysicians, mathematicians, economists, the historians of

¹ In his pamphlet, '*Pessimismus ?*'

politics, of religion, of art, of music, protested with various degrees of emphasis and of acerbity against his statements or his conclusions. But few of the weightier participators in the controversy withheld the admission that Spengler's colossal 'synthesis' was the most imposing effort of its kind since Hegel, and nothing can deprive 'Spenglerismus' of its significance as a portent of the post-war German mind.¹

Little of Spengler's 'Stoic' temper is to be detected in the crowd of lyric poets who utter in hectic chorus their repudiation of a mechanical social order, emphasized in most cases by a repudiation of rhythm and rhyme. In criticism of social conventions Ibsen may have led the way. But these explosive and chaotic singers never remind us of those inflexibly closed lips; and few of them have more of his genius than of his austere reticence. And if Ibsen might be called an anarchist in social morality, he was not an anarchist in art, but used for the exposure of the rottenness of society a marvellously perfected dramatic instrument; whereas most of the German moral anarchists, being anarchists in art as well, were handicapped by the imperfection of the self-made weapons they used. They reflected most faithfully, as one of them, Kurt Pinthus, says, the 'fermenting, chaotic, explosive' temper of the time. He has made an anthology of the poems of some two dozen of them, which he calls 'The Twilight of Humanity,' an expressive title. Not upon Germany alone, but upon Humanity, they saw the night descending; and in that twilight of coming doom they trample on the humanity of that past day and all it cherished. In its splendour, its boasted morality, in all morality, they saw only delusion and sham. 'In the luxuriant flower of civilization they smelt the reek of decay, and their prophetic eyes saw a hollow factitious culture and a social order propped up solely on mechanism and convention, and already in ruins.'² I shall not try to illustrate the crude directness with which these poets paint this moral slough, where sex throws aside its last veil.

¹ A valuable conspectus of the literature of 'Spenglerismus,' which offers at the same time a kind of cross-section through the intellectual life of Germany in 1922, is M. Schroeter's *Der Streit um Spengler* (München, 1922). The *Preussische Jahrbücher* of May in the same year devoted an entire number to Spengler; several of the essays and reviews it contains are important and illuminating. In English there are short notices in Gooch's *Germany*, and by Weinell, *Hibbert Rev.*, Jan., 1924.

² Pinthus, *Menschheits-dämmerung*, p. x.

I will rather quote a few poignant lines which bring home to us the intensity with which some of them felt the tragedy of the night into which that deepening twilight was leading their country and mankind ; they are headed 'Gethsemane' :

'All men are the Saviour.
In the twilight garden we all drink of the Cup.
Father, let it not be taken from us !
We are all of one love :
We are all deep woe.
Father, thy world is our Cross.
Let it not be taken from us !'

Poetry of this type is called by the outside critic 'anarchic' but is entitled by its own practitioners 'Expressionismus.' 'Expressionism' is the opposite, not of what we call impressionism, but of naturalism. The expressionist artist was not in the least concerned to depict outward things as men in general see them, or even, like the impressionist, to translate into form some pregnant moment in his own experience of them. He sought only to utter his own glowing individual vision or impassioned intuition, using the forms and images of outward things merely as instruments of that utterance. He did not, however, conceive himself as a merely 'subjective' poet. Rather, he claimed to see the world through an imagination which everywhere pierced to and disclosed its inner significance ; and he scornfully contrasted this transcendental universe laid bare in its eternal truth, with the merely momentary truth of impressionism and the merely surface truth of naturalism. 'For the piecemeal atomism, of the impressionist,' declares its eloquent exponent, Kasimir Edschmid, 'we have a great, all-embracing world-emotion. . . . The earth is a colossal landscape, given us by God. We have so to see it that it does not appear deformed. No one doubts that what appears to us the outer reality cannot be the truly real. Reality must be created by ourselves. The meaning of things however must be sought. We must not be satisfied with the believed, fancied, or observed fact. The image of the world must be received pure and unsullied. But that is only in ourselves. . . . Whenever a man has the root of things in his hand, if his fist has grip, then Expressionism comes about.'¹

¹ *Ueber den Expressionismus in der Literatur* (Tribüne der Kunst und Zeit), based on a speech delivered in Dec., 1917.

This ferment of transcendentalism in glowing temperaments held little promise of a severely cultured poetic form. And in fact we commonly find, in this expressionist poetry, an explosive chaotically-surgingly speech, mostly in brief lyrics which, as I have said, usually refuse rhyme and even rhythm, structure, continuity and sequence. The expressionist drama cannot, as drama, dispense with plot. But its plots are usually of naked simplicity, brief, vehement, spasmodic. This does not exclude great diversities both of style and temperament in their dramatic speech. There is the cool platonist Kaiser, says Diebold in his powerful but hostile study, 'Anarchy in the Drama,' and the nervously ecstatic Kornfeld, the theatre-film-like Hasenklever, the heavily moving von Unruh, the mocking cynic Sternheim, and the Catholic believer Sorge. These are the strongest dramatists of to-day. 'What binds them together is the passion for inwardness.'

The socialists' crusade against capital, already adumbrated in *The Pillars of Society*, surges through Georg Kaiser's powerful and original drama, *Gas*. 'Gas' is the symbol of money, which industry, the machine, produces for the capitalist, while the men who work the machine are used up. The hero, son of a millionaire, is engaged in manufacturing a gas more powerful than all known fuels. All the world runs wild after it. One day something goes wrong, there is a frightful explosion in which many lives are lost. The workmen strike, and the world's supply of gas threatens to run short. The millionaire's son casts about for a solution. There was no flaw in the manufacturing process, the formula used was perfectly correct. Then the true solution flashes upon him. No, it was not the formula for the gas that was wrong, but the product, the gas itself. 'Away with the Machine, and discover Man! The millions of men mechanically used up to produce it!' In this strange but impressive drama, the middle piece, in its two parts, of a tetralogy of social reform, Kaiser sounds the most strident note in the war with mechanism, as the enemy of life. And with this play in mind, we see how Kaiser's fellow dramatist, Ernst Toller came to make a drama of the story of our Nottingham machine-breakers, performed here not long ago. These Nottingham lace-machines were meant, like Kaiser's gas-works, as a symbol of the mechanism which devours and consumes man. We understand too how a more philosophic spirit than Toller, no social anarchist, but a travelled aristocrat, Count Keyserling, should

sum up Chicago as the city in which mechanism was completely master of man. He tells us with appalling clearness what he means. 'It is not that the machine kills the man, but that it reduces all that is spiritual to material, all that is organic to mechanical terms, by showing that without soul, cultural interests, or emotional cultivation, it is possible to live a full and busy life.'¹

VIII.

In these sentences of Count Keyserling, vibrating with passion for spiritual culture, we have a glimpse of the more ideal aspect of the revolution, hinted in many a chaotic utterance but of which we must now notice the explicit signs. The rebels against mechanism and social routine often used the language of the libertine, but their libertinage was shot with idealism; and what seemed the naked effrontery of passion was often a fierce effort at self-liberation from a bondage of the soul. The poet-collector of the anthology mentioned above, *The Twilight of Humanity*, explains that the 'twilight,' if it means primarily the twilight of decadence, the passing from day's splendour to the night of despair, in which their country seemed to be sinking, or sunk, means also the twilight which precedes the dawn of the new day; the deliverance of Man which Man himself can alone achieve.² It has been said, finely and profoundly, that chaos in Germany is a 'chaos that longs to be a Cosmos,'—*ein Chaos das sich nach Cosmos sehnt*.

We must not look in the chaotic ferment of these poets of the 'Twilight,' whether they take it to be of the dawning or of the dying day, for more than the germs of such a Cosmos. But the germs are there. Love and brotherhood are passionate ideals, and their vision of them transfigures to them the world. They know, too, that the spiritual revolution must begin within. Thus René Schickele:

'What I would have the world be
I must first be myself,
And utterly and without constraint.
I must become a ray of light,
A clear water,
And a fleckless Hand
Held out to greet and to help'³

¹ Graf Hermann Keyserling, *Reisetagebuch eines Philosophen*, p. 613. With the justice of this diagnosis of Chicago we are not here concerned.

² Pinthus, *u.s.*, ix.

³ *Abschwur* (Pinthus, *u.s.*, p. 269).

And Franz Werfel, more mystically :

' All things *are* if thou lovest ! . . .
Heart, heart, how dost thou shape and make ! . . .
When thou soarest, Man, the world grows great,
And when thou sinkest it grows desolate !
Only the soul that loses itself in love
Is of all the measure, and all measure above !'¹

The most remarkable and original manifestation of this impulse towards a new Cosmos of the spirit is that 'Youth-Movement' to which I have already referred ; the more so as it suggests to the outsider rather a revindication of Chaos, so resolutely do many of its spokesmen denounce the social order² of which they are heirs. It extends to the youth of all classes, parties, and creeds. Among the proletariat workers, free-thinkers, evangelicals, Catholics, the keenest and most spirited young men and young women form new groups, each, while retaining the old name, seeking to build up a new life upon a variously simplified and spiritualized version of the traditional faith. The oldest of all, the nucleus of the entire movement, the 'free-German' youth, is as its name suggests, the freest from tradition ; but while remaining definitely anti-Christian, it repudiates the free-thinker's idolatry of intelligence, as well as the neglect or abuse of the body. The 'Free Proletarian' youths have broken away from the materialism of Marx ; they resolutely oppose the alcoholism and sexual decadence of the great cities. The 'Protestant Youth,' more in touch than these with Christian tradition, pursue especially a mystical devotion to the person of Christ, but repudiate the dogmas and secular aims of the churches. While the much larger 'Catholic' group, with ramifications all over the land, seeks, according to its most authentic exponent, Foerster, to reawaken the ancient soul of the German people, long buried beneath modern materialism and *Staatskultur*, and historically and psychologically nearer to Catholicism than to the superimposed teaching and institutions of Luther. What all these groups have in common is the religion of youth, and if they do not, any more than the adherents of the older faiths, interpret its

¹ *Das Mass der Dinge* (Pinthus, u.s., 270).

² The fullest account of the *Jugendbewegung* is that of Förster : *Jugendbewegung, Jugendseele, Jugendziel*. See also the succinct article in *Hibb. Journ.*, April, 1924, by Dr. Meyrick Booth, and Gooch's excellent summary, *Germany*, p. 311 f.

dictates altogether in the same sense, their practice makes with immense preponderance for social service, sexual purity, class fraternity, and international goodwill.

The Youth Movement is likely to be dismissed by the practical Anglo-Saxon as a mere expression of puerile and impracticable impatience of the discipline of ordered life. Such a view is wholly inadequate. The Youth Movement has severed or loosened the more galling bonds which tied its members to the old society ; but they are everywhere forming new and more plastic modes of social cohesion. And that the new society thus constituted cannot be ignored in any attempt to interpret the post-war German mind, may be judged from the emphatic testimony of one of its leaders : ' The whole moral outlook of the young people of Germany is incomparably better to-day (1924) than it was thirty years ago.'¹

From the Youth Movement, an organized attempt to escape from the mechanism of modern German society, let us pass to two other movements which in different ways seek rather to grapple with the mechanism, and to turn the machinery which wears and crushes human life into the other machinery which furthers and upbuilds it.

The first, of which only the briefest mention can here be made, since its counterpart has been familiar to us in England since the closing decades of the last century, is the attempt to put education of university rank within reach of the people. But if England originated the "university extension" movement, post-war Germany has carried it out, like some other English inventions, with a systematic thoroughness which we cannot yet rival. The foundation of 'People's Universities' (*Volkshochschulen*) began only in 1918, mainly through the impulse of a single creative mind. In 1924 a 'Volkshochschule' was at work in every German town of 150,000 inhabitants or upwards.²

The other movement is that, less advanced and far more difficult, which seeks to humanize labour under the capitalist system, by giving the worker more opportunity for self-determination and responsibility. The socialists had of course another solution for labour problems ; but though the strongest party in the new State, they were not a

¹ Quoted by Meyrick Booth, *u.s.*, p. 473.

² An excellent account of them is given by A. Picht (*Contemp. Rev.*, Feb., 1924).

majority, and meanwhile the position of the workers grew worse. The great capitalists grew enormously in power and wealth, and were able to make largely ineffective the provisions of the Constitution designed to put Labour and Capital on equal terms. It is at this point that the new group of creative and progressive German thinkers steps in, among whom I name in particular Dr. Eugen Rosenstock, Professor of Law at Breslau.¹ 'What,' he asks in his illuminating pamphlet 'Living Work in Industry' (*Lebensarbeit in der Industrie*, 1926), 'What if there had to be ordinances designed to do justice not only to the worker as he is, to his actual wants and needs, but to the worker as he is to be? ordinances which will set free his creative power, and hew the path to that liberation through his passion to create? Such ordinances would complete and crown our social policy and our labour legislation, by giving free play to the need for power and passion. Thus, in place of the need for "protection" (secured by social legislation) and the need for political freedom (secured by labour legislation), there comes a need which is not even confined to the individual but, through the courage and vitality it inspires in him, redounds to the progress of the industry and thence of the nation at large.'

It is here, in fact, that we must look for one of the springs from which the German nation is to renew its strength. The mechanization of industry is a disease from which no country is free; but Germany's financial straits make reform at once more difficult and more urgent; and the very urgency is a stimulus to a crowd of eager and able brains to bring it about: 'Industry must recover by help of intellectual power what it has lost in financial resources.'

I cannot here enter upon the detail of the proposals made by Rosenstock and his colleagues. Enough, that they centre in the plan known in French as *commandite*, and already largely practised in French printing-works, by which a piece of work, instead of being distributed to the 'hands' by the employer, is handed over to the workers *en bloc*, who make themselves responsible for the execution, and themselves distribute the payment according to each man's

¹ Professor Rosenstock honoured us in Manchester with a visit of inquiry last autumn, and rejoiced, he told the present writer, in nothing that he saw and heard so much as in the discussion-classes at the University Settlement at Ancoats.

performance. This plan, which restores to the workman responsibility and duty, was hailed by the Union of German engineers in 1923 as the counterpart of the reforms by which Germany recovered her nationhood after the Napoleonic occupation. The comparison may be too grandiose but it is not meaningless. As the army of hired soldiers which was destroyed at Jena was replaced by the embattled host of Germany's youth which overcame Napoleon at Leipzig, so the German workman, becoming responsible, will learn to use his capacity to the full. In this willing and responsible, and not servile, service, the *Jugendbewegung*, which began as a mere revolt against the restraints of society and creed, may finally find the right solution of its needs, and at the same time bring about the spiritual emancipation of industry. 'If our young manhood takes this yoke upon itself,' concludes Dr. Rosenstock, 'the *Jugendbewegung* in the social order may in reality become that which a century ago the national army became for the state: the living stream whose tide, streaming through the lifeless mechanism of industry, may restore its forces and bring it to an effective action that will outlast the changing generations.'¹

IX.

Thus widespread was the revolt against mechanism in society and life, and thus manifold the effort to replenish and recreate 'the German soul.' I have now to glance, finally, at the revolt against mechanism in the sphere of mind and thought. By this is meant the reaction, now extremely widespread in the intellectual centres, and in the younger professoriate of the universities, against those characteristics of modern German mentality which tend to atrophy or sterilize spiritual life:² the rigidity of a theological dogmatism inaccessible to fresh spiritual currents; the aridity of a scholarship punctilious in the search for 'sources' but scornful of spiritual values; the ego-centric hardness of a capitalism obsessed with the vision of material power. The reaction against all these forms of mechanized mentality began long before the war; it was the reply of the spiritual forces of Germany to the materialist and military idolatries of the empire. It

¹ Rosenstock, *u.s.*, p. 64.

² Cf. the striking account of this movement in its various ramifications by Professor Gustav Hübner, of Königsberg, in *Hibbert Journal*, Oct., 1924: 'The Present Mind of the German Universities.'

gathered increased volume, naturally, with the empire's fall, and drew into its alliance men who were fighting for spiritual emancipation in other quarters and with other arms. Thus the exposure of capitalist mentality received powerful assistance from the historians of economics and religion, Weber and Troeltsch, who had traced the origin of capitalism, with its far-sighted abstention from present enjoyment for the sake of future benefit, to the Puritan's calculated asceticism for the salvation of his soul, contrasting both these types of the *homme clos*, with the instinctive and emotional vitality of the early Christian, who refused to take interest and was 'open' to all the winds of the spirit. And as these Christian and historical assailants of capitalism sought their ideal in the economic socialism of the feudal clan or the medieval guild, they found themselves joining hands with the medievalists of the reaction who looked back with longing to medieval Christianity.

The reaction from mechanism in scholarship, again, found its chief inspiration in the work of the great philosophic critic and historian of literature, Wilhelm Dilthey (d. 1910), whose profound interpretations of poetic experience, in 'Erlebnis und Dichtung,' opened a new way in the biography of poets; and who himself looked back, like the Neo-Romantics, to the Grimms and other masters of humanity and scholarship in the early nineteenth century. And the historians Weber and Troeltsch themselves, who had thrown so much light on the psychology of capitalism, contributed also, by their rich and many-sided apprehension of the meaning of history, to discredit the fetish of a narrow specialism.

The great personality of Ernst Troeltsch meets us once more when we turn, thirdly, to the reaction against the mechanism of dogma. His life-long wrestling with the problem of the relativity of truth has been described above. But the thinkers chiefly in question here were more directly concerned with theology and religion. They did not necessarily reject the dogmas of orthodoxy. In some vigorous reforming movements, both on the Catholic and on the Evangelical side, these are strenuously asserted. But they are approached otherwise than by ratiocinative processes. Mysticism, with its claim to an intuitive vision of God and communion with divine things, has always attracted minds of this type. And in the present century this attraction has been confirmed by the general discredit of 'intelligence' as an instrument in the discovery of truth, under the influence especi-

ally of Nietzsche and Bergson. Two remarkable books, among others, both enormously popular, though not with quite the same audiences, owed much of their vogue to the wide diffusion of this changed temper. The one offered a new path to the inmost sanctuary of religious faith, exempt from the barren logomachy of the creeds. The other opened new horizons to multitudes eager for religion but impatient of its conventional formulations. Rudolf Otto's 'The Holy' (*Das Heilige*, 1922), sought with great analytic and constructive power to establish the reality and significance of something that we recognize as Holy, as of the 'reverence' which it excites and demands. Otto was thus providing with a psychological basis the religion of three-fold reverence, for what is above us, like us, and beneath us, which Goethe sketched in a memorable chapter of *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre*.¹ The second book, Count Keyserling's *Travel Diary of a Philosopher* (1919), has far less pretence to psychological power, but is based upon a rich first-hand experience of oriental, especially Indian mystic, religion. Keyserling, whose verdict on Chicago was quoted above, is a philosophic nobleman who left his Esthonian seat to find 'the way to himself' by what he said was the shortest route—'a voyage round the world.'² He made the voyage, but he had found himself, as he thought, long before the close, lulled by the magic of India. India is the central theme of the 'Travel Diary,' the ruling preoccupation of the 'philosopher.' Keyserling's India is indeed his own,—an India in which the English are absolutely ignored, while the web of Indian religious life, obscure, intricate, subtle, many-coloured, is unfolded before us in a brilliant half visionary light. This book is indeed at bottom less a study of religious or other phenomena than, as Keyserling himself says, a 'poem,' in which facts are introduced, not for their own sake, but as means of expressing a meaning with which they have nothing to do;—an expressionist prose poem, in short. And this 'meaning' is not a doctrine but rather, as 'Nature' was for Wordsworth, or Imagination for Blake, a well-spring of inspiring thought and feeling ;

¹ The kindred, but more definitely evangelical, book of F. Heiler, *Das Gebet*, 1918, is reviewed by Dean Inge in *Quart. Rev.*, 1923. Cf. Weinell, *ibid.*, p. 277.

² For a critical, if theologically biassed, account of Keyserling, cf. R. Hüpfeld, *Graf K. Ein Vortrag*. (Bonn, 1922).

not, in his own words, a theoretically-possible view of the universe, but a practically attainable state of mind ;¹ a religion, in fact, disengaged from theology and ecclesiasticism, the spirit released from the doctrinal and institutional 'machine.'

Keyserling's book, though largely written before or during the war, was only published in 1919, and in spite of its bulk and difficulty, sold by tens of thousands.² Multitudes of educated Germans, who had witnessed the collapse of the stupendous machine of empire, felt the fascination of religions founded upon a disdainful abnegation of the material world. Keyserling, it is true, did not preach any such fundamental renunciation. He was at bottom too European to embrace unreservedly the passive negations of oriental soul-culture. He had, moreover, returned from India by way of the States, and despite his horror of Chicago, found that American 'efficiency' and American 'New Thought' had something to teach. His oriental mysticism received a Western embroidery. The German of the future was to become a purged and purified soul, but for the purpose ultimately of a purified and spiritualized citizenship.

The Esthonian baron who had made the pilgrimage of the world to find himself was not well equipped to become a leader of men or the founder of a religious sect. But he could not evade the implications of his own book. He had heralded a new faith, and loud and eager voices from many sides summoned him to show the way. Disciples flocked about him, and presently they organized themselves as a 'Society for Free Philosophy,' meeting for training and conference in an Academy or 'School of Wisdom,' at Darmstadt, and issuing a periodical 'The Lightbearer' (*Der Leuchter*). Keyserling, the actual 'bringer of the light,' provided a manual called 'The Way of Perfection.' Here, with German strenuousness and method, the spirit of Indian mystic meditation was wooed, and Rabindranath Tagore, its finest flower, whom Keyserling had visited in Calcutta (—'Never have I seen so much soul concentrated in a single man,' he wrote afterwards)³—came and lectured to the School. But Keyserling did not forget that he was training Germans, and for citizenship in the

¹ Keyserling, *u.s.*, Preface, p. xxvii.

² Gooch, *Germany*, p. 324. More recently the *Indienfahrt* of Waldemar Bonsel has touched a like note and awakened a like response.

³ Keyserling, *u.s.*, p. 302.

German state. Their soul-culture was to be no recluse-meditation upon eternity, but, like the meditation of Goethe, the instrument and accompaniment of action.¹

And Keyserling was not the only prophet of a new faith who offered to the hungry German soul the vision of a spiritual perfection to be had without the entangling apparatus of traditional dogma. The Darmstadt School of Wisdom had a parallel at Dornach in Switzerland in Rudolf Steiner's Anthroposophical Society, founded just before the war, and *The Way to Perfection* a counterpart in his *Threefold Commonwealth*, 1919. But a more powerful and original essay in the transfusion of the traditional spiritual values was Leopold Ziegler's 'Transformation of the Gods' (*Der Gestaltwandel der Götter*). This grandiose survey of the historic development of religion in the West is, like Spengler's more famous *Untergang*, an imposing intellectual fabric, reared to dizzy heights of speculation upon a basis of massive erudition. Both books are deeply stamped with the character of the German mind. Ziegler's theme recalls, and doubtless alludes to, the 'Götter-dämmerung' of Wagner: The reign of the old gods is over, Walhalla is in flames; but out of the ruin rise the deathless forms of Siegfried and Brynhild, symbols of immortal love. Ziegler, too, will save from the wreck of Christianity the precious mysteries which its genius conceived, but which remain after its passing, as instruments by which Man may realise the divine. 'Guilt and atonement, sacrifice and new birth, creation and redemption,—it is by these that Man, seeking to get beyond himself, wins apotheosis, even when he has long ceased to perceive gods above, without, or within him.' I am not here concerned with Ziegler's negations, but with his bold and impressive endeavour to save the ethical substance of the old faith; an endeavour the seeming futility of which may raise a smile, but which no one will deride who believes that the spirit of Christianity will remain, a deathless possession of humanity, whatever may be the destiny of its tradition or of its doctrine in the hands of the historian and of the philosopher.

¹ For the later career of Keyserling, see Gooch, *u.s.*, p. 326 f., and Weinel, *u.s.*

X.

Epilogue.

The ultimate drift of the mind of post-war Germany cannot be confidently gauged, much less summed up in a formula. We have been endeavouring, in the preceding pages to record some of the talk overheard at a vast national Symposium—a Symposium where the fellow-guests, as in a modern banquet, sit at separate tables, and discourse often of different matters and in divergent keys, dialects and tempers. At some of the tables there is brawling; at others abstruse and difficult argument; at few, gaiety or sparkling jest. No Socrates has yet appeared, to interpret the final purport of the talk, and lift it to its authoritative and convincing climax. Perhaps he is among the guests, and his turn is not yet come.

In the meantime, let us listen at the close to a few sentences of one who, if far enough from commanding the serene and assured sagacity of Socrates, had more perhaps of the visionary fire of the prophet than any of his contemporaries, and who met the prophet's reward. Walter Rathenau has already been mentioned (§ III.), but the outlines of his career may be briefly recalled. Born into wealth and power as the son of a great industrialist, he early showed the qualities of brain and character which use these advantages as a lever for enterprise, not as a pretext for luxury or indolence. By study in German, Swiss, and French universities, and then by travel in America, South Africa, and Russia, he won a rich equipment of sociological culture and observation invaluable to a nation-builder. Entering industry after his return he soon displayed a mastery both of technological science and of business organization which led to his appointment as sole director of the greatest of German electricity concerns, the 'A.E.S.' But the man who now stood almost on the pinnacle of the German industrial world was also an ardent idealist, who bitterly felt the price which was being exacted from German labour for the booming success of capital. His first book was in substance as in title a 'criticism of the time.'¹ In the soulless labour of the millions who worked that exquisitely elaborated machinery he saw an enslavement of the spirit to mechanism, an enslavement

¹ *Zur Kritik der Zeit* (1912).

in no wise redeemed by the profusion of resulting dividends which maintained a growing class of profiteers in affluent idleness. No socialist, he yet believed with the socialists that no society is healthy in which there is either a proletariat or a parasite ; but his final measure of social health was not economic at all : the end of society was the development of soul.

The war only changed the current of Rathenau's gigantic activities. He had opposed its inception ; but his organizing power was recognized by his appointment as first director of the Raw Material department. In the height of the crisis he found time to launch a plan directed to the elimination of the proletariat condition,—in his book 'Of Things that are Coming' (1917). The Revolution was at once too chaotic and too incomplete to satisfy him. Deeply aware of the weaknesses of the German state, of the hollowness of the imperialism and militarism which for a hundred years had diverted the German people from its true goal, and had now brought it to unprecedented disaster, he yet saw in the republican society which took its place only anarchical forces let loose, the demoralization of a people released from restraint, and reckless with want and despair.

He scorned the claim that the German people had effected its own revolution. 'It is not we who liberated ourselves : it was the enemy ; it was our destruction that set us free.' In the compromise-Constitution of Weimar he saw only a wretched idea-less fabrication. But he believed profoundly in the final recovery of the German people. It was not the war only it had to recover from. It was that hundred years alienation from itself. 'We are endowed as no other people is for a mission of the spirit. Such a mission was ours till a century ago : we renounced it because through political slackness of will-power we fell out of step ; we did not keep pace with the other nations in internal political development, but devoted ourselves to the most far-reaching mechanical developments and to their counterpart in bids for power. It was Faust, lured from his true path, cast off by the Earth-spirit, astray among witches, brawlers, and alchemists.

'But the Faust-soul of Germany is not dead. Of all peoples on the earth we alone have never ceased to struggle with ourselves. And not only with ourselves, but with our dæmon, and God. We still hear within ourselves the All ; we still expand in every breath of creation. We understand the language of things, of men, and of

peoples. We measure everything by itself, not by us ; . . . We are all alike and yet all different ; each of us is a wanderer, a brooder, a seeker. Things of the spirit are taken seriously by us ; we do not make them serve our lives, we serve their life with ours.'

"And you dare to say this," interrupts a supposed hearer, "in the face of all the bemiring and brutalizing that we experience—the profiteering and gourmandizing, the abject submissiveness, the shameless desertions, the apathy, the insincerity, the heartlessness and mindlessness of our day ?" Yes, I dare to say it, for I believe it and I know it.¹ And so, he concludes the last and ripest statement of his views : 'Only on Thoughts and Ideals can our existence be staked. We can and must live by becoming what we were designed to be, what we were about to be, what we failed to become : a people of the Spirit, the Spirit among the peoples of mankind.'²

It was the originality and the greatness of Rathenau that this profound faith was not the subterfuge of a dreamer but the animating assurance of a mind incessantly occupied with the working out of his country's salvation in the complex detail of political and economic action. He thought synthetically and on a vast scale. The individualism of which we boast in England,—'every man for himself,'—was wholly foreign to him, frankly as he recognized the greatness of England's economic achievement. But so was socialism, which after dividing the whole wealth of the country among its citizens would leave each a proletarian. What he envisaged was a National Control of Industry, by the unification and standardization of the whole of German industry and commerce in one great Trust, working under a state charter. This was described at large in his *New Economics* (1918).³ And his brilliant powers of dealing with political as well as economic facts were finally recognized by the republic of which he hoped so little, when he was called in to be Minister of Reconstruction and then, in April, 1922, Foreign Minister. In this capacity he went to the Genoa Conference as an apostle of peace and reconciliation, and no German statesman had yet impressed his Ally hearers as this man of genius impressed Mr. Lloyd George and M. Barthou, neither of them even approximately his equal in range of culture or in

¹ *The New Society*, p. 98 f.

² *Ibid.*, p. 145.

³ *The New Society*, p. 37 n.

weight of mind. His position was the stronger because he was convinced that the Treaty of Versailles, which he was now discussing over a council-board with its authors or sponsors, must perish of itself, since it was founded on hate. But his conclusion at the same moment of the Treaty of Rapello with Russia was an anticipation of the future too daring for ordinary judgments, and his mission to Genoa at once broke down. Then the baser passions that in those early days of the republic lay in wait for unpopular greatness came out of their lurking places, and in June, 1922, the most gifted, far-sighted, and high-minded of living German statesmen fell before the bullet of anti-Semite assassins.¹

In one of his keen and remorseless analyses of his country's mentality, Rathenau declares that the German mind is without the power of creating forms, but has eminently the power of filling the forms it finds, or inherits, or takes over, with a richer content. And it may be that Rathenau himself, overflowing with ideas as he was and inexhaustible in schemes for helping his stricken country out of the morass, was less eminent than some others in the clear-cut thinking which gives structure to intellectual creation. But he had in extraordinary measure the wealth of mind, the quickness of heart and sense, the acuteness and comprehensiveness of imagination which make whatever is abstract, concrete and human and positive; which bring philosophy from the clouds to the service of the state and the factory and the home, and yet leave unimpaired the winged power which sees all things with larger, other eyes than ours. And in that union of opposite gifts, rare in this degree, yet deeply grounded in the mentality of her people, lies the hope of Germany in the future.

¹ In a letter to an intimate friend, recently published, Rathenau vindicates his claim to be a German. 'I have and know none but German blood, no people but the German. If I am driven from my German home, I remain German and it alters nothing. You speak of my blood and race, meaning the Jewish. With the Jews I have no bond but that which all Germans share, the Bible, memory, and the formation of the Old and New Testament' (to W. Schwaner, Jan. 23, 1916). A collection of Rathenau's letters from all periods of his life has recently been published by his mother.