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TRANSCENDENTALISM IN NEW ENGLAND: A HISTORY

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Содержание

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PREFACE

While we are gathering up for exhibition before other nations, the results of a century of American life, with a purpose to show the issues thus far of our experiment in free institutions, it is fitting that some report should be made of the influences that have shaped the national mind, and determined in any important degree or respect its intellectual and moral character. A well-considered account of these influences would be of very great value to the student of history, the statesman and philosopher, not merely as throwing light on our own social problem, but as illustrating the general law of human progress. This book is offered as a modest contribution to that knowledge.

Transcendentalism, as it is called, the transcendental movement, was an important factor in American life. Though local in activity, limited in scope, brief in duration, engaging but a comparatively small number of individuals, and passing over the upper regions of the mind, it left a broad and deep trace on ideas and institutions. It affected thinkers, swayed politicians, guided moralists, inspired philanthropists, created reformers. The moral enthusiasm of the last generation, which broke out with such prodigious power in the holy war against slavery; which uttered such earnest protests against capital punishment, and the wrongs inflicted on women; which made such passionate pleading in behalf of the weak, the injured, the disfranchised of every race and condition; which exalted humanity above institutions, and proclaimed the inherent worth of man, – owed, in larger measure than is suspected, its glow and force to the Transcendentalists. This, as a fact of history, must be admitted, as well by those who judge the movement unfavorably, as by its friends. In the view of history, which is concerned with causes and effects in their large human relations, individual opinions on them are of small moment. It was once the fashion – and still in some quarters it is the fashion – to laugh at Transcendentalism as an incomprehensible folly, and to call Transcendentalists visionaries. To admit that they were, would not alter the fact that they exerted an influence on their generation. It is usual with critics of a cold, unsympathetic, cynical cast, to speak of Transcendentalism as a form of sentimentality, and of Transcendentalists as sentimentalists; to decry enthusiasm, and deprecate the mischievous effects of feeling on the discussion of social questions. But their disapproval, however just and wholesome, does not abolish the trace which moral enthusiasm, under whatever name these judges may please to put upon it, has left on the social life of the people. Whether the impression was for evil or for good, it is there, and equally significant for warning or for commendation.

As a form of mental philosophy Transcendentalism may have had its day; at any rate, it is no longer in the ascendant, and at present is manifestly on the decline, being suppressed by the philosophy of experience, which, under different names, is taking possession of the speculative world. But neither has this consideration weight in deciding its value as an element in progress. An unsound system requires as accurate a description and as severe an analysis as a sound one; and no speculative prejudice should interfere with the most candid acknowledgment of its importance. Error is not disarmed or disenchanted by caricature or neglect.

To those who may object that the writer has too freely indulged his own prejudices in favor of Transcendentalism and the Transcendentalists, and has transgressed his own rules by writing a eulogy instead of a history, he would reply, that in his belief every system is best understood when studied sympathetically, and is most fairly interpreted from the inside. We can know its purposes only from its friends, and we can do justice to its friends only when we accept their own account of their beliefs and aims. Rénan somewhere says, that in order to judge a faith one must have confessed it and abandoned it. Such a rule supposes sincerity in the confession and honesty in the withdrawal;

but with this qualification its reasonableness is easily admitted. If the result of such a verdict prove more favorable than the polemic would give, and more cordial than the critic approves, it may not be the less just for that.

The writer was once a pure Transcendentalist, a warm sympathizer with transcendental aspirations, and an ardent admirer of transcendental teachers. His ardor may have cooled; his faith may have been modified; later studies and meditations may have commended to him other ideas and methods; but he still retains enough of his former faith to enable him to do it justice. His purpose has been to write a history; not a critical or philosophical history, but simply a history; to present his subject with the smallest possible admixture of discussion, either in defence or opposition. He has, therefore, avoided the metaphysics of his theme, by presenting cardinal ideas in the simplest statement he could command, and omitting the details that would only cumber a narrative. Sufficient references are given for the direction of students who may wish to become more intimately acquainted with the transcendental philosophy, but an exhaustive survey of the speculative field has not been attempted. This book has but one purpose – to define the fundamental ideas of the philosophy, to trace them to their historical and speculative sources, and to show whither they tended. If he has done this inadequately, it will be disclosed; he has done it honestly, and as well as he could. In a little while it will be difficult to do it at all; for the disciples, one by one, are falling asleep; the literary remains are becoming few and scarce; the materials are disappearing beneath the rapid accumulations of thought; the new order is thrusting the old into the background; and in the course of a few years, even they who can tell the story feelingly will have passed away. The author, whose task was gladly accepted, though not voluntarily chosen, ventures to hope, that if it has not been done as well as another might have done it, it has not been done so ill that others will wish he had left it untouched.

O. B. F.

New York, April 12, 1876.

I.
BEGINNINGS IN GERMANY

To make intelligible the Transcendental Philosophy of the last generation in New England it is not necessary to go far back into the history of thought. Ancient idealism, whether Eastern or Western, may be left undisturbed. Platonism and neo-Platonism may be excused from further tortures on the witness stand. The speculations of the mystics, Romanist or Protestant, need not be re-examined. The idealism of Gale, More, Pordage, of Cudworth and the later Berkeley, in England, do not immediately concern us. We need not even submit John Locke to fresh cross-examination, or describe the effect of his writings on the thinkers who came after him.

The Transcendental Philosophy, so-called, had a distinct origin in Immanuel Kant, whose "Critique of Pure Reason" was published in 1781, and opened a new epoch in metaphysical thought. By this it is not meant that Kant started a new movement of the human mind, proposed original problems, or projected issues never contemplated before. The questions he discussed had been discussed from the earliest times, and with an acumen that had searched out the nicest points of definition. In the controversy between the Nominalists, who maintained that the terms used to describe abstract and universal ideas were mere names, designating no real objects and corresponding to no actually existing things, and the Realists, who contended that such terms were not figments of language, but described realities, solid though incorporeal, actual existences, not to be confounded with visible and transient things, but the essential types of such, – the scholastics of either school discussed after their manner, with astonishing fulness and subtlety, the matters which later metaphysicians introduced. The modern Germans revived in substance the doctrines held by the Realists. But the scholastic method, which was borrowed from the Greeks, lost its authority when the power of Aristotle's name declined, and the scholastic discussions, turning, as they signally did, on theological questions, ceased to be interesting when the spell of theology was broken.

Between the schools of Sensationalism and Idealism, since John Locke, the same matters were in debate. The Scotch as well as the English metaphysicians dealt with them according to their genius and ability. The different writers, as they succeeded one another, took up the points that were presented in their day, exercised on them such ingenuity as they possessed, and in good faith made their several contributions to the general fund of thought, but neglected to sink their shafts deep enough below the surface to strike new springs of water.

Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding was an event that made an epoch in philosophy, because its author, not satisfied to take up questions where his predecessors had left them, undertook an independent examination of the Human Mind, in order to ascertain what were the conditions of its knowledge. The ability with which this attempt was made, the entire sincerity of it, the patient watch of the mental operations, the sagacity that followed the trail of lurking thoughts, surprised them in their retreats, and extracted from them the secret of their combinations, fairly earned for him the title of "Father of Modern Psychology." The intellectual history of the race shows very few such examples of single-minded fidelity combined with rugged vigor and unaffected simplicity. With what honest directness he announced his purpose! His book grew out of a warm discussion among friends, the fruitlessness whereof convinced him that both sides had taken a wrong course; that before men set themselves upon inquiries into the deep matters of philosophy "it was necessary to examine our own abilities, and see what objects our understandings were or were not fitted to deal with." To do this was his purpose.

"First," he said, "I shall inquire into the original of those ideas, notions, or whatever else you please to call them, which a man observes and is conscious to himself he has in his mind; and the ways whereby the understanding comes to be furnished with them.

"Secondly, I shall endeavor to show what knowledge the understanding hath by those ideas, and the certainty, evidence and extent of it.

"Thirdly, I shall make some inquiry into the nature and grounds of faith or opinion; whereby I mean that assent which we give to any proposition as true, of whose truth we have yet no certain knowledge; and we shall have occasion to examine the reasons and degrees of assent."

Locke did his work well: how well is attested by the excitement it caused in the intellectual world, the impulse it gave to speculation in England and on the continent of Europe, the controversies over the author's opinions, the struggle of opposing schools to secure for their doctrines his authority, the appreciation on one side, the depreciation on the other, the disposition of one period to exalt him as the greatest discoverer in the philosophic realm, and the disposition of another period to challenge his title to the name of philosopher. The "Essay" is a small book, written in a homely, business-like style, without affectation of depth or pretence of learning, but it is charged with original mental force. Exhaustive it was not; exhaustive it could not have been. The England of the seventeenth century was not favorable to original researches in that field. The "Essay" was planned in 1670, completed after considerable interruptions in 1687, and published in 1690. To one acquainted with the phases through which England was passing at that period, these dates will tell of untoward influences that might account for graver deficiencies than characterize Locke's work. The scholastic philosophy, from which Locke broke contemptuously away at Oxford, seems to have left no mark on his mind; but the contemptuous revulsion, and the naked self-reliance in which the sagacious but not generously cultivated man found refuge, probably roughened his speculative sensibility, and made it impossible for him to handle with perfect nicety the more delicate facts of his science. It can hardly be claimed that Locke was endowed by nature with philosophical genius of the highest order. While at Oxford he abandoned philosophy, in disgust, for medicine, and distinguished himself there by judgment and penetration. Subsequently his attention was turned to politics, another pursuit even less congenial with introspective genius. These may not be the reasons for the "incompleteness" which so glowing a eulogist as Mr. George H. Lewes admits in the "Essay;" but at all events, whatever the reasons may have been, the incompleteness was felt; the debate over the author's meaning was an open proclamation of it; at the close of a century it was apparent to at least one mind that Locke's attempt must be repeated, and his work done over again more carefully.

The man who came to this conclusion and was moved to act on it was Immanuel Kant, born at Königsberg, in Prussia, April 22d, 1724; died there February 12th, 1804. His was a life rigorously devoted to philosophy. He inherited from his parents a love of truth, a respect for moral worth, and an intellectual integrity which his precursor in England did not more than match. He was a master in the sciences, a proficient in languages, a man cultivated in literature, a severe student, of the German type, whose long, calm, peaceful years were spent in meditation, lecturing and writing. He was distinguished as a mathematician before he was heard of as a philosopher, having predicted the existence of the planet Uranus before Herschel discovered it. He was forty-five years old when these trained powers were brought to bear on the study of the human mind: he was sixty-seven when the meditation was ended. His book, the "Critique of Pure Reason," was the result of twelve years of such thinking as his genius and training made him capable of. In what spirit and with what hope he went about his task, appears in the Introduction and the Prefaces to the editions of 1781 and 1787. In these he frankly opens his mind in regard to the condition of philosophical speculation. That condition he describes as one of saddest indifference. The throne of Metaphysics was vacant, and its former occupant was a wanderer, cast off by the meanest of his subjects. Locke had started a flight of hypotheses, which had frittered his force away and made his effort barren of definite result. Theories had been suggested and abandoned; the straw had been thrashed till only dust remained; and unless a new method could be hit on, the days of mental philosophy might be considered as numbered. The physical sciences would take advantage of the time, enter the deserted house, secure possession, and set up their idols in the ancient shrine.

These sciences, it was admitted, command and deserve unqualified respect. To discover the secret of their success Kant passed in review their different systems, examined them in respect to their principles and conditions of progress, with a purpose to know what, if any, essential difference there might be between them and the metaphysics which had from of old claimed to be, and had the name of being, a science. Logic, mathematics, physics, are sciences: by virtue of what inherent peculiarity do they claim superior right to that high appellation? Intellectual philosophy has always been given over to conflicting parties. Its history is a history of controversies, and of controversies that resulted in no triumph for either side, established no doctrine, and reclaimed no portion of truth. Material philosophy has made steady advances from the beginning; its disputes have ended in demonstrations, its contests have resulted in the establishment of legitimate authority: if its progress has been slow it has been continuous; it has never receded; and its variations from a straight course are insignificant when surveyed from a position that commands its whole career.

Since Aristotle, logic has, without serious impediment or check, matured its rules and methods. Holding the same cardinal positions as in Aristotle's time, it has simply made them stronger, the rules being but interpretations of rational principles, the methods following precisely the indications of the human mind, which from the nature of the case remain always the same.

The mathematics, again, have had their periods of uncertainty and conjecture. But since the discovery of the essential properties of the triangle, the career has been uninterrupted. The persistent study of constant properties, which were not natural data, but mental conceptions formed by the elimination of variable quantities, led to results which had not to be abandoned.

It was the same with physics. The physics of the ancients were heaps of conjecture. The predecessors of Galileo abandoned conjecture, put themselves face to face with Nature, observed and classified phenomena, but possessed no method by which their labors could be made productive of cumulative results. But after Galileo had experimented with balls of a given weight on an inclined plane, and Torricelli had pushed upward a weight equal to a known column of water, and Stahl had reduced metals to lime and transformed lime back again into metal, by the addition and subtraction of certain parts, the naturalists carried a torch that illumined their path. They perceived that reason lays her own plans, takes the initiative with her own principles, and must compel nature to answer her questions, instead of obsequiously following its leading-string. It was discovered that scattered observations, made in obedience to no fixed plan, and associated with no necessary law, could not be brought into systematic form. The discovery of such a law is a necessity of reason. Reason presents herself before nature, holding in one hand the principles which alone have power to bring into order and harmony the phenomena of nature; in the other hand grasping the results of experiment conducted according to those principles. Reason demands knowledge of nature, not as a docile pupil who receives implicitly the master's word, but as a judge who constrains witnesses to reply to questions put to them by the court. To this attitude are due the happy achievements in physics; reason seeking – not fancying – in nature, by conformity with her own rules, what nature ought to teach, and what of herself she could not learn. Thus physics became established upon the solid basis of a science, after centuries of error and groping.

Wherefore now, asks Kant, are metaphysics so far behind logic, mathematics, and physics? Wherefore these heaps of conjecture, these vain attempts at solution? Wherefore these futile lives of great men, these abortive flights of genius? The study of the mind is not an arbitrary pursuit, suggested by vanity and conducted by caprice, to be taken up idly and relinquished at a moment's notice. The human mind cannot acquiesce in a judgment that condemns it to barrenness and indifference in respect to such questions as God, the Soul, the World, the Life to Come; it is perpetually revising and reversing the decrees pronounced against itself. It must accept the conditions of its being.

From a review of the progress of the sciences it appeared to Kant that their advance was owing to the elimination of the variable elements, and the steady contemplation of the elements that are invariable and constant, the most essential of which is the contribution made by the human mind.

The laws that are the basis of logic, of the mathematics, and of the higher physics, and that give certitude to these sciences, are simply the laws of the human mind itself. Strictly speaking, then, it is in the constitution of the human mind, irrespective of outward objects and the application of principles to them, that we must seek the principle of certitude. Thus far in the history of philosophy the human mind had not been fairly considered. Thinkers had concerned themselves with the objects of knowledge, not with the mind that knows. They had collected facts; they had constructed systems; they had traced connections; they had drawn conclusions. Few had defined the relations of knowledge to the human mind. Yet to do that seemed the only way to arrive at certainty, and raise metaphysics to the established rank of physics, mathematics, and logic.

Struck with this idea, Kant undertook to transfer contemplation from the objects that engaged the mind to the mind itself, and thus start philosophy on a new career. He meditated a fresh departure, and proposed to effect in metaphysics a revolution parallel with that which Copernicus effected in astronomy. As Copernicus, finding it impossible to explain the movements of the heavenly bodies on the supposition of their turning round the globe as a centre, bethought him to posit the sun as a centre, round which the earth with other heavenly bodies turned – so Kant, perceiving the confusion that resulted from making man a satellite of the external world, resolved to try the effect of placing him in the position of central sway. Whether this pretension was justifiable or not, is not a subject of inquiry here. They may be right who sneer at it as a fallacy; they may be right who ridicule it as a conceit. We are historians, not critics. That Kant's position was as has been described, admits of no question. That he built great expectations on his method is certain. He anticipated from it the overthrow of hypotheses which, having no legitimate title to authority, erected themselves to the dignity of dogmas, and assumed supreme rank in the realm of speculation. That it would be the destruction of famous demonstrations, and would reduce renowned arguments to naught, might be foreseen; but in the place of pretended demonstrations, he was confident that solid ones would be established, and arguments that were merely specious would give room to arguments that were profound. Schools might be broken up, but the interests of the human race would be secured. At first it might appear as if cardinal beliefs of mankind must be menaced with extinction as the ancient supports one after another fell; but as soon as the new foundations were disclosed it was anticipated that faith would revive, and the great convictions would stand more securely than ever. Whatever of truth the older systems had contained would receive fresh and trustworthy authentication; the false would be expelled; and a method laid down by which new discoveries in the intellectual sphere might be confidently predicted.

In this spirit the author of the transcendental philosophy began, continued, and finished his work.

The word "transcendental" was not new in philosophy. The Schoolmen had used it to describe whatever could not be comprehended in or classified under the so-called categories of Aristotle, who was the recognized prince of the intellectual world. These categories were ten in number: Quantity, Quality, Relation, Action, Passion, The Where, The When, Position in Space, Possession, Substance. Four things were regarded by the Schoolmen as transcending these mental forms – namely, Being, Truth, Unity, Goodness. It is hardly necessary to say that the Transcendentalism of modern times owed very little to these distinctions, if it owed anything to them. Its origin was not from thence; its method was so dissimilar as to seem sharply opposed.

The word "transcendental" has become domesticated in science. Transcendental anatomy inquires into the idea, the original conception or model on which the organic frame of animals is built, the unity of plan discernible throughout multitudinous genera and orders. Transcendental curves are curves that cannot be defined by algebraic equations. Transcendental equations express relations between transcendental qualities. Transcendental physiology treats of the laws of development and function, which apply, not to particular kinds or classes of organisms, but to all organisms. In the terminology of Kant the term "transcendent" was employed to designate qualities that lie outside of all "experience," that cannot be brought within the recognized formularies of thought, cannot be reached

either by observation or reflection, or explained as the consequences of any discoverable antecedents. The term "transcendental" designated the fundamental conceptions, the universal and necessary judgments, which transcend the sphere of experience, and at the same time impose the conditions that make experience tributary to knowledge. The transcendental philosophy is the philosophy that is built on these necessary and universal principles, these primary laws of mind, which are the ground of absolute truth. The supremacy given to these and the authority given to the truths that result from them entitle the philosophy to its name. "I term all cognition transcendental which concerns itself not so much with objects, as with our mode of cognition of objects so far as this may be possible à priori. A system of such conceptions would be called Transcendental Philosophy."

II.
TRANSCENDENTALISM IN GERMANY

KANT

There is no call to discuss here the system of Kant, or even to describe it in detail. The means of studying the system are within easy reach of English readers.[1] Our concern is to know the method which Kant employed, and the use he made of it, the ground he took and the positions he held, so far as this can be indicated within reasonable compass, and without becoming involved in the complexity of the author's metaphysics. The Critique of Pure Reason is precisely what the title imports – a searching analysis of the human mind; an attempt to get at the ultimate grounds of thought, to discover the à priori principles. "Reason is the faculty which furnishes the principles of cognition à priori. Therefore pure reason is that which contains the principles of knowing something, absolutely à priori. An organon of pure reason would be a summary of these principles, according to which all pure cognition à priori can be obtained, and really accomplished. The extended application of such an organon would furnish a system of pure reason."

The problem of modern philosophy may be thus stated: *Have we or have we not ideas that are true of necessity, and absolutely? Are there ideas that can fairly be pronounced independent in their origin of experience, and out of the reach of experience by their nature?* One party contended that all knowledge was derived from experience; that there was nothing in the intellect that had not previously been in the senses: the opposite party maintained that a portion, at least, of knowledge came from the mind itself; that the intellect contained powers of its own, and impressed its forms upon the phenomena of sense. The extreme doctrine of the two schools was represented, on the one side by the materialists, on the other by the mystics. Between these two extremes various degrees of compromise were offered.

The doctrine of innate ideas, ascribed to Descartes, – though he abandoned it as untenable in its crude form, – affirmed that certain cardinal ideas, such as causality, infinity, substance, eternity, were native to the mind, born in it as part of its organic constitution, wholly independent therefore of experience. Locke claimed for the mind merely a power of reflection by which it was able to modify and alter the material given by the senses, thus exploding the doctrine of innate ideas.

Leibnitz, anxious to escape the danger into which Descartes fell, of making the outward world purely phenomenal, an expression of unalterable thought, and also to escape the consequences of Locke's position that all knowledge originates in the senses, suggested that the understanding itself was independent of experience, that though it did not contain ideas like a vessel, it was entitled to be called a power of forming ideas, which have, as in mathematics, a character of necessary truths. These necessary laws of the understanding, which experience had no hand in creating, are, according to Leibnitz, the primordial conditions of human knowledge.

Hume, taking Locke at his word, that all knowledge came from experience, that the mind was a passive recipient of impressions, with no independent intellectual substratum, reasoned that mind was a fiction; and taking Berkeley at his word that the outward world had no material existence, and no *apparent* existence except to our perception, he reasoned that matter was a fiction. Mind and matter

[1] See Kant's Critique of Pure Reason, London, 1838; Morell's History of Modern Philosophy; Chalybäus' Historical Development of Speculative Philosophy from Kant to Hegel; Lewes' Biographical History of Philosophy; Cousin's Leçons, Œuvres, Iere série, vol. 5, give a clear account of Kant's philosophy.

both being fictions, there could be no certain knowledge; truth was unattainable; ideas were illusions. The opposing schools of philosophers annihilated each other, and the result was scepticism.

Hume started Kant on his long and severe course of investigation, the result of which was, that neither of the antagonist parties could sustain itself: that Descartes was wrong in asserting that such abstract ideas as causality, infinity, substance, time, space, are independent of experience, since without experience they would not exist, and experience takes from them form only; that Locke was wrong in asserting that all ideas originated in experience, and were resolvable into it, since the ideas of causality, substance, infinity and others certainly did not so originate, and were not thus resolvable. It is idle to dispute whether knowledge comes from one source or another – from without through sensation, or from within through intuition; the everlasting battle between idealism and realism, spiritualism and materialism, can never result in victory to either side. Mind and universe, intelligence and experience, suppose each other; neither alone is operative to produce knowledge. Knowledge is the product of their mutual co-operation. Mind does not originate ideas, neither does sensation impart them. Object and subject, sterile by themselves, become fruitful by conjunction. There are not two sources of knowledge, but one only, and that one is produced by the union of the two apparent opposites. Truth is the crystallization, so to speak, that results from the combined elements.

Let us follow the initial steps of Kant's analysis. Mind and Universe – Subject and Object – Ego and Non-ego, stand opposite one another, front to front. Mind is conscious only of its own operations: the subject alone considers. The first fact noted is, that the subject is sensitive to impressions made by outward things, and is receptive of them. Dwelling on this fact, we discover that while the impressions are many in number and of great variety, they all, whatever their character, fall within certain inflexible and unalterable conditions – those of space and time – which must, therefore, be regarded as pre-established forms of sensibility. "Time is no empirical conception which can be deduced from experience. Time is a necessary representation which lies at the foundation of all intuitions. Time is given à priori. In it alone is any reality of phenomena possible. These disappear, but it cannot be annihilated." So of space. "Space is an intuition, met with in us à priori, antecedent to any perception of objects, a pure, not an empirical intuition." These two forms of sensibility, inherent and invariable, to which all experiences are subject, are primeval facts of consciousness. Kant's argument on the point whether or no space and time have an existence apart from the mind, is interesting, but need not detain us.

The materials furnished by sensibility are taken up by the understanding, which classifies, interprets, judges, compares, reduces to unity, eliminates, converts, and thus fashions sensations into conceptions, transmutes impressions into thoughts. Here fresh processes of analysis are employed in classifying judgments, and determining their conditions. All judgments, it is found, must conform to one of four invariable conditions. I. Quantity, which may be subdivided into unity, plurality, and totality: the one, the many, the whole. II. Quality, which is divisible as reality, negation, and limitation: something, nothing, and the more or less. III. Relation, which also comprises three heads: substance and accident, cause and effect, reciprocity, or action and reaction. IV. Modality, which embraces the possible and the impossible, the existent and the non-existent, the necessary and the contingent. These categories, as they were called, after the terminology of Aristotle, were supposed to exhaust the forms of conception.

Having thus arrived at conceptions, thoughts, judgments, another faculty comes in to classify the conceptions, link the thoughts together, reduce the judgments to general laws, draw inferences, fix conclusions, proceed from the particular to the general, recede from the general to the particular, mount from the conditioned to the unconditioned, till it arrives at ultimate principles. This faculty is reason, – the supreme faculty, above sensibility, above understanding. Reason gives the final generalization, the idea of a universe comprehending the infinitude of details presented by the senses, and the worlds of knowledge shaped by the understanding; the idea of a personality embracing the infinite complexities of feeling, and gathering under one dominion the realms of consciousness; the

idea of a supreme unity combining in itself both the other ideas; the absolute perfection, the infinite and eternal One, which men describe by the word God.

Here the thinker rested. His search could be carried no further. He had, as he believed, established the independent dominion of the mind, had mapped out its confines, had surveyed its surface; he had confronted the idealist with the reality of an external world; he had confronted the sceptic with laws of mind that were independent of experience; and, having done so much, he was satisfied, and refused to move an inch beyond the ground he occupied. To those who applied to him for a system of positive doctrines, or for ground on which a system of positive doctrines could be erected, he declined to give aid. The mind, he said, cannot go out of itself, cannot transgress its own limits. It has no faculty by which it can perceive things *as they are*; no vision to behold objects corresponding to its ideas; no power to bridge over the gulf between its own consciousness and a world of realities existing apart from it. Whether there be a spiritual universe answering to our conception, a Being justifying reason's idea of supreme unity, a soul that can exist in an eternal, supersensible world, are questions the philosopher declined to discuss. The contents of his own mind were revealed to him, no more. Kant laid the foundations, he built no structure. He would not put one stone upon another; he declared it to be beyond the power of man to put one stone upon another. The attempts which his earnest disciples – Fichte, for example – made to erect a temple on his foundation he repudiated. As the existence of an external world, though a necessary postulate, could not be demonstrated, but only logically affirmed; so the existence of a spiritual world of substantial entities corresponding to our conceptions, though a necessary inference, could only be logically affirmed, not demonstrated. Our idea of God is no proof that God exists. That there is a God may be an irresistible persuasion, but it can be nothing more; it cannot be knowledge. Of the facts of consciousness, the reality of the ideas in the mind, we may be certain; our belief in them is clear and solid; but from *belief* in them there is no bridge to *them*.

Kant asserted the veracity of consciousness, and demanded an absolute acknowledgment of that veracity. The fidelity of the mind to itself was a first principle with him. Having these ideas, of the soul, of God, of a moral law; being certain that they neither originated in experience, nor depended on experience for their validity; that they transcended experience altogether – man was committed to an unswerving and uncompromising loyalty to himself. His prime duty consisted in deference to the integrity of his own mind. The laws of his intellectual and moral nature were inviolable. Whether there was or was not a God; whether there was or was not a substantial world of experience where the idea of rectitude could be realized, the dictate of duty justified, the soul's affirmation of good ratified by actual felicity, – rectitude was none the less incumbent on the rational mind; the law of duty was none the less imperative; the vision of good none the less glorious and inspiring. Virtue had its principle in the constitution of the mind itself. Every virtue had there its seat. There was no sweetness of purity, no heroism of faith, that had not an abiding-place in this impregnable fortress.

Thus, while on the speculative side Kant came out a sceptic in regard to the dogmatic beliefs of mankind, on the practical side he remained the fast friend of intellectual truth and moral sanctity. Practical ethics never had a more stanch supporter than Immanuel Kant. If a man cannot pass beyond the confines of his own mind, he has, at all events, within his own mind a temple, a citadel, a home.

The "Critique of Pure Reason" made no impression on its first appearance. But no sooner was its significance apprehended, than a storm of controversy betrayed the fact that even the friends of the new teacher were less content than he was to be shut up in their own minds. The calm, passionless, imperturbable man smoked his pipe in the peace of meditation; eager thinkers, desirous of getting more out of the system than its author did, were impatient at his backwardness, and made the intellectual world ring with their calls to improve upon and complete his task.

The publication of Kant's great work did not put an end to the wars of philosophy. On the contrary, they raged about it more furiously than ever. As the two schools found in Locke fresh occasion for renewing their strife under the cover of that great name, so here again the latent elements

of discord were discovered and speedily brought to the surface. The sceptics seized on the sceptical bearings of the new analysis, and proceeded to build their castle from the materials it furnished; the idealists took advantage of the positions gained by the last champion, and pushed their lines forward in the direction of transcendental conquest. We are not called on to follow the sceptics, however legitimate their course, and we shall but indicate the progress made by the idealists, giving their cardinal principles, as we have done those of their master.

JACOBI

The first important step in the direction of pure transcendentalism was taken by Frederick Henry Jacobi, who was born at Düsseldorf, January 25, 1743. He was a man well educated in philosophy, with a keen interest in the study of it, though not a philosopher by profession, or a systematic writer on metaphysical subjects. His position was that of a civilian who devoted the larger part of his time to the duties of a public office under the government. His writings consist mainly of letters, treatises on special points of metaphysical inquiry, and articles in the philosophical journals. His official position gave repute to the productions of his pen, and the circumstance of his being, not an amateur precisely, but a devotee of philosophy for the love of it and not as a professional business, imparted to his speculation the freshness of personal feeling. His ardent temperament, averse to scepticism, and touched with a mystical enthusiasm, rebelled against the formal and deadly precision of the analytical method, and sought a way out from the intellectual bleakness of the Kantean metaphysics into the sunshine and air of a living spiritual world. The critics busied themselves with mining and sapping the foundations of consciousness as laid by the philosopher of Königsberg, who, they complained, had been too easy in conceding the necessity of an outward world. Jacobi accepted with gratitude the intellectual basis afforded, and proceeded to erect thereupon his observatory for studying the heavens. Though not the originator of the "Faith Philosophy," as it was called, he became the finisher and the best known expositor of it. "Since the time of Aristotle," he said, "it has been the effort of philosophical schools to rank direct and immediate knowledge below mediate and indirect; to subordinate the capacity for original perception to the capacity for reflection on abstract ideas; to make intuition secondary to understanding, the sense of essential things to definitions. Nothing is accepted that does not admit of being proved by formal and logical process, so that, at last, the result is looked for there, and there only. The validity of intuition is disallowed."

Jacobi's polemics were directed therefore against the systems of Spinoza, Leibnitz, Wolf – in a word against all systems that led to scepticism and dogmatism; and his positive efforts were employed in constructing a system of Faith. His key-word was "Faith," by which he meant intuition, the power of gazing immediately on essential truth; an intellectual faculty which he finally called Reason, by which supersensual objects become visible, as material objects become visible to the physical eye; an inward sense, a spiritual eye, that "gives evidence of things not seen and substance to things hoped for;" a faculty of vision to which truths respecting God, Providence, Immortality, Freedom, the Moral Law, are palpably disclosed. Kant had pronounced it impossible to prove that the transcendental idea had a corresponding reality as objective being. Jacobi declared that no such proof was needed; that the reality was necessarily assumed. Kant had denied the existence of any faculty that could guarantee the existence of either a sensual or a supersensual world. Jacobi was above all else certain that such a faculty there was, that it was altogether trustworthy, and that it actually furnished material for religious hope and spiritual life: the only possible material, he went on to say; for without this capacity of intuition, philosophy could be in his judgment nothing but an insubstantial fabric, a castle in the air, a thing of definitions and terminologies, a shifting body of hot and cold vapor.

This, it will be observed, seemed a legitimate consequence of Kant's method. Kant had admitted the subjective reality of sensible impressions, and had claimed a similar reality for our mental images of supersensible things. He allowed the validity *as conceptions*, the practical validity, of the ideas of God, Duty, Immortality. Jacobi contended that having gone so far, it was lawful if not compulsory to go farther; that the subjective reality implied an objective reality; that the practical inference was as valid as any logical inference could be; and that through the intuition of reason the mind was placed again in a living universe of divine realities.

Chalybäus says of Jacobi: "With deep penetration he traced the mystic fountain of desire after the highest and best, to the point where it discloses itself as an immediate feeling in consciousness;

that this presentiment was nothing more than Kant said it was – a faint mark made by the compressing chain of logic, he would not allow; he described it rather as the special endowment and secret treasure of the human mind, which he that would not lose it must guard against the touch of evil-minded curiosity; for whoever ventures into this sanctuary with the torch of science, will fare as did the youth before the veiled image at Sais." And again: "This point, that a self-subsisting truth must correspond to the conscious idea, that the subject must have an object which is personal like itself, is the ore that Jacobi was intent on extracting from the layers of consciousness: he disclosed it only in part, but unsatisfactory as his exposition was to the stern inquisition of science, his purpose was so strong, his aim so single, we cannot wonder that, in spite of the outcry and the scorn against his 'Faith or Feeling Philosophy,' his thought survived, and even entered on a new career in later times. It must, however, be confessed that instead of following up his clue, speculative fashion, he laid down his undeveloped theorem as an essential truth, above speculation, declaring that speculation must end in absolute idealism, which was but another name for nihilism and fatalism. Jacobi made his own private consciousness a measure for the human mind." At the close of his chapter, Chalybäus quotes Hegel's verdict, expressed in these words: "Jacobi resembles a solitary thinker, who, in his life's morning, finds an ancient riddle hewn in the primeval rock; he believes that the riddle contains a truth, but he tries in vain to discover it. The day long he carries it about with him; entices weighty suggestions from it; displays it in shapes of teaching and imagery that fascinate listeners, inspiring noblest wishes and anticipations: but the interpretation eludes him, and at evening he lays him down in the hope that a celestial dream or the next morning's waking will make articulate the word he longs for and has believed in."

FICHTE

The transcendental philosophy received from Jacobi an impulse toward mysticism. From another master it received an impulse toward heroism. This master was Johann Gottlieb Fichte, born at Rammenau, in Upper Lusatia, on the 19th of May, 1762. A short memoir of him by William Smith, published in 1845, with a translation of the "Nature of the Scholar," and reprinted in Boston, excited a deep interest among people who had neither sympathy with his philosophy nor intelligence to comprehend it. He was a great mind, and a greater character – sensitive, proud, brave, determined, enthusiastic, imperious, aspiring; a mighty soul; "a cold, colossal, adamantine spirit, standing erect and clear, like a Cato Major among degenerate men; fit to have been the teacher of the Stoa, and to have discoursed of beauty and virtue in the groves of Academe! So robust an intellect, a soul so calm, so lofty, massive, and immovable, has not mingled in philosophical discussion since the time of Luther. For the man rises before us amid contradiction and debate like a granite mountain amid clouds and winds. As a man approved by action and suffering, in his life and in his death, he ranks with a class of men who were common only in better ages than ours." Thus wrote Thomas Carlyle of him more than a generation ago.

The direction given to philosophy by such a man could not but be decided and bold. His short treatises, all marked by intellectual power, some by glowing eloquence, carried his thoughts beyond the philosophical circle and spread his leading principles far beyond the usual speculative lines. "The Destination of Man," "The Vocation of the Scholar," "The Nature of the Scholar," "The Vocation of Man," "The Characteristics of the Present Age," "The Way towards the Blessed Life," were translated into English, published in the "Catholic Series" of John Chapman, and extensively read. The English reviewers helped to make the author and his ideas known to many readers.

The contribution that Fichte made to the transcendental philosophy may be described without using many words. He became acquainted with Kant's system in Leipsic, where he was teaching, in 1790. The effect it had on him is described in letters to his friends. To one he wrote: "The last four or five months which I have passed in Leipsic have been the happiest of my life; and the most satisfactory part of it is, that I have to thank no man for the smallest ingredient in its pleasures. When I came to Leipsic my brain swarmed with great plans. All were wrecked; and of so many soap-bubbles there now remains not even the light froth that composed them. This disturbed a little my peace of mind, and half in despair I joined a party to which I should long ere this have belonged. Since I could not alter my outward condition, I resolved on internal change. I threw myself into philosophy, and, as you know, the Kantean. Here I found the remedy for my ills, and joy enough to boot. The influence of this philosophy, the moral part of it in particular (which, however, is unintelligible without previous study of the 'Critique of Pure Reason'), on the whole spiritual life, and especially the revolution it has caused in my own mode of thought, is indescribable." To another he wrote in similar strain: "I have lived in a new world since reading the 'Critique of Pure Reason.' Principles I believed irrefragable are refuted; things I thought could never be proved – the idea of absolute freedom, of duty, for example – are demonstrated; and I am so much the happier. It is indescribable what respect for humanity, what power this system gives us. What a blessing to an age in which morality was torn up by the roots, and the word duty blotted out of the dictionary!" To Johanna Rahn he expresses himself in still heartier terms: "My scheming mind has found rest at last, and I thank Providence that shortly before all my hopes were frustrated I was placed in a position which enabled me to bear the disappointment with cheerfulness. A circumstance that seemed the result of mere chance induced me to devote myself entirely to the study of the Kantean philosophy – a philosophy that restrains the imagination, always too strong with me, gives reason sway, and raises the soul to an unspeakable height above all earthly concerns. I have accepted a nobler morality, and instead of busying myself with outward things, I concern myself more with my own being. It has given me a peace such as I never before experienced;

amid uncertain worldly prospects I have passed my happiest days. It is difficult beyond all conception, and stands greatly in need of simplification… The first elements are hard speculations, that have no direct bearing on human life, but their conclusions are most important for an age whose morality is corrupted at the fountain head; and to set these consequences before the world would, I believe, be doing it a good service. I am now thoroughly convinced that the human will is free, and that to be happy is not the purpose of our being, but to deserve happiness." So great was Fichte's admiration of Kant's system, that he became at once an expositor of its principles, in the hope that he might render it intelligible and attractive to minds of ordinary culture.

Fichte considered himself a pure Kantean, perhaps the only absolutely consistent one there was; and that he did so is not surprising; for, in mending the master's positions, he seemed to be strengthening them against assault. He did not, like Jacobi, draw inferences which Kant had laboriously, and, as it seemed, effectually cut off; he merely entrenched himself within the lines the philosopher of Königsberg had drawn. Kant had, so his critics charged, taken for granted the reality of our perceptions of outward things. This was the weak point in his system, of which his adversaries took advantage. On this side he allowed empiricism to construct his wall, and left incautiously an opening which the keen-sighted foe perceived at once. Fichte bethought him to fortify that point, and thus make the philosophy unassailable; to take it, in fact, out of the category of a philosophical system, and give it the character of a science. To this end, with infinite pains and incredible labor, he tested the foundations to discover the fundamental and final facts which rested on the solid rock. The ultimate facts of consciousness were in question.

Fichte accepted without hesitation the confinement within the limits of consciousness against which Jacobi rebelled, and proceeded to make the prison worthy of such an occupant. The facts of consciousness, he admitted, are all we have. The states and activities of the mind, perceptions, ideas, judgments, sentiments, or by whatever other name they may be called, constitute, by his admission, all our knowledge, and beyond them we cannot go. They are, however, solid and substantial. Of the outward world he knew nothing and had nothing to say; he was not concerned with that. The mind is the man; the history of the mind is the man's history; the processes of the mind report the whole of experience; the phenomena of the external universe are mere phenomena, reflections, so far as we know, of our thought; the mountains, woods, stars, are facts of consciousness, to which we attach these names. To infer that they exist because we have ideas of them, is illegitimate in philosophy. The ideas stand by themselves, and are sufficient of themselves.

The mind is first, foremost, creative and supreme. It takes the initiative in all processes. He that assumes the existence of an external world does so on the authority of consciousness. If he says that consciousness compels us to assume the existence of such a world, that it is so constituted as to imply the realization of its conception, still we have simply the fact of consciousness; power to verify the relation between this inner fact and a corresponding physical representation, there is none. Analyze the facts of consciousness as much as we may, revise them, compare them, we are still within their circle and cannot pass beyond its limit. Is it urged that the existence of an external world is a *necessary* postulate? The same reply avails, namely, that the idea of necessity is but one of our ideas, a conception of the mind, an inner notion or impression which legitimates itself alone. Does the objector further insist, in a tone of exasperation caused by what seems to him quibbling, that in this case consciousness plays us false, makes a promise to the ear which it breaks to the hope – lies, in short? The imperturbable philosopher sets aside the insinuation as an impertinence. The fact of consciousness, he maintains, stands and testifies for itself. It is not answerable for anything out of its sphere. In saying what it does it speaks the truth; the whole truth, so far as we can determine. Whether or no it is absolutely the whole truth, the truth as it lies in a mind otherwise constituted, is no concern of ours.

The reasoning by which Fichte cut off the certainty of a material world outside of the mind, told with equal force against the objective existence of a spiritual world. The mental vision being

bounded by the mental sphere, its objects being there and only there, with them we must be content. The soul has its domain, untrodden forests to explore, silent and trackless ways to follow, mystery to rest in, light to walk by, fountains and floods of living water, starry firmaments of thought, continents of reason, zones of law, and with this domain it must be satisfied. God is one of its ideas; immortality is another; that they are anything more than ideas, cannot be known.

That the charge of atheism should be brought against so uncompromising a thinker, is a less grave imputation upon the discernment of his contemporaries than ordinarily it is. That he should have been obliged, in consequence of it, to leave Jena, and seek an asylum in Prussia, need not excite indignation, at least in those who remember his unwillingness or inability to modify his view, or explain the sense in which he called himself a believer. To "charge" a man with atheism, as if atheism were guilt, is a folly to be ashamed of; but to "class" a man among atheists who *in no sense* accepts the doctrine of an intelligent, creative Cause, is just, while language has meaning. And this is Fichte's position. In his philosophy there was no place for assurance of a Being corresponding to the mental conception. The word "God" with him expressed the category of the Ideal. The world being but the incarnation of our sense of duty, the reflection of the mind, the creator of it is the mind. God, being a reflection of the soul in its own atmosphere, is one of the soul's creations, a shadow on the surface of a pool. The soul creates; deity is created. This is not even ideal atheism, like that of Etienne Vacherot; it may be much nobler and more inspiring than the recognized forms of theism; it is dogmatic or speculative atheism only: but that it is, and that it should confess itself. It was natural that Fichte, being perfect master of his thought, should disclaim and resent an imputation which in spirit he felt was undeserved. It was natural that people who were not masters of his thought, and would not have appreciated it if they had been, should judge him by the only definitions they had. Berkeley and Fichte stood at opposite extremes in their Idealism. Berkeley, starting from the theological conception of God, maintained that the outward world had a real existence in the supreme mind, being phenomenal only to the human. Fichte, starting from the human mind, contended that it was *altogether* phenomenal, the supreme mind itself being phantasmal.

How came it, some will naturally ask, that such a man escaped the deadly consequences of such resolute introspection? Where was there the indispensable basis for action and reaction? Life is conditioned by limitation; the shore gives character to the sea; the outward world gives character to the man, excites his energy, defines his aim, trains his perception, educates his will, offers a horizon to his hope. The outward world being removed, dissipated, resolved into impalpable thought, what substitute for it can be devised? Must not the man sink into a visionary, and waste his life in dream?

That Fichte was practically no dreamer, has already been said. The man who closed a severe, stately, and glowing lecture on duty with the announcement – it was in 1813, when the French drums were rattling in the street, at times drowning the speaker's voice – that the course would be suspended till the close of the campaign, and would be resumed, if resumed at all, in a free country, and thereupon, with a German patriot's enthusiasm, rushed himself into the field – this man was no visionary, lost in dreams. The internal world was with him a living world; the mind was a living energy; ideas were things; principles were verities; the laws of thought were laws of being. So intense was his feeling of the substantial nature of these invisible entities, that the obverse side of them, the negation of them, had all the *vis inertia*, all the objective validity of external things. He spoke of "absolute limitations," "inexplicable limitations," against which the mind pressed as against palpable obstacles, and in pressing against which it acquired tension and vigor. Passing from the realm of speculation into that of practice, the obstacles assumed the attributes of powers, the impediments became foes, to be resisted as strenuously as ever soldier opposed soldier in battle. From the strength of this conviction he was enabled to say: "I am well convinced that this life is not a scene of enjoyment, but of labor and toil, and that every joy is granted but to strengthen us for further exertion; that the control of our fate is not required of us, but only our self-culture. I give myself no concern about external things; I endeavor to *be*, not to *seem*; I am no man's master, and no man's slave."

Fichte was a sublime egoist. In his view, the mind was sovereign and absolute, capable of spontaneous, self-determined, originating action, having power to propose its own end and pursue its own freely-chosen course; a live intelligence, eagerly striving after self-development, to fulfil all the possibilities of its nature. Of one thing he was certain – the reality of the rational soul, and in that certainty lay the ground of his tremendous weight of assertion. His professional chair was a throne; his discourses were prophecies; his tone was the tone of an oracle. It made the blood burn to hear him; it makes the blood burn at this distance to read his printed words. To cite a few sentences from his writings in illustration of the man's way of dealing with the great problems of life, is almost a necessity. The following often-quoted but pregnant passage is from "The Destination of Man: " "I understand thee now, spirit sublime! I have found the organ by which to apprehend this reality, and probably all other. It is not knowledge, for knowledge can only demonstrate and establish itself; every kind of knowledge supposes some higher knowledge upon which it is founded; and of this ascent there is no end. It is faith, that voluntary repose in the ideas that naturally come to us, because through these only we can fulfil our destiny; which sets its seal on knowledge, and raises to conviction, to certainty, what, without it, might be sheer delusion. It is not knowledge, but a resolve to commit one's self to knowledge. No merely verbal distinction this, but a true and deep one, charged with momentous consequences to the whole character. All conviction is of faith, and proceeds from the heart, not from the understanding. Knowing this, I will enter into no controversy, for I foresee that in this way nothing can be gained. I will not endeavor, by reasoning, to press my conviction on others, nor will I be discouraged if such an attempt should fail. My mode of thinking I have adopted for myself, not for others, and to myself only need I justify it. Whoever has the same upright intention will also attain the same or a similar conviction, and without it that is impossible. Now that I know this, I know also from what point all culture of myself and others must proceed; from the will, and not from the understanding. Let but the first be steadily directed toward the good, the last will of itself apprehend the true. Should the last be exercised and developed, while the first remains neglected, nothing can result but a facility in vain and endless refinements of sophistry. In faith I possess the test of all truth and all conviction; truth originates in the conscience, and what contradicts its authority, or makes us unwilling or incapable of rendering obedience to it, is most certainly false, even should I be unable to discover the fallacies through which it is reached… What unity, what completeness and dignity, our human nature receives from this view! Our thought is not based on itself, independently of our instincts and inclinations. Man does not consist of two beings running parallel to each other; he is absolutely one. Our entire system of thought is founded on intuition; as is the heart of the individual, so is his knowledge."

"The everlasting world now rises before me more brightly, and the fundamental laws of its order are more clearly revealed to my mental vision. The will alone, lying hid from mortal eyes in the obscurest depths of the soul, is the first link in a chain of consequences that stretches through the invisible realm of spirit, as, in this terrestrial world, the action itself, a certain movement communicated to matter, is the first link in a material chain that encircles the whole system. The will is the effective cause, the living principle of the world of spirit, as motion is of the world of sense. The will is in itself a constituent part of the transcendental world. By my free determination I change and set in motion something in this transcendental world, and my energy gives birth to an effect that is new, permanent, and imperishable. Let this will find expression in a practical deed, and this deed belongs to the world of sense and produces effects according to the virtue it contains."

This is the stoical aspect of the doctrine. The softer side of it appears throughout the book that is entitled "The Way towards the Blessed Life." We quote a few passages from the many the eloquence whereof does no more than justice to the depth of sentiment:

"Full surely there is a blessedness beyond the grave for those who have already entered on it here, and in no other form than that wherein they know it here, at any moment. By mere burial man arrives not at bliss; and in the future life, throughout its whole infinite range, they will seek

for happiness as vainly as they sought it here, who seek it in aught else than that which so closely surrounds them here – the Infinite."

"Religion consists herein, that man in his own person, with his own spiritual eye, immediately beholds and possesses God. This, however, is possible through pure independent thought alone; for only through this does man assume real personality, and this alone is the eye to which God becomes visible. Pure thought is itself the divine existence; and conversely, the divine existence, in its immediate essence, is nothing else than pure thought."

"The truly religious man conceives of his world as action, which, because it is his world, he alone creates, in which alone he can live and find satisfaction. This action he does not will for the sake of results in the world of sense; he is in no respect anxious in regard to results, for he lives in action simply as action; he wills it because it is the will of God in him, and his own peculiar portion in being."

"As to those in whom the will of God is not inwardly accomplished, – because there is no inward life in them, for they are altogether outward, – upon them the will of God is wrought as alone it can be; appearing at first sight bitter and ungracious, though in reality merciful and loving in the highest degree. To those who do not love God, all things must work together immediately for pain and torment, until, by means of the tribulation, they are led to salvation at last."

Language like this from less earnest lips might be deceptive; but from the lips of a teacher like Fichte it tells of the solid grandeurs that faithful men possess in the ideal creations of their souls; the habitableness of air-castles.

SCHELLING

The chief sources from which the transcendental philosophy came from Germany to America have been indicated. The traces of Jacobi and Fichte are broad and distinct on the mind of the New World. Of Schelling little need be said, for his works were not translated into English, and the French translation of the "Transcendental Idealism" was not announced till 1850, when the movement in New England was subsiding. His system was too abstract and technical in form to interest any but his countrymen. Coleridge was fascinated by it, and yielded to the fascination so far as to allow the thoughts of the German metaphysician to take possession of his mind; but for Coleridge, indeed, few English-speaking men would have known what the system was. Transcendentalism in New England was rather spiritual and practical than metaphysical. Jacobi and Fichte were both; it can scarcely be said that Schelling was either. His books were hard; his ideas underwent continual changes in detail; his speculative system was developed gradually in a long course of years. But for certain grandiose conceptions which had a charm for the imagination and fascinated the religious sentiment, his name need not be mentioned in this little incidental record at all. There was, however, in Schelling something that recalled the ideal side of Plato, more that suggested Plotinus, the neo-Platonists and Alexandrines, a mystical pantheistic quality that mingled well with the general elements of Idealism, and gave atmosphere, as it were, to the tender feeling of Jacobi and the heroic will of Fichte.

Schelling was Fichte's disciple, filled his vacant chair in Jena in 1798, and took his philosophical departure from certain of his positions. Fichte had shut the man up close in himself, had limited the conception of the world by the boundaries of consciousness, had reduced the inner universe to a full-orbed creation, made its facts substantial and its fancies solid, peopled it with living forces, and found room in it for the exercise of a complete moral and spiritual life. In his system the soul was creator. The outer universe had its being in human thought. Subject and object were one, and that one was the subject.

Schelling restored the external world to its place as an objective reality, no fiction, no projection from the human mind. Subject and object, in his view, were one, but in the ABSOLUTE, the universal soul, the infinite and eternal mind. His original fire mist was the unorganized intelligence of which the universe was the expression. Finite minds are but phases of manifestation of the infinite mind, inlets into which it flows, some deeper, wider, longer than others. Spirit and matter are reverse aspects of being. Spirit is invisible nature, nature invisible spirit. Starting from nature, we may work our way into intelligence; starting from intelligence, we may work our way out to nature. Thought and existence having the same ground, ideal and real being one, the work of philosophy is twofold – from nature to arrive at spirit, from spirit to arrive at nature. They who wish to know how Schelling did it must consult the histories of philosophy; the most popular of them will satisfy all but the experts. It is easy to conjecture into what mysterious ways the clue might lead, and in what wilderness of thickets the reader might be lost; how in mind we are to see nature struggling upward into consciousness, and in nature mind seeking endless forms of finite expression. To unfold both processes, in uniform and balanced movement, avoiding pantheism on one side, and materialism on the other, was the endeavor we shall not attempt, even in the most cursory manner, to describe. God becomes conscious in man, the philosophic man, the man of reason, in whom the absolute being recognizes himself. The reason gazes immediately on the eternal realities, by virtue of what was called "intellectual intuition," which beholds both subject and object as united in a single thought. Reason was impersonal, no attribute of the finite intelligence, no fact of the individual consciousness, but a faculty, if that be the word for it, that transcended all finite experience, commanded a point superior to consciousness, was, in fact, the all-seeing eye confronting itself. What room here for intellectual rovers! What mystic groves for ecstatic souls to lose themselves in! What intricate mazes for those who are fond of hunting phantoms! Flashes of dim glory from this tremendous speculation are seen in the writings of Emerson,

Parker, Alcott, and other seers, probably caught by reflection, or struck out, as they were by Schelling himself, by minds moving on the same level. In Germany the lines of speculation were carried out in labyrinthine detail, as, fortunately, they were not elsewhere.

Of Hegel, the successor in thought of Schelling, there is no call here to speak at all. His speculation, though influential in America, as influential as that of either of his predecessors, was scarcely known thirty-five years ago, and if it had been, would have possessed little charm for idealists of the New England stamp. That system has borne fruits of a very different quality, being adopted largely by churchmen, whom it has justified and fortified in their ecclesiastical forms, doctrinal and sacramental, and by teachers of moderately progressive tendencies. The duty of unfolding his ideas has devolved upon students of German, as no other language has given them anything like adequate expression. Hegel, too, was more formidable than Schelling; the latter was brilliant, dashing, imaginative, glowing; his ideas shone in the air, and were caught with little toil by enthusiastic minds. To comprehend or even to apprehend Hegel requires more philosophical culture than was found in New England half a century ago, more than is by any means common to-day. Modern speculative philosophy is, as a rule, Hegelian. Its spirit is conservative, and it scarcely at all lends countenance to movements so revolutionary as those that shook New England.

Long before the time we are dealing with – as early as 1824 – the philosophy of Hegel had struck hands with church and state in Prussia; Hegel was at once prophet, priest, and prince. In the fulness of his powers, ripe in ability and in fame, he sat in the chair that Fichte had occupied, and gave laws to the intellectual world. He would "teach philosophy to talk German, as Luther had taught the Bible to do." A crowd of enthusiasts thronged about him. The scientific and literary celebrities of Berlin sat at his feet; state officials attended his lectures and professed themselves his disciples. The government provided liberally for his salary, and paid the travelling expenses of this great ambassador of the mind. The old story of disciple become master was told again. The philosopher was the friend of those that befriended him; the servant, some say, of those that lavished on him honors. Then the new philosophy that was to reconstruct the mental world learned to accept the actual world as it existed, and lent its powerful aid to the order of things it promised to reconstruct. Throwing out the aphorism, "The rational is the actual, the actual is the rational," Hegel declared that natural right, morality, and even religion are properly subordinated to authority. The despotic Prussian system welcomed the great philosopher as its defender. The Prussian Government was not tardy in showing appreciation of its advocate's eminent services.

The church, taking the hint, put in its claim to patronage. It needed protection against the rationalism that was coming up; and such protection the majesty of Hegel vouchsafed to offer. Faith and philosophy formed a new alliance. Orthodox professors gave in their loyalty to the man who taught that "God was in process of becoming," and the man who taught that "God was in process of becoming" welcomed the orthodox professors to the circle of his disciples. He was more orthodox than the orthodox; he gave the theologians new explanations of their own dogmas, and supplied them with arguments against their own foes. Trinity, incarnation, atonement, redemption, were all interpreted and justified, to the complete satisfaction of the ecclesiastical powers.

This being the influence of the master, and of philosophy as he explained it, the formation of a new school by the earnest, liberal men who drew very different conclusions from the master's first principles, was to be expected. But the "New Hegelians," as they were called, became disbelievers in religion and in spiritual things altogether, and either lapsed, like Strauss, into intellectual scepticism, or, like Feuerbach, became aggressive materialists. The ideal elements in Hegel's system were appropriated by Christianity, and were employed against liberty and progress. Spiritualists, whether in the old world or the new, had little interest in a philosophy that so readily favored two opposite tendencies, both of which they abhorred. To them the spiritual philosophy was represented by Hegel's predecessors. The disciples of sentiment accepted Jacobi; the loyalists of conscience followed Fichte; the severe metaphysicians, of whom there were a few, adhered to Kant; the soaring speculators and

imaginative theosophists spread their "sheeny vans," and soared into the regions of the absolute with Schelling. The idealists of New England were largest debtors to Jacobi and Fichte.

III.
TRANSCENDENTALISM IN THEOLOGY AND LITERATURE

One of the earliest students of the German language in Boston was Dr. N. L. Frothingham, Unitarian minister of the First Church. Among the professional books that interested him was one by Herder, "Letters to a Young Theologian," chapters from which he translated for the "Christian Disciple," the precursor of the "Christian Examiner." Of Herder, George Bancroft wrote an account in the "North American Review," and George Ripley in the "Christian Examiner." The second number of "The Dial" contains a letter from Mr. Ripley to a theological student, in which this particular book of Herder is warmly commended, as being worth the trouble of learning German to read. The volume was remarkable for earnest enlightenment, its discernment of the spirit beneath the letter, its generous interpretations, and its suggestions of a better future for the philosophy of religion. Herder was one of the illuminated minds; though not professedly a disciple, he had felt the influence of Kant, and was cordially in sympathy with the men who were trying to break the spell of form and tradition. With Lessing more especially, Herder's "Spirit of Hebrew Poetry," of which a translation by Dr. James Marsh was published in 1833, found its way to New England, and helped to confirm the disposition to seek the springs of inspiration in the human mind, whence all poetry proceeded. The writer of the book, by applying to Hebrew poetry the rules of critical appreciation by which all poetic creations are judged, abolished so far the distinction between sacred and secular, and transferred to the credit of human genius the products commonly ascribed to divine. In the persons of the great bards of Israel all bards were glorified; the soul's creative power was recognized, and with it the heart of the transcendental faith.

The influence of Schleiermacher was even more distinct than that of Herder. One book of his, in particular, made a deep impression, – the "Reden über Religion," published in 1799. The book is thus described by Mr. George Ripley, in a controversial letter to Mr. Andrews Norton, who had assailed Schleiermacher as an atheist. "The 'Discourses on Religion' were not intended to present a system of theology. They are highly rhetorical in manner, filled with bursts of impassioned eloquence, always intense, and sometimes extravagant; addressed to the feelings, not to speculation; and expressly disclaiming all pretensions to an exposition of doctrine. They were published at a time when hostility to religion, and especially to Christianity as a divine revelation, was deemed a proof of talent and refinement. The influence of the church was nearly exhausted; the highest efforts of thought were of a destructive character; a frivolous spirit pervaded society; religion was deprived of its supremacy; and a 'starveling theology' was exalted in place of the living word. Schleiermacher could not contemplate the wretched meagreness and degradation of his age without being moved as by 'a heavenly impulse.' His spirit was stirred within him as he saw men turning from the true God to base idols. He felt himself impelled to go forth with the power of a fresh and youthful enthusiasm, for the restoration of religion; to present it in its most sublime aspect, free from its perversions, disentangled from human speculation, as founded in the essential nature of man, and indispensable to the complete unfolding of his inward being. In order to recognize everything which is really religious among men, and to admit even the lowest degree of it into the idea of religion, he wishes to make this as broad and comprehensive in its character as possible." In illustration of this purpose Mr. Ripley quotes the author as follows: "I maintain that piety is the necessary and spontaneous product of the depths of every elevated nature; that it possesses a rightful claim to a peculiar province in the soul, over which it may exercise an unlimited sovereignty; that it is worthy, by its intrinsic power, to be a source of life to the most noble and exalted minds; and that from its essential character it deserves to be known and received by them. These are the points which I defend, and which I would fain establish."

From this it will appear that Schleiermacher gave countenance to the spiritual aspect of transcendentalism, and co-operated with the general movement it represented. His position that religion was not a system of dogmas, but an inward experience; that it was not a speculation, but a feeling; that its primal verities rested not on miracle or tradition, not on the Bible letter or on ecclesiastical institution, but on the soul's own sense of things divine; that this sense belonged by nature to the human race, and gave to all forms of religion such genuineness as they had; that all affirmation was partial, and all definition deceptive; proved to be practically the same with that taken by Jacobi, and was so received by the disciples of the new philosophy.

But Schleiermacher was an Evangelical Lutheran, a believer in supernatural religion, in Christ, in Christianity as a special dispensation, in the miracles of the New Testament. So far from being a "rationalist," he was the most formidable opponent that "rationalism" had; for his efforts were directed against the critical and theological method, and in support of the spiritual method of dealing with religious truths. In explaining religion as being in its primitive character a sense of divine things in the soul, and as having its seat, not in knowledge, nor yet in action, neither in theology nor in morality, but in feeling, in aspiration, longing, love, veneration, conscious dependence, filial trust, he deprived "rationalism" of its strength. Hence his attraction for liberal orthodox believers in America. Schleiermacher had as many disciples among the Congregationalists as among their antagonists of the opposite school. Professors Edwards and Park included thoughts of his in their "Selections from German Literature." The pulpit transcendentalists acknowledged their indebtedness to him, and the debt they acknowledged was sentimental rather than intellectual. They thanked him for the spirit of fervent piety, deep, cordial, human, unlimited in generosity, untrammelled by logical distinctions, rather than for new light on philosophical problems. His bursts of eloquent enthusiasm over men whom the church outlawed – Spinoza for example – made amends with them for the absence of doctrinal exactness. A warm sympathy with those who detached religion from dogma, and recognized the religious sentiment under its most diverse forms, was characteristic of the new spirit that burned in New England. Schleiermacher was one of the first and foremost to encourage such sympathy: he based it on the idea that man was by nature religious, endowed with spiritual faculties, and that was welcome tidings; and though he retained the essence of the evangelical system, he retained it in a form that could be dropped without injury to the principle by which it was justified. Thus Schleiermacher strengthened the very positions he assailed, and gave aid and comfort to the enemy he would overthrow. The transcendentalists, it is true, employed against the "rationalists" the weapons that he put into their hands. At the same time they left as unimportant the theological system which his weapons were manufactured to support.

But it was through the literature of Germany that the transcendental philosophy chiefly communicated itself. Goethe, Richter and Novalis were more persuasive teachers than Kant, Jacobi or Fichte. To those who could not read German these authors were interpreted by Thomas Carlyle, who took up the cause of German philosophy and literature, and wrote about them with passionate power in the English reviews; not contenting himself with giving surface accounts of them, but plunging boldly into the depths, and carrying his readers with him through discussions that, but for his persuasive eloquence, would have had little charm to ordinary minds. Goethe and Richter were his heroes: their methods and opinions are of the greatest account with him; and he leaves nothing unexplained of the intellectual foundations on which they builded. Consequently in the remarkable papers that Carlyle wrote about them and their books, full report is given of the place held by the Kantean philosophy in their culture. The article on Novalis, in the "Foreign Review" of 1829, No. 7, presents with a master hand the peculiarities of the new metaphysics that were regenerating the German mind. Regenerating is not too strong a word for the influence that he ascribes to it. Thus in 1827 he wrote in the "Edinburgh Review:"

"The critical philosophy has been regarded by persons of approved judgment, and nowise directly implicated in the furthering of it, as distinctly the greatest intellectual achievement of the

century in which it came to light. August Wilhelm Schlegel has stated in plain terms his belief that in respect of its probable influence on the moral culture of Europe, it stands on a line with the Reformation. We mention Schlegel as a man whose opinion has a known value among ourselves. But the worth of Kant's philosophy is not to be gathered from votes alone. The noble system of morality, the purer theology, the lofty views of man's nature derived from it; nay, perhaps the very discussion of such matters, to which it gave so strong an impetus, have told with remarkable and beneficial influence on the whole spiritual character of Germany. No writer of any importance in that country, be he acquainted or not with the critical philosophy, but breathes a spirit of devoutness and elevation more or less directly drawn from it. Such men as Goethe and Schiller cannot exist without effect in any literature or any century; but if one circumstance more than another has contributed to forward their endeavors and introduce that higher tone into the literature of Germany, it has been this philosophical system, to which, in wisely believing its results, or even in wisely denying them, all that was lofty and pure in the genius of poetry or the reason of man so readily allied itself."

After quoting from "Meister's Apprenticeship" a noble passage on the spiritual function of art, Carlyle comments thus: "To adopt such sentiments into his sober practical persuasion; in any measure to feel and believe that such was still and must always be, the high vocation of the poet; on this ground of universal humanity, of ancient and now almost forgotten nobleness, to take his stand, even in these trivial, jeering, withered, unbelieving days, and through all their complex, dispiriting, mean, yet tumultuous influences, to make his light shine before men that it might beautify even our rag-gathering age with some beams of that mild divine splendor which had long left us, the very possibility of which was denied; heartily and in earnest to meditate all this was no common proceeding; to bring it into practice, especially in such a life as his has been, was among the highest and hardest enterprises which any man whatever could engage in."

From Schiller's correspondence with Goethe, Carlyle quotes the following tribute to the Kantean philosophy: "From the opponents of the new philosophy I expect not that tolerance which is shown to every other system no better seen into than this; for Kant's philosophy itself, in its leading points, practises no tolerance, and bears much too rigorous a character to leave any room for accommodation. But in my eyes this does it honor, proving how little it can endure to have truth tampered with. Such a philosophy will not be shaken to pieces by a mere shake of the head. In the open, clear, accessible field of inquiry it builds up its system, seeks no shade, makes no reservation, but even as it treats its neighbors, so it requires to be treated, and may be forgiven for lightly esteeming everything but proofs. Nor am I terrified to think that the law of change, from which no human and no divine work finds grace, will operate on this philosophy as on every other, and one day its form will be destroyed, but its foundations will not have this fate to fear, for ever since mankind has existed, and any reason among mankind, these same first principles have been admitted, and on the whole, acted on."

Of Richter he writes: "Richter's philosophy, a matter of no ordinary interest, both as it agrees with the common philosophy of Germany, and disagrees with it, must not be touched on for the present. One only observation we shall make: it is not mechanical or sceptical; it springs not from the forum or the laboratory, but from the depths of the human spirit, and yields as its fairest product a noble system of morality, and the firmest conviction of religion. An intense and continual faith in man's immortality and native grandeur accompanies him; from amid the vortices of life he looks up to a heavenly loadstar; the solution of what is visible and transient, he finds in what is invisible and eternal. He has doubted, he denies, yet he believes."

Of Novalis, scarcely more than a name to Americans, the same oracle speaks thus: "The aim of Novalis' whole philosophy is to preach and establish the majesty of reason, in the strict philosophical sense; to conquer for it all provinces of human thought, and everywhere resolve its vassal understanding into fealty, the right and only useful relation for it. How deeply these and the like principles (those of the Kantean philosophy) had impressed themselves on Novalis, we see more

and more the further we study his writings. Naturally a deep, religious, contemplative spirit, purified also by harsh affliction, and familiar in the 'Sanctuary of Sorrow,' he comes before us as the most ideal of all idealists. For him the material creation is but an appearance, a typical shadow in which the Deity manifests himself to man. Not only has the unseen world a reality, but the only reality; the rest being not metaphorically, but literally and in scientific strictness, 'a show;' in the words of the poet:

'Sound and smoke overclouding the splendor of heaven!'

The invisible world is near us; or rather, it is here, in us and about us; were the fleshly coil removed from our soul, the glories of the unseen were even now around us, as the ancients fabled of the spheral music. Thus, not in word only, but in truth and sober belief he feels himself encompassed by the Godhead; feels in every thought that 'in Him he lives, moves, and has his being.'"

These declarations from a man who was becoming prominent in the world of literature, and whose papers were widely and enthusiastically read, had great weight with people to whom the German was an unknown tongue. But it was not an unknown tongue to all, and they who had mastered it were active communicators of its treasures. Carlyle's efforts at interesting English readers through his remarkable translation of Wilhelm Meister, and the "Specimens of German Romance," which contained pieces by Tieck, Jean Paul, Hoffmann, and Musæus, published in 1827, were seconded here by F. H. Hedge, C. T. Brooks, J. S. Dwight, and others, who made familiar to the American public the choicest poems of the most famous German bards. Richter became well known by his "Autobiography," "Quintus Fixlein," "Flower, Fruit, and Thorn Pieces," "Hesperus," "Titan," "The Campaner Thal," the writings and versions of Madame de Staël. The third volume of the "Dial," July, 1841, opened with a remarkable paper on Goethe, by Margaret Fuller. The pages of the "Dial" abounded in references to Goethe's ideas and writings. No author occupied the cultivated New England mind as much as he did. None of these writers taught formally the doctrines of the transcendental philosophy, but they reflected one or another aspect of it. They assumed its cardinal principles in historical and literary criticism, in dramatic art, in poetry and romance. They conveyed its spirit of aspiration after ideal standards of perfection. They caught from it their judgments on society and religion. They communicated its aroma, and so imparted the quickening breath of its soul to people who would have started back in alarm from its doctrines.

The influence of the transcendental philosophy on German literature was fully conceded by Menzel, who, however, found little trace of it in Goethe. Of the author of the philosophy he wrote: "Kant was very far from assenting to French infidelity and its immoral consequences. He directed man to himself, to the moral law in his own bosom; and the fresh breath of life of the old Grecian dignity of man penetrates the whole of his luminous philosophy." Of Goethe he wrote: "If he ever acknowledged allegiance to a good spirit, to great ideas, to virtue, he did it only because they had become the order of the day, for, on the other hand, he has, again, served every weakness, vanity and folly, if they were but looked on with favor at the time; in short, like a good player, he has gone through all the parts." Menzel's book was translated by a man who had no sympathy with Transcendentalism – Prof. C. C. Felton; was admired by people of his own school, and was sharply criticised, especially in the portions relating to Goethe, by the transcendentalists, who accepted Carlyle's view. He and they put the most generous interpretations on the masterpieces of the poet, passed by as incidental, did not see, or in their own mind transfigured, the objectionable features that Menzel seized on. Too little was ascribed to the foreign French element that reached the literature of Germany through Prussia – to Rousseau, Voltaire, Diderot – whose ideas fell in with the unworthier sceptical tendencies of the Kantean system, and polluted the waters of that clear, cold stream; too much was ascribed to the noble idealism that was credited with power to glorify all it touched, and redeem even low things from degradation. If therefore they apologized for what the sensational moralists blamed, they did it in good faith, not as excusing the indecency, but as surmounting it. What they admired was the art, and the aspiration it expressed. The devotees of the French spirit, in its frivolity and meretricious

beauty, they turned away from with disdain. There was enough of the nobler kind to engage them. When they went to France they went for what France had in common with Germany – an idealism of the wholesome, ethical and spiritual type, which, whether German, French or English, bore always the same characteristics of beauty and nobleness. Much that was unspiritual, all that was merely speculative, they passed by. With an appetite for the generous and inspiring only, they sought the really earnest teachers, of whom in France there were a few. The influence of those few was great in proportion to their fewness probably, quite as much as to their merit as philosophers.

IV.
TRANSCENDENTALISM IN FRANCE

From the time of Malebranche, who died in 1715, to Maine de Biran, Royer-Collard, Ampère and Cousin, a period of about a century, philosophy in France had not borne an honorable name. The French mind was active; philosophy was a profession; the philosophical world was larger than in Germany, where it was limited to the Universities. But France took no lead in speculation, it waited to receive impulse from other lands; and even then, instead of taking up the impulse and carrying it on with original and sympathetic force, it was content to exhibit and reproduce it. The office of expositor, made easy by the perspicacity of its intellect and the flexibility of its language, was accepted and discharged with a cleverness that was recognized by all Europe. Its histories of philosophy, translations, expositions, reproductions, were admirable for neatness and clearness. The most obscure systems became intelligible in that limpid and lucid speech, which reported with faultless dexterity the agile movements of the Gallic mind, and made popular the most abstruse doctrines of metaphysics. German philosophy in its original dress was outlandish, even to practised students in German. The readers of French were many in England and the United States, and the readers of French, without severe labor on their part, were put in possession of the essential ideas of the deep thinkers of the race. The best accounts of human speculation are in French. Barthélemy Saint Hilaire interprets Aristotle, and throws important light on Indian Philosophy; Bouillet translates Plotinus; Emil Saisset translates Spinoza; Tissot and Jules Barni perform the same service for Kant; Jules Simon and Etienne Vacherot undertake to make intelligible the School of Alexandria; Paul Janet explains the dialectics of Plato; Adolphe Franck deals with the Jewish Kabbala; Charles de Rémusat with Anselm, Abelard and Bacon; MM. Hauréau and Rousselot with the philosophy of the middle age; M. Chauvet with the theories of the human understanding in antiquity. Cousin published unedited works of Proclus, analyzed the commentaries of Olympiodorus on the Platonic dialogues, made a complete translation of Plato, admirable for clearness and strength, and proposed to present, not of course with his own hand, but by the hands of friendly fellow-workers, and under his own direction, examples of whatever was best in every philosophical system. The philosophical work of France is ably summed up in the report on "Philosophy in France in the nineteenth century," presented by Felix Ravaisson, member of the Institute, and published in 1868, under the auspices of the Ministry of Public Instruction.

The ideas of Locke were brought from London to Paris by Voltaire, who became acquainted with them during a residence in England, and found them effective in his warfare against the ecclesiastical institutions of his country. Through his brilliant interpretations and keen applications, they gained currency, became fashionable among the wits, were domesticated with people of culture and elegance, and worked their way into the religion and politics of the time. It is needless to say that in his hands full justice was done to their external and material aspects.

The system found a more exact and methodical expounder in Condillac, who reduced it to greater simplicity by eliminating from it what in the original marred its unity, namely reflection, the bent of the mind back on itself, whereby it took cognizance of impressions made by the outer world. Taking what remained of the system, the notion that all knowledge came primarily through the senses, and drawing the conclusion that the mind itself was a product of sensation, Condillac fashioned a doctrine which had the merit, such as it was, of utter intelligibleness to the least instructed mind; a system of materialism naked and unadorned. If he himself forbore to push his principle to its extreme results, declining to assert that we were absolutely nothing else than products of sensation, and surmising that beneath the layers of intelligence and reason there might lurk a principle that sensation could not account for, something stable in the midst of the ceaseless instability, something absolute below everything relative, which might be called action or will, the popular interpretation of

his philosophy took no account of such subtleties. In vain did his disciple Destutt de Tracy declare that "the principle of movement is the will, and that the will is the person, the man himself." The fascination of simplicity proved more than a match for nicety of distinction, and both were ranked among materialists.

Cabanis was at no pains to conceal the most repulsive features of the system. In his work, "The Relations of the Physical and the Moral in Man," he maintained bluntly the theory that there was no spiritual being apart from the body; that mind had no substance, no separate existence of its own, but was in all its parts and qualities a product of the nervous system; that sensibility of every kind, sentimental, intelligent, moral, spiritual, including the whole domain of conscious and unconscious vitality, was a nervous manifestation; that man was capable of sensation because he had nerves; that he was what he was because of the wondrous character of the mechanism of sensation; that, in a word, the perfection of organization was the perfection of humanity. It was Cabanis who said "the brain secretes thought as the liver secretes bile." Cabanis modified his philosophy before his death, but without effect to break the force of his cardinal positions. The results of such teaching appeared in a morality of selfishness, tending to self-indulgence – a morality destitute of nobleness and sweetness, summing up its lessons in the maxims that good is good to eat; that the pleasurable thing is right, the painful thing wrong; that success is the measure of rectitude; that the aim of life is the attainment of happiness, and that happiness means physical enjoyment; that virtue and vice are names for prudence and for folly, – Virtue being conformity with the ways of the world, Vice being non-conformity with the ways of the world; no ideal standard being recognized for the one, no law of rectitude being confessed for the other. Conscience was regarded as an artificial habit created by custom or acquiesced in from tradition; the "categorical imperative" was pronounced the dogmatism of the fanatic.

From such principles atheism naturally proceeded. Atheism not of opinion merely, but of sentiment and feeling; for at that time "the potencies" of matter impressed no such awe upon the mind as they have done since; the "mystery of matter" was unfelt; physiology was an unexplored region; the materialist simply denied spirit, putting a blank where believers in religion had been used to find a soul; and had no alternative but to run sensationalism into sensualism, and to give the senses the flavor of the ground. With us the sensational philosophy has become refined into a philosophy of experience, and the materialist finds himself in a region where to distinguish between matter and spirit is difficult, to say the least. But a hundred years ago matter was clod, and the passion it engendered smelt of the charnel-house. The morbid insanities of the revolution, the orgies in which blood and wine ran together, the savage glee, the delirium that ensued when the uncertainty of life acting on the impulse to enjoy life while it lasted, made men ferocious in clutching at immediate pleasure, attest the consequences that ensued from such frank adoption of the sensational philosophy as was practised among the French. Locke was a man of piety, which even his warmest apologists will hardly claim for Voltaire. The English mind, grave and thoughtful, trained by religious institutions in religious beliefs, was less inclined than the French to drive speculative theories to extreme conclusions. The philosophy of sensationalism culminated, not in the French Revolution, as has been vulgarly asserted, but in the unbelief and sensual extravagance that marked one phase of it.

In this there was nothing original; there was no originality in the reaction that followed, and gave to modern philosophy in France its spiritual character. Laromiguiére, educated in the school of Condillac, improved on the suggestion that Condillac had given, and deepened into a chasm the scratch he had made to indicate a distinction between the results of sensation and the faculties of the mind. In his analysis of the mental constitution he came upon two facts that denoted an original activity in advance of sensation – namely, *attention* and *desire*: the former the root of the intellectual, the latter of the moral powers; both at last resolvable into one principle – attention. This discovery met with wide and cordial welcome, the popularity of Laromiguiére's lectures, delivered in 1811, 1812, 1813, revealing the fact that thoughtful people were prepared for a new metaphysical departure.

Maine de Biran, who more than the rest deserves the name of an original investigator, a severe, solitary, independent thinker, pupil of no school and founder of none, brought into strong relief the activity of the intellect. Thought, he maintained, proceeds from will, which is at the base of the personality, is, in fact, the essence of personality. The primary fact is volition. Descartes said, "I think, therefore I am." Maine de Biran said, "I will, therefore I am." "In every one of my determinations," he declared, "I recognize myself as being a cause anterior to its effect and capable of surviving it. I behold myself as outside of the movement I produce, and independent of time; for this reason, strictly speaking, I do not *become*, I really and absolutely *am*." "To be, to act, to will, are the same thing under different names." Will as the seat of activity; will as the core of personality; will as the soul of causation: here is the corner-stone for a new structure to replace the old one of the "Cyclopædists." Important deductions followed from such a first principle; the dignity of the moral being, freedom of the moral will, the nobility of existence, the persistency of the individual as a ground for continuous effort and far-reaching hope, the spirituality of man and his destiny. To recover the will from the mass of sensations that had buried it out of sight, was the achievement of this philosopher. It was an achievement by which philosophy was disengaged from physics, and sent forth on a more cheerful way.

The next steps were taken by disciples of the Scotch school – Royer-Collard, Victor Cousin and Theodore Jouffroy. The last translated Reid and Stewart from English into French; the two former lectured on them. The three, being masters of clear and persuasive speech, made their ideas popular in France. Cousin's lectures on the Scotch school, including Reid, were delivered in 1819. The lectures on Kant were given in 1820. Both courses were full and adequate. Cousin committed himself to neither, but freely criticised both, laying stress on the sceptical aspect of the transcendental system as expounded by Kant.

Cousin's own system was the once famous, now discarded eclecticism, under cover of which another phase of idealism was presented which found favor in America. The cardinal principle of eclecticism was that truth was contained in no system or group of systems, but in all together; that each had its portion and made its contribution; and that the true philosophy would be reached by a process of intellectual distillation by which the essential truth in each would be extracted. A method like this would have nothing to recommend it but its generosity, if there were no criterion by which truths could be tested, no philosophical principle, in short, to govern the selection of materials. Eclecticism must have a philosophy before proceeding to make one, must have arrived at its conclusion before entering on its process. And this it did. It will be seen by the following extracts from his writings what the fundamental ideas of M. Cousin were, and in what respect they aided the process of rationalism.

The quotations are from his exposition of eclecticism:

> "Facts are the point of departure, if not the limit of philosophy. Now facts, whatever they may be, exist for us only as they come to our consciousness. It is there alone that observation seizes them and describes them, before committing them to induction, which forces them to reveal the consequences which they contain in their bosom. The field of philosophical observation is consciousness; there is no other; but in this nothing is to be neglected; everything is important, for everything is connected; and if one part be wanting, complete unity is unattainable. To return within our consciousness, and scrupulously to study all the phenomena, their differences and their relations – this is the primary study of philosophy. Its scientific name is psychology. Psychology is then the condition and, as it were, the vestibule of philosophy. The psychological method consists in completely retiring within the world of consciousness, in order to become familiar in that sphere where all is reality, but where the reality is so various and so delicate; and the psychological talent consists in placing ourselves at will within this interior world, in presenting the spectacle there displayed to ourselves, and in reproducing freely and distinctly

all the facts which are accidentally and confusedly brought to our notice by the circumstances of life."…

"The first duty of the psychological method is to retire within the field of consciousness, where there is nothing but phenomena, that are all capable of being perceived and judged by observation. Now as no substantial existence falls under the eye of consciousness, it follows that the first effect of a rigid application of method is to postpone the subject of ontology. It postpones it, I say, but does not destroy it. It is a fact, indeed, attested by observation, that in this same consciousness, in which there is nothing but phenomena, there are found notions, whose regular development passes the limits of consciousness and attains the knowledge of actual existences. Would you stop the development of these notions? You would then arbitrarily limit the compass of a fact, you would attack this fact itself, and thus shake the authority of all other facts. We must either call in question the authority of consciousness in itself, or admit this authority without reserve for all the facts attested by consciousness. The reason is no less certain and real than the will or the sensibility; its certainty once admitted we must follow it wherever it rigorously conducts, though it be even into the depths of ontology. For example, it is a rational fact attested by consciousness, that in the view of intelligence, every phenomenon which is presented supposes a cause. It is a fact, moreover, that this principle of causality is marked with the characteristics of universality and necessity. If it be universal and necessary, to limit it would be to destroy it. Now in the phenomenon of sensation, the principle of causality intervenes universally and necessarily, and refers this phenomenon to a cause; and our consciousness testifying that this cause is not the personal cause which the will represents, it follows that the principle of causality in its irresistible application conducts to an impersonal cause, that is to say, to an external cause, which subsequently, and always irresistibly, the principle of causality enriches with the characteristics and laws, of which the aggregate is the Universe. Here then is an existence; but an existence revealed by a principle which is itself attested by consciousness. Here is a primary step in ontology, but by the path of psychology, that is to say, of observation. We are led by similar processes to the Cause of all causes, to the substantial Cause, to God; and not only to a God of Power, but to a God of Justice, a God of Holiness; so that this experimental method, which, applied to a single order of phenomena, incomplete and exclusive, destroyed ontology and the higher elements of consciousness, applied with fidelity, firmness and completeness, to all the phenomena, builds up that which it had overthrown, and by itself furnishes ontology with a sure and legitimate instrument. Thus, having commenced with modesty, we can end with results whose certainty is equalled by their importance."…

"What physical inquirer, since Euler, seeks anything in nature but forces and laws? Who now speaks of atoms? And even molecules, the old atoms revived – who defends them as anything but an hypothesis? If the fact be incontestable, if modern physics be now employed only with forces and laws, I draw the rigorous conclusion from it, that the science of Physics, whether it know it or not, is no longer material, and that it became spiritual when it rejected every other method than observation and induction, which can never lead to aught but forces and laws. Now what is there material in forces and laws? The physical sciences, then, themselves have entered into the broad path of an enlightened spiritualism; and they have only to march with a firm step, and to gain a more and more profound knowledge of forces and laws, in order to arrive at more important generalizations. Let us go still further. As it is

a law already recognized of the same reason which governs humanity and nature, to refer every finite cause and every multiple law – that is to say, every phenomenal cause and every phenomenal law – to something absolute, which leaves nothing to be sought beyond it in relation to existence, that is to say, to a substance; so this law refers the external world composed of forces and laws to a substance, which must needs be a cause in order to be the subject of the causes of this world, which must needs be an intelligence in order to be the subject of its laws; a substance, in fine, which must needs be the identity of activity and intelligence. We have thus arrived accordingly, for the second time, by observation and induction in the external sphere, at precisely the same point to which observation and induction have successively conducted us in the sphere of personality and in that of reason; consciousness in its triplicity is therefore one; the physical and moral world is one, science is one, that is to say, in other words, God is One."…

"Having gained these heights, philosophy becomes more luminous as well as more grand; universal harmony enters into human thought, enlarges it, and gives it peace. The divorce of ontology and psychology, of speculation and observation, of science and common-sense, is brought to an end by a method which arrives at speculation by observation, at ontology by psychology, in order then to confirm observation by speculation, psychology by ontology, and which starting from the immediate facts of consciousness, of which the common-sense of the human race is composed, derives from them the science which contains nothing more than common-sense, but which elevates that to its purest and most rigid form, and enables it to comprehend itself. But I here approach a fundamental point.

"If every fact of consciousness contains all the human faculties, sensibility, free activity, and reason, the me, the not-me, and their absolute identity; and if every fact of consciousness be equal to itself, it follows that every man who has the consciousness of himself possesses and cannot but possess all the ideas that are necessarily contained in consciousness. Thus every man, if he knows himself, knows all the rest, nature and God at the same time with himself. Every man believes in his own existence, every man therefore believes in the existence of the world and of God; every man thinks, every man therefore thinks God, if we may so express it; every human proposition, reflecting the consciousness, reflects the idea of unity and of being that is essential to consciousness; every human proposition therefore contains God; every man who speaks, speaks of God, and every word is an act of faith and a hymn. Atheism is a barren formula, a negation without reality, an abstraction of the mind which cannot assert itself without self-destruction; for every assertion, even though negative, is a judgment which contains the idea of being, and, consequently, God in His fulness. Atheism is the illusion of a few sophists, who place their liberty in opposition to their reason, and are unable even to give an account to themselves of what they think; but the human race, which is never false to its consciousness and never places itself in contradiction to its laws, possesses the knowledge of God, believes in him, and never ceases to proclaim Him. In fact, the human race believes in reason and cannot but believe in it, in that reason which is manifested in consciousness, in a momentary relation with the me – the pure though faint reflection of that primitive light which flows from the bosom of the eternal substance, which is at once substance, cause, intelligence. Without the manifestation of reason in our consciousness, there could be no knowledge – neither psychological, nor, still less, ontological. Reason is, in some sort, the bridge between psychology and ontology, between consciousness and being; it rests at the same time

on both; it descends from God and approaches man; it makes its appearance in the consciousness, as a guest who brings intelligence of an unknown world of which it at once presents the idea and awakens the want. If reason were personal, it would have no value, no authority, beyond the limits of the individual subject. If it remained in the condition of primitive substance, without manifestation, it would be the same for the me which would not know itself, as if it were not. It is necessary therefore that the intelligent substance should manifest itself; and this manifestation is the appearance of reason in the consciousness. Reason then is literally a revelation, a necessary and universal revelation, which is wanting to no man and which enlightens every man on his coming into the world: *illuminat omnem hominem venientem in hunc mundum*. Reason is the necessary mediator between God and man, the λογος of Pythagoras and Plato, the Word made flesh which serves as the interpreter of God and the teacher of man, divine and human at the same time. It is not, indeed, the absolute God in his majestic individuality, but his manifestation in spirit and in truth; it is not the Being of beings, but it is the revealed God of the human race. As God is never wanting to the human race and never abandons it, so the human race believes in God with an irresistible and unalterable faith, and this unity of faith is its own highest unity…

"If these convictions of faith be combined in every act of consciousness, and if consciousness be one in the whole human race, whence arises the prodigious diversity which seems to exist between man and man, and in what does this diversity consist? In truth, when we perceive at first view so many apparent differences between one individual and another, one country and another, one epoch of humanity and another, we feel a profound emotion of melancholy, and are tempted to regard an intellectual development so capricious, and even the whole of humanity, as a phenomenon without consistency, without grandeur, and without interest. But it is demonstrated by a more attentive observation of facts, that no man is a stranger to either of the three great ideas which constitute consciousness, namely, personality or the liberty of man, impersonality or the necessity of nature, and the providence of God. Every man comprehends these three ideas immediately, because he found them at first and constantly finds them again within himself. The exceptions to this fact, by their small number, by the absurdities which they involve, by the difficulties which they create, serve only to exhibit, in a still clearer light, the universality of faith in the human race, the treasure of good sense deposited in truth, and the peace and happiness that there are for a human soul in not discarding the convictions of its kind. Leave out the exceptions which appear from time to time in certain critical periods of history, and you will perceive that the masses which alone have true existence, always and everywhere live in the same faith, of which the forms only vary."

These somewhat too copious extracts have been purposely taken from the first volume of the "Specimens of Foreign Standard Literature," edited by George Ripley in 1838, rather than from the collected writings of Cousin, because they show what a leading New England transcendentalist thought most important in the teaching of the French school. His own estimate of the philosophy and his expectations from it may be learned from the closing passages of the introduction to that volume:

"The objects at which Mr. Coleridge aims, it seems to me, are in a great measure accomplished by the philosophy of Cousin. This philosophy demolishes, by one of the most beautiful specimens of scientific analysis that is anywhere to be met with, the system of sensation, against which Mr. Coleridge utters such eloquent and pathetic denunciations. It establishes on a rock the truth of the everlasting sentiments

of the human heart. It exhibits to the speculative inquirer, in the rigorous forms of science, the reality of our instinctive faith in God, in virtue, in the human soul, in the beauty of holiness, and in the immortality of man.

"Such a philosophy, I cannot but believe, will ultimately find a cherished abode in the youthful affections of this nation, in whose history, from the beginning, the love of freedom, the love of philosophical inquiry, and the love of religion have been combined in a thrice holy bond. We need a philosophy like this to purify and enlighten our politics, to consecrate our industry, to cheer and elevate society. We need it for our own use in the hours of mental misgiving and gloom; when the mystery of the universe presses heavily upon our souls; when the fountains of the great deep are broken up, and the

"Intellectual power
Goes sounding on, a dim and perilous way,"

over the troubled waters of the stormy sea. We need it for the use of our practical men, who, surrounded on every side with the objects of sense, engrossed with the competitions of business, the rivalries of public life, or the cares of professional duty, and accustomed to look at the immediate and obvious utility of everything which appeals to their notice, often acquire a distaste for all moral and religious inquiries, and as an almost inevitable consequence, lose their interest, and often their belief, in the moral and religious faculties of their nature. We need it for the use of our young men, who are engaged in the active pursuits of life, or devoted to the cultivation of literature. How many on the very threshold of manly responsibility, by the influence of a few unhappy mistakes, which an acquaintance with their higher nature, as unfolded by a sound religious philosophy, would have prevented, have consigned themselves to disgrace, remorse, and all the evils of a violated conscience! How many have become the dupes of the sophists' eloquence, or the victims of the fanatics' terrors, for whom the spirit of a true philosophy – a philosophy 'baptized in the pure fountain of eternal love,' would have preserved the charm and beauty of life."

Cousin's "History of Philosophy," translated by H. G. Linberg, was published in 1832. The "Elements of Psychology," by C. S. Henry, appeared in 1834. Thus Cousin was early introduced and recommended, and his expositions of the German schools were received. The volume from which passages have been cited had an important influence on New England thought.

V.
TRANSCENDENTALISM IN ENGLAND

The prophet of the new philosophy in England was Samuel Taylor Coleridge; in the early part of the present century, perhaps the most conspicuous figure in our literary world; the object of more admiration, the centre of more sympathy, the source of more intellectual life than any individual of his time; the criticism, the censure, the manifold animadversion he was made the mark for, better attest his power than the ovations he received from his worshippers. The believers in his genius lacked words to express their sense of his greatness. He was the "eternal youth," the "divine child." The brilliant men of his period acknowledged his surpassing brilliancy; the deep men confessed his depth; the spiritual men went to him for inspiration. His mind, affluent and profuse, contained within no barriers of conventional form, poured an abounding flood of thoughts over the whole literary domain. He was essayist, journalist, politician, poet, dramatist, metaphysician, philosopher, theologian, divine, critic, expositor, dreamer, soliloquizer; in all eloquent, in all intense. The effect he produced on the minds of his contemporaries will scarcely be believed now. At present he is little more than a name: his books are pronounced unreadable; his opinions are not quoted as authority; his force is spent. But in 1851, Thomas Carlyle, then past the years of his enthusiasm, and verging on the scornful epoch of his intellectual career, spoke of him, in the "Life of Sterling," as "A sublime man, who, alone in those dark days, had saved his crown of spiritual manhood; escaping from the black materialisms and revolutionary deluges, with God, freedom, immortality still his; a king of men. The practical intellects of the world did not much heed him, or carelessly reckoned him a metaphysical dreamer; but to the rising spirits of the young generation he had this dusky, sublime character, and sat there as a kind of *Magus*, girt in mystery and enigma, his Dodona oak grove (Mr. Gillman's house at Highgate) whispering strange things, uncertain whether oracles or jargon." "To the man himself, Nature had given in high measure the seeds of a noble endowment, and to unfold it was forbidden him. A subtle, lynx-eyed intellect, tremulous, pious sensibility to all good and all beautiful; truly a ray of empyrean light, – but imbedded in such weak laxity of character, in such indolences and esuriences, as made strange work with it. Once more, the tragic story of a high endowment with an insufficient will."

The abatement is painfully just; but while Coleridge lived, this very indolence and moral imbecility added to the interest he excited, and gave a mystic splendor as of a divine inspiration to his mental performances. The distinction between unhealthiness and inspiration has never been clearly marked, and the voluble utterances of the feebly outlined and loosely jointed soul easily passed for oracles. Thus his moral deficiencies aided his influence. His wonderful powers of conversation or rather of effusion in the midst of admiring friends helped the illusion and the fascination. He really seemed inspired while he talked; and as his talk ranged through every domain, the listeners carried away and communicated the impression of a superhuman wisdom.

The impression that Coleridge made on minds of a very different order from Carlyle's, is given in the following lines by Aubrey de Vere:

"No loftier, purer soul than his hath ever
With awe revolved the planetary page
From infancy to age,
Of knowledge, sedulous and proud to give her
The whole of his great heart, for her own sake;
For what she is: not what she does, or what can make.

And mighty voices from afar came to him;

Converse of trumpets held by cloudy forms
And speech of choral storms.
Spirits of night and noontide bent to woo him;
He stood the while lonely and desolate
As Adam when he ruled a world, yet found no mate.

His loftiest thoughts were but as palms uplifted;
Aspiring, yet in supplicating guise —
His sweetest songs were sighs.
Adown Lethean streams his spirit drifted,
Under Elysian shades from poppied bank,
With amaranths massed in dark luxuriance dank.

Coleridge, farewell! That great and grave transition
Which may not king or priest or conqueror spare.
And yet a babe can bear,
Has come to thee. Through life a goodly vision
Was thine; and time it was thy rest to take.
Soft be the sound ordained thy sleep to break;
When thou art waking, wake me, for thy Master's sake."

In May, 1796, – he was then twenty-four years old, – Coleridge wrote to a friend, "I am studying German, and in about six weeks shall be able to read that language with tolerable fluency. Now I have some thoughts of making a proposal to Robinson, the great London bookseller, of translating all the works of Schiller, which would make a portly quarto, on condition that he should pay my journey and my wife's to and from Jena, a cheap German University where Schiller resides, and allow me two guineas each quarto sheet, which would maintain me. If I could realize this scheme, I should there study chemistry and anatomy, and bring over with me all the works of Semler and Michaelis, the German theologians, and of Kant, the great German metaphysician." In September, 1798, in company with Wordsworth and his sister, and at the expense of his munificent friends Josiah and Thomas Wedgewood, he went to Germany and spent fourteen months in hard study. There he attended the lectures of Eichhorn and Blumenbach, made the acquaintance of Tieck, dipped quite deeply into philosophy and general literature, and took by contagion the speculative ideas that filled his imagination with visions of intellectual discovery. Schelling's "Transcendental Idealism," with which Coleridge was afterwards most in sympathy, was not published till 1800. The "Philosophy of Nature" was published in 1797, the year before Coleridge's visit. In 1817, he tells the readers of the "Biographia Literaria" that he had been able to procure only two of Schelling's books – the first volume of his "Philosophical Writings," and the "System of Transcendental Idealism;" these and "a small pamphlet against Fichte, the spirit of which was, to my feelings, painfully incongruous with the principles, and which displayed the love of wisdom rather than the wisdom of love."

The philosophical ideas of Schelling commended themselves at once to Coleridge, who was a born idealist, of audacious genius, speculative, imaginative, original, capable of any such abstract achievement as the German undertook.

> "In Schelling's *Natur Philosophie* and the *System des Transcendentalen Idealismus*, I first found a genial coincidence with much that I had toiled out for myself, and a powerful assistance in what I had yet to do. All the main and fundamental ideas were born and matured in my mind before I had ever seen a single page of the German philosopher; and I might indeed affirm with truth, before the more important works of Schelling had been written, or at least made public.

> Nor is this at all to be wondered at. We had studied in the same school; been disciplined by the same preparatory philosophy, namely, the writings of Kant; we had both equal obligations to the polar logic and dynamic philosophy of Giordano Bruno; and Schelling has lately, and, as of recent acquisition, avowed that same affectionate reverence for the labors of Behmen and other mystics which I had formed at a much earlier period. God forbid that I should be suspected of a wish to enter into a rivalry with Schelling for the honors so unequivocally his right, not only as a great original genius, but as the *founder* of the Philosophy of Nature, and as the most successful *improver* of the Dynamic system, which, begun by Bruno, was reintroduced (in a more philosophical form, and freed from all its impurities and visionary accompaniments) by Kant, in whom it was the native and necessary growth of his own system. Kant's followers, however, on whom (for the greater part) their master's *cloak* had fallen, without, or with a very scanty portion of his *spirit*, had adopted his dynamic ideas, only as a more refined species of mechanics. With exception of one or two fundamental ideas which cannot be withheld from Fichte, to Schelling we owe the completion and the most important victories of this revolution in philosophy. To me it will be happiness and honor enough, should I succeed in rendering the system itself intelligible to my countrymen, and in the application of it to the most awful of subjects for the most important of purposes. Whether a work is the offspring of a man's own spirit and the product of original thinking, will be discovered by those who are its sole legitimate judges, by better tests than the mere reference to dates."

The question of Coleridge's alleged plagiarism from Schelling does not concern us here. Whether the philosophy he taught was the product of his own thinking, or whether he was merely the medium for communicating the system of Schelling to his countrymen, is of no moment to us. For us it is sufficient to know that the English-speaking people on both shores of the Atlantic received them chiefly through the Englishman. Those who are interested in the other matter will find Coleridge's reputation vindicated in a long and elaborate introduction to the "Biographia Literaria," edition of 1847, by the poet's son.

Coleridge was a pure Transcendentalist, of the Schelling school. The transcendental phrases came over and over in book and conversation, "reason" and "understanding," "intuition," "necessary truths," "consciousness," and the rest that were used to describe the supersensual world and the faculties by which it was made visible. He shall speak for himself. The following passage from the "Biographia Literaria," Chapter XII., will be sufficiently intelligible to those who have read the previous chapters, or enough of them to comprehend their cardinal ideas:

> "The criterion is this: if a man receives as fundamental facts, and therefore of course indemonstratable and incapable of further analysis, the general notions of matter, spirit, soul, body, action, passiveness, time, space, cause and effect, consciousness, perception, memory and all these, and is satisfied if only he can analyze all other notions into some one or more of these supposed elements, with plausible subordination and apt arrangement; to such a mind I would as courteously as possible convey the hint, that for him this chapter was not written… For philosophy, in its highest sense, as the science of ultimate truths, and therefore *scientia scientiarum*, this mere analysis of terms is preparative only, though as a preparative discipline indispensable.
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> "Still less dare a favorable perusal be anticipated from the proselytes of that compendious philosophy which, talking of mind, but thinking of brick and mortar, or other images equally abstracted from body, contrives a theory of spirit

by nicknaming matter, and in a few hours can qualify its dullest disciples to explain the *omne scibile* by reducing all things to impressions, ideas, and sensations.

"But it is time to tell the truth; though it requires some courage to avow it in an age and country in which disquisitions on all subjects not privileged to adopt technical terms or scientific symbols, must be addressed to the public. I say, then, that it is neither possible nor necessary for all men, nor for many, to be philosophers. There is a philosophic consciousness which lies beneath or (as it were) behind the spontaneous consciousness natural to all reflecting beings. As the elder Romans distinguished their northern provinces into Cis-Alpine and Trans-Alpine, so may we divide all the objects of human knowledge into those on this side and those on the other side of the spontaneous consciousness. The latter is exclusively the domain of pure philosophy, which is therefore properly entitled *transcendental*, in order to discriminate it at once, both from mere reflection and *re*-presentation on the one hand, and on the other from those flights of lawless speculation which, abandoned by *all* distinct consciousness, because transgressing the bounds and purposes of our intellectual faculties, are justly condemned as *transcendent*.

"The first range of hills that encircles the scanty vale of human life is the horizon for the majority of its inhabitants. On its ridges the sun is born and departs. From them the stars rise, and touching them they vanish. By the many, even this range, the natural limit and bulwark of the vale, is but imperfectly known. Its higher ascents are too often hidden in mists and clouds from uncultivated swamps which few have courage or curiosity to penetrate. To the multitude below these vapors appear, now as the dark haunts of terrific agents, on which none may intrude with impunity; and now all aglow, with colors not their own, they are gazed at as the splendid palaces of happiness and power. But in all ages there have been a few who, measuring and sounding the rivers of the vale at the feet of their farthest inaccessible falls, have learned that the sources must be far higher and far inward; a few who, even in the level streams, have detected elements which neither the vale itself nor the surrounding mountains contained or could supply. How and whence to these thoughts, these strong probabilities, the ascertaining vision, the intuitive knowledge may finally supervene, can be learned only by the fact. I might oppose to the question the words with which Plotinus supposes Nature to answer a similar difficulty: 'Should any one interrogate her how she works, if graciously she vouchsafe to listen and speak, she will reply, it behooves thee not to disquiet me with interrogatories, but to understand in silence, even as I am silent, and work without words.'

"They and they only can acquire the philosophic imagination, the sacred power of self-intuition, who within themselves can interpret and understand the symbol, that the wings of the air-sylph are forming within the skin of the caterpillar; those only, who feel in their own spirits the same instinct which impels the chrysalis of the horned fly to leave room in its *involucrum* for *antennæ* yet to come. They know and feel that the potential works in them, even as the actual works in them! In short, all the organs of sense are framed for a corresponding world of sense; and we have it. All the organs of spirit are framed for a correspondent world of spirit; though the latter organs are not developed in all alike. But they exist in all, and their first appearance discloses itself in the moral being. How else could it be that even worldlings, not wholly debased, will contemplate the man of simple and disinterested goodness with contradictory feelings of pity and respect. 'Poor man, he is not made for this world.' Oh, herein they utter a prophecy of universal fulfilment, for man must either rise or sink.

"It is the essential mark of the true philosopher to rest satisfied with no imperfect light, as long as the impossibility of attaining a fuller knowledge has not been demonstrated. That the common consciousness itself will furnish proofs by its own direction that it is connected with master currents below the surface, I shall merely assume as a postulate *pro tempore*… On the IMMEDIATE which dwells in every man, and on the original intuition or absolute affirmation of it (which is likewise in every man, but does not in every man rise into consciousness), all the *certainty* of our knowledge depends; and this becomes intelligible to no man by the ministry of mere words from without. The medium by which spirits understand each other is not the surrounding air, but the *freedom* which they possess in common, as the common ethereal element of their being, the tremulous reciprocations of which propagate themselves even to the inmost of the soul. Where the spirit of a man is not *filled* with the consciousness of freedom (were it only from its restlessness, as of one struggling in bondage) all spiritual intercourse is interrupted, not only with others, but even with himself. No wonder, then, that he remains incomprehensible to himself as well as to others. No wonder that in the fearful desert of his consciousness he wearies himself out with empty words to which no friendly echo answers, either from his own heart or the heart of a fellow-being; or bewilders himself in the pursuit of *notional* phantoms, the mere refractions from unseen and distant truths through the distorting medium of his own unenlivened and stagnant understanding! To remain unintelligible to such a mind, exclaims Schelling on a like occasion, is honor and a good name before God and man.

"Philosophy is employed on objects of the *inner sense*, and cannot, like geometry, appropriate to every construction a corresponding *outward* intuition… Now the inner sense has its direction determined for the greater part only by an act of freedom. One man's consciousness extends only to the pleasant or unpleasant sensations caused in him by external impressions; another enlarges his inner sense to a consciousness of forms and quantity; a third, in addition to the image, is conscious of the conception or notion of the thing; a fourth attains to a notion of his notions – he reflects on his own reflections; and thus we may say without impropriety, that the one possesses more or less inner sense than the other…

"The postulate of philosophy, and at the same time the test of philosophical capacity, is no other than the heaven-descended Know Thyself. And this at once practically and speculatively. For as philosophy is neither a science of the reason or understanding only, nor merely a science of morals, but the science of Being altogether, its primary ground can be neither merely speculative nor merely practical, but both in one. All knowledge rests upon the coincidence of an object with a subject. For we can *know* only that which is true; and the truth is universally placed in the coincidence of the thought with the thing, of the representation with the object represented."

Coleridge then puts and argues the two alternatives. 1. Either the Objective is taken as primary, and then we have to account for the supervention of the Subjective which coalesces with it, which natural philosophy supposes. 2. Or the Subjective is taken as primary, and then we have to account for the supervention of the objective, which spiritual philosophy supposes. The Transcendentalist accepts the latter alternative.

"The second position, which not only claims but necessitates the admission of its immediate certainty, equally for the scientific reason of the philosopher as for the common-sense of mankind at large, namely, I AM, cannot properly be entitled

> a prejudice. It is groundless indeed; but then in the very idea it precludes all ground, and, separated from the immediate consciousness, loses its whole sense and import. It is groundless; but only because it is itself the ground of all other certainty. Now the apparent contradiction, that the first position – namely, that the existence of things without us, which from its nature cannot be immediately certain – should be received as blindly and as independently of all grounds as the existence of our own being, the transcendental philosopher can solve only by the supposition that the former is unconsciously involved in the latter; that it is not only coherent, but identical, and one and the same thing with our own immediate self-consciousness. To demonstrate this identity is the office and object of his philosophy.

"If it be said that this is idealism, let it be remembered that it is only so far idealism, as it is at the same time and on that very account the truest and most binding realism."

To follow the exposition further is unnecessary for the present purpose, which is to state the fundamental principles of the philosophy, not to give the processes of reasoning by which they are illustrated. Had Coleridge been merely a philosopher, his influence on his generation, by this means, would have been insignificant; for his expositions were fragmentary; his thoughts were too swift and tumultuous in their flow to be systematically arranged; his style, forcible and luminous in passages, is interrupted by too frequent episodes, excursions and explanatory parentheses, to be enjoyed by the inexpert. Besides being a philosopher, he was a theologian. His deepest interest was in the problems of theology. His mind was perpetually turning over the questions of trinity, incarnation, Holy Ghost, sin, redemption, salvation. He meditated endless books on these themes, and, in special, one "On the Logos," which was to remove all difficulties and reconcile all contradictions. "On the whole, those dead churches, this dead English church especially, must be brought to life again. Why not? It was not dead; the soul of it, in this parched-up body, was tragically asleep only. Atheistic philosophy was, true, on its side; and Hume and Voltaire could, on their own ground, speak irrefragably for themselves against any church: but lift the church and them into a higher sphere of argument, *they* died into inanition, the church revivified itself into pristine florid vigor, became once more a living ship of the desert, and invincibly bore you over stock and stone."

The philosophy was accepted as a basis for the theology, and apparently only so far as it supplied the basis. Mrs. Coleridge declares, in a note to Chapter IX. of the "Biographia Literaria," that her husband, soon after the composition of that work, became dissatisfied with the system of Schelling, considered as a fundamental and comprehensive scheme intended to exhibit the relations of God to the world and man. He objected to it, she insists, as essentially pantheistic, radically inconsistent with a belief in God as himself moral and intelligent, as beyond and above the world, as the supreme mind to which the human mind owes homage and fealty – inconsistent with any just view and deep sense of the moral and spiritual being of man. He was mainly concerned with the construction of a "philosophical system, in which Christianity, – based on the triune being of God, and embracing a primal fall and universal redemption, (to use Carlyle's words) Christianity, ideal, spiritual, eternal, but likewise and necessarily historical, realized and manifested in time, – should be shown forth as accordant, or rather as one with ideas of reason, and the demands of the spiritual and of the speculative mind, of the heart, conscience, reason, which should all be satisfied and reconciled in one bond of peace."

This explains the interest which young and enthusiastic minds in the English Church took in Coleridge, the verses just quoted from Aubrey de Vere, one of the new school of believers, the admiring discipleship of Frederick Denison Maurice, the hearty allegiance of the leaders of the spiritual reformation in England. Coleridge was the real founder of the Broad Church, which attempted to justify creed and sacrament, by substituting the ideas of the spiritual philosophy for the formal authority of traditions which the reason of the age was discarding.

The men who sympathized with the same movement in America felt the same gratitude to their leader. Already in 1829 "The Aids to Reflection" were republished by Dr. James Marsh. Caleb

Sprague Henry, professor of philosophy and history in the University of New York in 1839, and before that a resident of Cambridge, an enthusiastic thinker and eloquent talker, loved to dilate on the genius of the English philosopher, and was better than a book in conveying information about him, better than many books in awakening interest in his thought. The name of Coleridge was spoken with profound reverence, his books were studied industriously, and the terminology of transcendentalism was as familiar as commonplace in the circles of divines and men of letters. At present Hegel is the prophet of these believers, Schelling is obsolete, and Coleridge, the English Schelling, has had his day. The change is marked by an all but entire absence of the passionate enthusiasm, the imaginative glow and fervor, that characterized the transcendental phase of the movement. Coleridge was a vital thinker; his mind was a flame; his thoughts burned within him, and issued from him in language that trembled and throbbed with the force of the ideas committed to it. He was a divine, a preacher of most wonderful eloquence. At the age of three or four and forty Serjeant Talfourd heard him talk.

> "At first his tones were conversational: he seemed to dally with the shallows of the subject and with fantastic images which bordered it; but gradually the thought grew deeper, and the voice deepened with the thought; the stream gathering strength seemed to bear along with it all things which opposed its progress, and blended them with its current; and stretching away among regions tinted with ethereal colors, was lost at airy distance in the horizon of fancy." At five-and-twenty William Hazlitt heard him preach.
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> "It was in January, 1798, that I rose one morning before daylight, to walk ten miles in the mud, to hear this celebrated person preach. Never, the longest day I have to live, shall I have such another walk as this cold, raw, comfortless one, in the winter of the year 1798. *Il y a des impressions que ni le temps ni les circonstances peuvent effacer. Dusse je vivre des siècles entiers, le doux temps de ma jeunesse ne peut renaître pour moi, ni s'effacer jamais dans ma memoire.* When I got there the organ was playing the hundredth psalm, and when it was done Mr. Coleridge rose and gave out his text. 'He departed again into a mountain himself alone.' As he gave out this text his voice 'rose like a stream of rich distilled perfumes;' and when he came to the last two words, which he pronounced loud, deep, and distinct, it seemed to me, who was then young, as if the sounds had echoed from the bottom of the human heart, and as if that prayer might have floated in solemn silence through the universe. The idea of St. John came into my mind, of one crying in the wilderness, who had his loins girt about, and whose food was locusts and wild honey. The preacher then launched into his subject, like an eagle dallying with the wind. The sermon was upon peace and war, upon church and state, not their alliance, but their separation; on the spirit of the world and the spirit of Christianity, not as the same, but as opposed to one another. He talked of those who had inscribed the cross of Christ on banners dripping with human gore. He made a poetical and pastoral excursion, and to show the effects of war, drew a striking contrast between the simple shepherd boy, driving his team afield, or sitting under the hawthorn, piping to his flock as though he should never be old; and the same poor country lad, crimped, kidnapped, brought into town, made drunk at an ale-house, turned into a wretched drummer-boy, with his hair sticking on end with powder and pomatum, a long cue at his back, and tricked out in the finery of the profession of blood.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.