

## WHAT IS ART?

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### I.

Take any newspaper of our time, and you will find in it a department of the theatre and of music; in almost any number you will find the description of this or that exhibition or of a separate picture, and in each you will find reviews of newly published books of artistic contents, of verses, stories, and novels.

There is a detailed description, immediately after it has happened, of how such and such an actor or actress played this rôle or that in such and such a drama, comedy, or opera, and of what talent he or she displayed, and of what the contents of the new drama, comedy, or opera are, and of their failures and good points. With similar details and care the newspaper describes how such and such an artist sang or played on the piano or violin such and such a piece of music, and in what the good and bad points of this piece and of his playing consist. In every large city there is always, if not several, at least one exhibition of new paintings, the good and bad qualities of which are analyzed by critics and connoisseurs with the greatest profundity. Nearly every day there appear new novels and verses, separately and in periodicals, and the newspapers regard it as their duty to give detailed accounts to their readers about these productions of art.

For the support of art in Russia, where only one-hundredth part of what is necessary for furnishing instruction to the whole people is expended on public education, the government offers millions as subsidies to academies, conservatories, and theatres. In France eight millions are set aside for the arts ; the same is true of Germany and of England. In every large city they build enormous structures for museums, academies, conservatories, dramatic schools, for performances and concerts. Hundreds of thousands of workmen – carpenters, masons, painters, joiners, paper-hangers, tailors, wig-makers, jewellers, bronzers, composers – pass their whole lives at hard work for the satisfaction of the demands of art, so that there is hardly any other human activity, except the military, which absorbs so many forces as this.

But it is not only these enormous labours that are wasted on this activity, – on it, as on war, human lives are wasted outright : hundreds of thousands of men devote all their lives from their earliest youth, in order to learn how to twirl their feet very rapidly (dancers); others (the musicians) – to learn how to run

rapidly over the keys or over the strings ; others again (painters) – to learn how to paint with colours everything they see ; and others – to know how to twist every phrase in every way imaginable, and to find a rhyme for every word. And such people, who frequently are very good, clever men, capable of any useful work, grow wild in these exclusive, stupefying occupations and become dulled to all serious phenomena of life, and one-sided and completely selfsatisfied specialists, who know only how to twirl their legs, their tongues, or their fingers.

But this is not enough. I remember I was once present at the rehearsal of one of the most common modern operas, which is given in all the theatres of Europe and of America.

I came after the first act had begun. In order to reach the auditorium I had to cross behind the curtain. I was led through dark corridors and passages in the basement of an enormous building, past enormous machines for the change of the scenery and for illumination, where in the darkness and dust I saw men working at something. One of these labourers, with a gray, lean face, dressed in a dirty blouse, with dirty working hands with sprawling fingers, apparently tired and dissatisfied with something, passed by me, angrily rebuking some one. Ascending a dark staircase, I entered the stage behind the curtain. Among scenery lying in heaps, curtains, and some kind of poles, were standing about and moving, tens, if not hundreds, of painted and dressed-up men in costumes fitting tightly over their thighs and calves, and women with their bodies bared as much as always. All these were singers, choirmen and girls, and ballet-dancers, waiting for their turn. My guide led me across the stage and across a plank bridge over the orchestra, where sat about a hundred musicians of every description, from cymbals to flute and harp, into the dark parterre. On an elevation between two lamps with reflectors, the leader of the musical part, directing the orchestra and the singers and the whole getting up of the opera in general, was sitting on a chair before a desk, holding the baton in his hand.

When I came, the performance had already begun, and on the stage they were representing the procession of Indians bringing a bride. Besides the masquerading men and women, two men in frock coats were running up and down the stage: one, the manager of the dramatic part, and the other, who was stepping with extraordinary lightness in his soft boots and running from one place to another, the teacher of dancing, who received a monthly salary which was greater than what ten workmen receive in a year.

These three chiefs arranged the singing, the orchestra, and the procession. The procession was being performed, as always, by pairs with tin-foil halberds on their shoulders. All came out from one spot and walked in a circle and again in a circle, and then stopped. The procession was long in getting into shape; now the Indians with the halberds came out too late, now too early ; now they came out in time, but crowded too much in going out, and now they did not crowd, but did not take up the right positions at the sides of the stage, and every time everything stopped and began anew. The procession

began with a recitative of a man dressed up as a Turk or something like that, who, opening his mouth in a strange manner, sang out, " I accompany the bri-i-ide." After singing he waved his arm, - which, of course, was bare, - under his mantle.

And the procession begins, but the French horn does something wrong in a chord of the recitative, and the director, shivering as though from a misfortune which has happened to him, strikes the desk with his baton. Everything comes to a stop, and the director, turning to the orchestra, attacks the French horn, scolding him with the coarsest of words, such as cabmen curse with, because he did not take the right note. And again everything begins from the beginning. The Indians with the halberds come out again, stepping softly in their strange footgear, and again the singer sings, " I accompany the bri-i-ide." But here the pairs stand too close. Again a rap with the baton, and scolding, and again from the beginning. Again, " I accompany the bri-i-ide ; " again the same motion with the bared arm from under the mantle, and the pairs, stepping softly with their halberds on their shoulders, some of them with serious and sad faces, others chatting and smiling, stand around and begin to sing.

Everything, it would seem, is well, but again there is a rap with the baton, and the director begins with a suffering and furious voice to scold the men and the girls of the choir : it turns out that during the singing some members of the choir have not raised their hands now and then in sign of animation.

" Are you dead, eh ? Cows ! Are you dead that you do not move ? "

Again from the beginning, again, "I accompany the bri-i-ide," and again the choir-girls sing with gloomy faces, and now one, and now another raises her hand. But two choir-girls are talking to each other, - again an energetic rap of the baton.

"Have you come here to talk? You can gossip at home. You there, in the red pants, stand nearer. Look at me. From the beginning."

Again, " I accompany the bri-i-ide," - and so it lasts an hour, two, three hours. Ever)' such rehearsal lasts six hours in succession. Raps with baton, repetitions, transpositions, corrections of the singers, of the orchestra, of the procession, of the dances, and everything seasoned with choice curses. Words, like " ass, stupid, idiots, swine," directed to the musicians and the singers, I heard something like forty times during one hour. And the unfortunate, physically and morally distorted man, - the flute, the French horn, the singer, - to whom these curses are directed, is silent and does what he is commanded, - he repeats twenty times, " I accompany the bri-i-ide," and twenty times sings the same phrase, and again marches in his yellow shoes, with the halberd across his shoulders. The director knows that these people are so distorted that they are not good for anything but blowing the horn and walking with a halberd and in yellow shoes, and that at the same time they have become accustomed to a pleasant, luxurious life, and will endure everything, rather than be deprived of this pleasant life, - and so

he calmly abandons himself to his vulgarity, the more so since he saw this in Paris and in Vienna and knows that the best directors do so and that this is the musical tradition of great artists, who are so much absorbed in the great work of their art that they have no time to analyze the feelings of the artists.

It is difficult to find a more disgusting spectacle. I have seen at the unloading of merchandise one labourer curse another for not having supported a weight which was pressing down upon him, or at the harvest an elder scolding a labourer for rounding up a stack badly, when the labourer would submissively listen in silence. No matter how disagreeable it is to see this, the unpleasant feeling is mitigated by the consciousness that here a necessary and important work is being done and that the mistake for which the boss is scolding the labourer may have spoiled the necessary work.

But what is being done here, and for what purpose, and for whom ? It is very likely that he, the director, is himself worn out like that labourer; it is even evident that he is exhausted, – but who compels him to wear himself out ? Yes, and for what purpose does he wear himself out ? The opera which they were rehearsing was one of the most common operas for those who are used to them, but one of the greatest insipidities that one can imagine : The King of India wants to get married ; they bring a bride to him, and he dresses himself up as a singer, the bride falls in love with the presumptive singer and is in despair, and then discovers that the singer is the king himself, and all are very much satisfied.

There cannot be the slightest doubt that there never have been, and never could have been, such Indians, and that what they represented not only did not resemble any Indians, but did not even resemble anything in the world, except other operas ; that nobody expresses his feelings in a recitative and in quartettes, standing at a certain distance and waving his hand ; that no one walks with tin-foil halberds, in slippers, in pairs, except in the theatre ; that nobody gets angry like that, or makes love, or smiles, or weeps like that, and that no one in the world can be touched by all these performances.

Involuntarily there arises the question : For whom is all this being done ? Whom can it please ? If now and then there is a good motive in the opera, which it would give pleasure to hear, it would be possible to sing the opera simply, without these stupid costumes, and processions, and recitatives, and wavings of the hand. But the ballet, in which half-naked women make lascivious evolutions and intertwine in all kinds of sensual garlands, is simply an immoral performance. And so it is hard to make out for whom all this is intended. To an educated man it is intolerable and annoying ; to a real working man it is completely incomprehensible. It can please only those, and doubtfully even them, who have filled themselves with the spirit of gentlemen, but who are not yet satiated with gentlemanly pleasures, – corrupt artisans, who wish to testify to their culture, and young lackeys.

And all this abominable stupidity is not only not prepared with good-natured merriment and with simplicity, but with fury and beastly cruelty.

They say that this is done for art, and that art is a very important matter. But is it true that this is art, and that art is such an important matter, that such sacrifices may be brought to it? This question is especially important, because the art, for the sake of which the labours of millions of men and even the lives of men and, above all else, love among men are sacrificed, becomes in the consciousness of men something more and more obscure and indefinite.

Criticism, in which heretofore the lovers of art found a support for their judgments about art, has of late become so contradictory that, if we omit from the sphere of art everything which the critics of the various schools do not recognize as possessing the right of belonging to art, there will lie hardly anything left in art.

Like the theologians of the various sects, so the artists of the various denominations exclude and destroy one another. Listen to the artists of the modern schools, and you will see in all branches one set of artists denying the rest: in poetry, – the old romanticists, denying the Parnassians and the decadents; the Parnassians, denying the romanticists and the decadents; the decadents, denying all their predecessors and the symbolists; the symbolists, denying all their predecessors and the Magi; and the Magi, denying all their predecessors; in the novel, – the naturalists, psychologists, naturalists, denying one another. The same is true of painting and of music. Thus art, which absorbs the enormous labours of the nation and of human lives, and which impairs the love among them, is not only nothing clearly and firmly defined, but is also understood so contradictorily by its lovers that it is hard to say what indeed is meant by art, and especially by good, useful art, such that in the name of it there may be brought those sacrifices which are made for it.

## II.

For every ballet, circus, opera, operetta, exhibition, painting, concert, printing of a book, we need the strained labour of thousands and thousands of men, who under pressure perform what frequently is destructive and debasing work.

It would be well if the artists did all their work themselves, but as it is, they need the aid of workmen, not only for the production of the art, but also for their for the most part luxurious existence, and in one way or another they receive it either in the form of pay from rich people, or in the form of subsidies from the government, which are given them by the million for theatres, conservatories, academies. This money is collected from the masses,

whose cows are sold for this purpose and who never enjoy these Esthetic pleasures which art gives them.

It was well for the Greek or the Roman artist, or even for our artist of the first half of our century, when there were slaves and it was considered right that there should be, with a calm conscience to make men serve him and his pleasure ; but in our time, when in all men there is at least a faint consciousness of the equality of all men, it is impossible to make people work for art against their will, without having first decided the question whether it is true that art is such a good and important thing that it redeems this violence.

Otherwise it is terrible to consider that it may very easily happen that terrible sacrifices in labour, in human life, in morality, are made for art's sake, while art not only fails to be useful, but is even harmful.

And so for a society, amidst which the productions of art arise and are supported, it is necessary to know whether all is really art which is given out as such, and whether all that which is art is good, as it is considered to be in our society, and whether, if it is good, it is important and deserves all those sacrifices which are demanded in its name. And still more indispensable is it for every artist to know this, in order that he may be assured that everything which he does has a meaning, and is not an infatuation of that small circle of men among whom he is living, evoking in him a false conviction that he is doing something good and that what he is taking from other people in the form of support for his for the most part luxurious life will be paid by those productions over which he is working. And so the answers to these questions are of particular importance in our time.

What, then, is this art which is considered so important and so indispensable for humanity that for it may be made those sacrifices, not only of labour and of human lives, but also of the good, which are made for it ?

What is art? How is this, – what is art? Art is architecture, sculpture, painting, music, poetry in all its forms, will be the answer of the average man, of the lover of art, or even of the artist himself, assuming that what he is talking about is clearly and universally understood by all men. But in architecture, you will say, there are simple structures, which do not form the object of art, and, besides, structures which make a pretence of being objects of art, unsuccessful, monstrous structures, which, therefore, cannot be acknowledged to be objects of art. Where, then, is the sign of the object of art to be found ?

The same is true of sculpture, and of music, and of poetry. Art in all its forms borders, on the one hand, on what is practically useful ; on the other, on attempts at art which are failures. It seems to him that all this has been decided long ago and is well known to all

" Art is an activity which manifests beauty," such an average man will say.

" But if art consists in this, is a ballet, an operetta, also art ?  
" you will ask.

" Yes," the average man will answer, but with some hesitation. "A good ballet and a graceful operetta are also art, in so far as they manifest beauty."

But if, without asking the average man any further as to how a good ballet and a graceful operetta differ from ungraceful ones, – questions which he would find it hard to answer, – if you ask the same average man whether the activity of the costumer and the wig-maker who adorn the figures and the faces of the women in the ballet and the operetta, and of the tailor Worth, the perfumer, and the cook may be considered to be art, he in the majority of cases will reject the activity of the tailor, the wig-maker, the costumer, and the cook, as not belonging to the sphere of art. But in this the average man will be mistaken, for the very reason that he is an average man, and not a specialist, and has not busied himself with questions of æsthetics. If he busied himself with them, he would find in the famous Renan, in his book, *Marc Aurèle*, a discussion as to the tailor's art being art, and a statement that those men who in the attire of woman do not see the work of the highest art are very narrow and very stupid. " C'est le grand art," he says. Besides, the average man would find out that in many æsthetics, as, for example, in the æsthetics of the learned Professor Kralik, *Weltschonheit, Ver such einer allegemeinen Æsthetik*, and in Guyau, *Les problèmes de l'esthétique*, the costumer's art and the arts of taste and of feeling are recognized as being art.

" Es folgt nun ein Fiinfblatt von Kiinsten, die der subjectiven Sinnlichkeit entkeimen," says Kralik (p. 175). " Sie sind die ästhetische Behandlung der fünf Sinne."

These five arts are the following :

Die Kunst des Geschmacksinns, – the art of the sense of taste (p. 175).

Die Kunst des Geruchsinns, – the art of the sense of smell (p. 177).

Die Kunst des Tastsinns, – the art of the sense of feeling (p. 180).

Die Kunst des Gehorsinns, – the art of the sense of hearing (p. 182).

Die Kunst des Gesichtsinns, – the art of the sense of sight (p. 184).

Of the first, the Kunst des Geschmacksinns, the following is said :  
" Man halt zwar gewöhnlich nur zwei oder hdchstens drei Sinne fur

wiirdig, den Stoff kunstlicher Behandlung abzugeben, aber ich glaube, nur mit beding-tem Recht. Ich will kein all zu grosses Gewicht darauf legen, dass der gemeine Sprachgebrauch manch andere Kiinste, wie zum Beispiel die Kochkunst, kennt.

“Und es ist doch gewiss eine âsthetische Leistung, wenn es der Kochkunst gelingt aus einem thierischen Kadaver einen Gegenstand des Geschmacks in jedem Sinne zu machen. Der Grundsatz der Kunst des Geschmacksinns (die weiter ist als die sogenannte Kochkunst) ist also dieser. Es soil ailes Geniessbare als Sinnbild einer Idee behandelt werden und in jedesmaligem Einklang zur auszudriickenden Idee.”

The author recognizes, like Renan, eine Kostimkunst (p. 200), and other arts.

The same is the opinion of the French writer, Guyau, who is highly esteemed by some writers of our day. In his book, *Les problèmes de Vesthétique*, he speaks seriously of the sensations of feeling, taste, and smell as being able to give Esthetic impressions.

“ Si la couleur manque au toucher, il nous fournit en revanche une notion, que l’œil seul ne peut nous donner et qui a une valeur esthétique considerable : celle du doux, du soyeux, du poli. Ce qui caractérisé la beauté du velours, c’est le douceur au toucher, non moins que son brillant. Dans l’idée, que nous nous faisons de la beauté d’une femme, la velouté de sa peau entre comme élément essentiel.

“ Chacun de nous probablement avec un peu d’attention se rappellera des jouissances du gout, qui ont été des véritables jouissances esthétiques.”

And he goes on to tell how a glass of milk drunk by him in the mountains gave him an Esthetic pleasure.

Thus the conception of art as a manifestation of beauty is not at all so simple as it seems, especially now, when in this conception of beauty they include, as the modern æstheticians do, our sensations of feeling, taste, and smell.

But the average man either does not know this, or does not wish to know it, and is firmly convinced that all questions of art are very simply and very clearly solved by recognizing beauty as the contents of art. To the average man it seems clear and comprehensible that art is the product of beauty ; and by beauty are all the questions of art solved for him.

But what is beauty, which, according to his opinion, forms the contents of art? How is it determined, and what is it?

As in every other matter, the more obscure and complicated the conception is which is transmitted in words, the greater is the aplomb and self-assurance with which people use this word, making it appear that what is understood by the word is so simple and so clear

that it is not worth while to talk of what it really means. Thus people generally act in reference to questions of religious superstition, and so people act in our time in reference to the concept of beauty. It is assumed that what is understood by the word " beauty " is known and comprehensible to all. At the same time this is not only unknown, but ever since, in the last 150 years, from the year 1750, when Baumgarten laid the foundation for Esthetics, there have been written mountains of books by most learned and profound men, the question as to what beauty is has remained completely open and with every new work on Esthetics is solved in a new way. One of the last books which, among others, I read on aesthetics, is a not at all bad little book by Julius Mithalter, called Ratsel des Schonen. The title quite correctly explains the position of the question as to what beauty is. The meaning of the word " beauty " has remained an enigma after 150 years of discussion by a thousand learned men as to the meaning of this word. The Germans solve the enigma in their own way, though in a hundred different manners. The physiological æsthe-ticians, especially the Englishmen of the Spencer-Grant Allen school, also decide it each in his own way ; the French eclectics and the followers of Guy au and Taine also decide it in their own way, and all these men know all the previous solutions by Baumgarten, and Kant, and Schelling, and Schiller, and Fichte, and Winkelmann, and Lessing, and Hegel, and Schopenhauer, and Hartmann, and Schasler, and Cousin, and Lévêque, and so forth.

What is this strange conception of beauty, which seems so comprehensible to those who do not think what they are saying, and on the definition of which all the philosophers of the various nations having all kinds of tendencies have been unable to agree for the past 150 years ? What is the concept of beauty on which the prevailing doctrine about art is based ?

By the word " beauty " we understand in the Russian language only that which pleases our vision. Although of late we have begun to speak of " ugly acts," " beautiful music," this is not Russian.

A Russian from among the masses, who does not know any foreign languages, will not understand you, if you tell him that a man who gave another his last garment, or something like that, acted " beautifully," or, having cheated another, acted " ugly," or that a song is " beautiful." In Russian an act may be good, or bad ; music may be agreeable and good, or disagreeable and bad, but it cannot be beautiful or ugly.

Beautiful can be a man, a horse, a house, a view, a motion, but of acts, thoughts, character, music, if we like them very much, we can say that they are good, or bad, if we do not like them ; " beautiful " we can say only of what pleases our sense of vision. Thus the word and the concept of " good " includes the concept of " beautiful," but not vice versa: the concept of "beautiful" does not include that of " good." If we say " good " of an object which is valued for its external appearance, we say by this that it is also beautiful ; but if we say " beautiful," it does not at all designate that the object is good.

Such is the meaning ascribed by the Russian language, consequently by the Russian national mind, to the words and the concepts of "good" and "beautiful."

In all European languages, in the languages of those nations among which the teaching of the beautiful is disseminated, as being the essence of art, the words "beau," "schon," "beautiful," "hello," having retained the meaning of beauty of form, have also come to signify goodness, that is, have come to take the place of "good."

Thus, it is quite natural in these languages to employ expressions like "belle âme, schone Gedanken, beautiful deed;" but for the definition of the beauty of form, these languages have no corresponding word, and are obliged to use the combination of words, "beau par la forme," and so forth.

Observation made on the meaning which the words "beauty," "beautiful," have, both in our language and in all the ancient languages, not excluding the European languages, particularly those of the nations among whom the æsthetical theory has been established, shows us that a special meaning, that of goodness, is ascribed to the word "beauty."

What is remarkable in this is the fact that since we, the Russians, have come more and more fully to adopt the European views of art, the same evolution has been taking place in our language, and, with the greatest assurance and without surprising any one, people have begun to speak and to write of beautiful music and ugly acts and even thoughts, whereas forty years ago, in my youth, such expressions as "beautiful music" and "ugly acts" were not only unused, but even incomprehensible. It is evident that this new meaning, which by European thought is attached to beauty, is being adopted also by Russian society.

In what, then, does this meaning consist? What is beauty, as understood by the European nations?

In order to answer this question, I shall quote here a small part of those definitions of beauty which are most current in the existing works on Esthetics. I beg the reader most earnestly not to feel wearied, but to read these quotations or, what would be better still, to read any scientific Esthetics he may please. Leaving out the extensive works on aesthetics by the Germans, it would be very well for this purpose to read the German work by Kralik, the English by Knight, and the French by Lé-vêque. It is indispensable to read some learned work on aesthetics, in order that one may form for oneself a conception of the variety of opinions and of the frightful obscurity which reign in this sphere of opinions, and not take another person's word for it.

This, for example, is what Schasler, the German æsthetician, says about the character of all aesthetic investigations, in his famous, compendious, and minute work on aesthetics:

" In hardly any other sphere of the philosophic sciences can we find such contradictory and rude investigations and manners of exposition as in the sphere of aesthetics. On the one hand, there is an elegant phraseology, without any contents, distinguished for the most part by a most one-sided superficiality ; on the other, with an unquestionable profundity of investigation and wealth of contents, a repellent clumsiness of a philosophic terminology, which vests the simplest things in the garment of abstract learning, as though to make them worthy of entering into the illuminated halls of the system, and, finally, between these two methods of investigation and exposition, a third, forming, as it were, a transition from one to the other, a method which consists in eclecticism, which foppishly displays now an elegant phraseology, and now a pedantic learning. . . . But a form of exposition which may not fall into any one of the three faults, but may be truly concrete and with its essential contents may express its meaning in a clear and popular philosophic language, is nowhere to be met with less frequently than in the sphere of Esthetics."1

It is sufficient to read Schasler's own book, in order to become convinced of the justice of his opinion.

" Il n'y a pas de science," says of the same subject Véron, a French writer, in the introduction to his very good work on aesthetics, " qui ait été de plus, que l'esthétique, livrée aux reveries des métaphysiciens. Depuis Platon jusqu'aux doctrines officielles de nos jours, on a fait de l'art je ne sais quel amalgame de fantaisies quintessences et de mystères transcendants, qui trouvent leur expression suprême dans la conception absolue du beau idéal prototype immuable et divin des choses réelles." 3

1 Schasler, Kritische Geschichte der Ästhetik, 1872, i. p. xiii. All notes in What Is Art are the author's.

a Véron, L'esthétique, 1878, p. v.

This opinion is the more correct, as the reader will convince himself, if he takes the trouble to read the following definitions of beauty, which I quote from the chief authors on Esthetics.

I will not quote the definitions of beauty which are ascribed to the ancients, to Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, down to Plotinus, because, in reality, there did not exist with the ancients that definition of beauty, distinct from goodness, which forms the foundation and aim of Esthetics in our day. In adapting the opinions of the ancients about beauty to our concept, as they generally do in works on aesthetics, we attribute to the words of the ancients a meaning which they did not have (see concerning this the beautiful book of Bénard, L'esthétique d'Aristote, and Walter's Geschichte der Ästhetik im Alter thum).

### III.

I will begin with the founder of aesthetics, Baumgarten (1714–62).

According to Baumgarten,<sup>1</sup> the subject of logical cognition is truth ; the subject of Esthetic (that is, sensuous) cognition is beauty. Beauty is the perfect (absolute), which is cognized by feeling. Truth is the perfect, which is cognized by reason. Goodness is the perfect, which is attained through moral will.

Beauty is, according to Baumgarten, defined by the correspondence, that is, order of parts in their mutual relation among themselves and in their relation to the whole. The aim of beauty itself is to please and excite desire (Wohlgefallen und Erregung eines Verlangens),— a proposition which, according to Kant, is directly opposed to the chief quality and sign of beauty.

In respect to the manifestation of beauty, Baumgarten assumes that the highest realization of beauty we recognize in Nature, and so the imitation of Nature, according to Baumgarten, is the highest problem of art (a proposition which is directly opposed to the opinions of the later æstheticians).

Omitting the less remarkable followers of Baumgarten, Meyer, Eschenburg, Eberhard, who modify their teacher's opinions but a little, by separating what is agreeable from what is beautiful, I quote the definitions of beauty in the authors who appeared immediately after Baumgarten, and who defined beauty quite differently. These writers were Schutz, Sulzer, Mendelssohn, Moritz. These writers recognize, in contradistinction to Baumgarten's proposition, that the aim of art is not beauty, but goodness. Thus Sulzer (1720–79) says that only that which contains the good in itself may be recognized as beautiful. According to Sulzer, the aim of the whole life of humanity is the good of the social life. It is obtained through the education of the moral sentiment, and art must be subjected to this aim. Beauty is that which evokes and educates this feeling.

<sup>1</sup> Scbasler, lb. p. 361.

Almost in the same way does Mendelssohn (1729–36) understand beauty. Art, according to Mendelssohn,<sup>1</sup> is the elevation of what is beautiful, as cognized by a dim feeling, to what is true and good. But the aim of art is moral perfection.

For the æstheticians of this school the ideal of beauty is a beautiful soul in a beautiful body. Thus in these æstheticians is completely wiped out the division of the perfect (the absolute) into its three forms, — truth, goodness, and beauty, and beauty is again united with goodness and truth.

But such a conception of beauty is not supported by the later æstheticians ; there appears Winkelmann's Esthetics, which is again totally opposed to these views, which in a most decisive and sharp manner separates the problems of art from the aims of goodness, and which sets up as the aim of art external and even nothing but plastic art. To these opinions also hold Lessing and later Gbthe.

According to Winkelmann's (1717-67) work, the law and aim of every art is nothing but beauty, quite distinct and independent of goodness. Now, beauty is of three kinds : (1) the beauty of forms, (2) the beauty of the idea, which finds its expression in the position of the figure (in relation to plastic art), and (3) the beauty of expression, which is possible only in the presence of the first two conditions ; this beauty of expression is the highest aim of art, and is realized in antique art, for which reason modern art must strive to imitate antiquity.<sup>1</sup>

1 L/b. p. 369.

Beauty is similarly understood by Lessing, Herder, then Gothe, and all the prominent æstheticians of Germany up to Kant, with which time there begins an entirely different comprehension of art.

In England, France, Italy, Holland, there originated at the same time, independently of the writers of Germany, æsthetical theories of their own, which are just as obscure and as contradictory, but all the æstheticians, just like the Germans, who put at the base of their reflections the concept of beauty, understand beauty not as something not absolutely in existence, but more or less blending with goodness or having one and the same root with it. In England, almost at the same time with Baumgarten, and even a little earlier, Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, Home, Burke, Hogarth, and others write about art.

According to Shaftesbury (1670-1713) what is beautiful is harmonious and proportionable ; what is beautiful and proportionable, is true ; and what is at once both beautiful and true, is agreeable and good. Beauty, according to Shaftesbury, is cognized by the spirit only. God is the fundamental beauty, - beauty and goodness proceed from one source.<sup>2</sup> Thus, according to Shaftesbury, though beauty is viewed as something distinct from goodness, it again blends with it into something indivisible.

According to Hutcheson (1694-1744), in his Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue, the aim of art is beauty, the essence of which consists in the manifestation of unity in multiplicity. But in the cognition of what is beauty we are guided by the ethical instinct ("an internal sense"). Now this instinct may be opposed to the Esthetical. Thus, according to Hutcheson, beauty no longer 'Knight, The Philosophy of the Beautiful, i. pp. 165-166. always coincides with goodness, and is separated from it and may be contrary to it.<sup>1</sup>

1. lb. pp. 388-390.

According to Home (1696–1782), beauty is that which is agreeable, and so beauty is determined only by taste. Now, the foundation of true taste rests on this fact, that the greatest wealth, fulness, strength, and variety of impressions are contained within most circumscribed limits. In this lies the ideal of the perfect production of art.

According to Burke (1730–97), *Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful*, the sublime and the beautiful, which form the aim of art, have for their foundation the feeling of self-preservation and the social feeling. These feelings, as viewed in their sources, are means for the preservation of the species through the individual. The first is attained through nutrition, defence, and war ; the second, through communion and propagation. And so self-preservation and war, which is connected with it, are the source of the sublime ; the communal feeling and the sexual necessity, which is united with it, serve as the source of beauty.<sup>2</sup>

Such are the chief English definitions of art and beauty for the eighteenth century.

At the same time Père André, Batteux, Diderot, d'Alembert, and Voltaire, in part, were writing in France on art.

According to Père André (*Essai sur le Beau*) (1741), there are three kinds of beauty: (1) divine beauty, (2) natural beauty, and (3) artificial beauty.<sup>3</sup>

According to Batteux (1713–80), art consists in the imitation of the beauty of Nature, and its aim is enjoyment.<sup>4 5</sup>

Diderot's definition of art is similar to it. Taste is, as in the case of the English, assumed as the arbiter of what is beautiful. But the laws of taste are not only not established, but it is admitted that all this is impossible. D'Alembert and Voltaire<sup>1</sup> are of the same opinion.

According to the Italian æsthetician of the same time, Pagano, art is the bringing together into one of the beauties scattered in Nature. The ability to see these beauties is taste ; the ability to unite them into one whole is the artistic genius. Beauty, according to Pagano, is so blended with goodness that beauty is manifesting goodness, and good is inner beauty.

According to the opinion of other Italians, Muratori (1672–1750), (*Riflessioni sopra il buon gusto intorno le scienze e le arti*), and especially Spaletti<sup>2</sup> (*Saggio sopra la bellezza*, 1765), art is reduced to an egoistical sensation which, as in the case of Burke, is based on the striving after self-preservation and the communal feeling.

Among the Dutch we must note Hemsterhuis (1720–90), who had an

influence on the German æstheticians and on Gothe. According to his teaching, beauty is what offers the greatest enjoyment, and what offers us the greatest enjoyment is what gives us the greatest number of ideas in the shortest possible time. The enjoyment of the beautiful is the highest cognition which man can attain, because in the shortest time possible it gives the greatest number of perceptions.<sup>8</sup>

Such were the theories of the Esthetics outside of Germany in the course of the past century. But in Germany there appears after Winkelmann again an entirely new Esthetic theory by Kant (1724–1804), which more than any other makes clear the essence of the concept of beauty, and so also of art.

1 Knight, pp. 102–104. 2 Schasler, p. 328.

8 Schasler, pp. 331, 333.

Kant's æsthetics is based on this: man, according to Kant, cognizes Nature outside himself, and himself in Nature. In Nature outside himself he seeks truth, in himself he seeks goodness, – one is the work of pure reason, the other – of practical reason (freedom). In addition to these two instruments of cognition, according to Kant, there is also the ability to judge (Urtheilskraft), which forms judgments without concepts and produces pleasure without desire (Urtheil ohne Begriff und Ver-gnügen ohne Begehren). This ability forms the basis of the Esthetic feeling. But beauty, according to Kant, in the subjective sense, is what pleases, without conception or practical advantage, in general, of necessity ; in the objective sense it is the form of the suitable object in the measure in which it is conceived without any representation of its aim.<sup>1</sup>

Beauty is similarly defined by Kant's followers, among them by Schiller (1759–1805). According to Schiller, who wrote a great deal on æsthetics, the aim of art is, as with Kant, beauty, the source of which is enjoyment without any practical advantage. Thus art may be called a game, not in the sense of an insignificant occupation, but in the sense of the manifestation of the beauty of life itself, which has no other aim than beauty.<sup>2</sup>

Next to Schiller, the most remarkable of Kant's followers in the field of æsthetics was Wilhelm Humboldt, who though he added nothing to the definition of beauty, expatiated on its various aspects, as the drama, music, humour, etc.<sup>3</sup>

1 lb. pp. 525–528. 2 Knight, pp. 61–63.

3 Schasler, pp. 740–743.

After Kant, it is Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel, and their followers, besides less important authors, who have written on æsthetics. According to Fichte (1761–1814), the consciousness of the beautiful results from the following : the universe, that is, Nature, has two sides, – it is the product of our limitation and of our free ideal

activity. In the first sense the universe is limited, in the second it is free. In the first sense everybody is limited, distorted, compressed, narrowed, and we see ugliness ; in the second we see inner fulness, vitality, regeneration, – beauty. Thus the ugliness or the beauty of an object, according to Fichte, depends on the view-point of the observer. Thus beauty is not contained in the world, but in the beautiful soul (schdner Geist). Art is the manifestation of this beautiful soul, and its aim is the education, not only of the mind, – that is the work of the scholar, – not only of the heart, – that is the work of the moral preacher, – but also of the whole man. And so the sign of beauty is found, not in something external, but in the presence of the beautiful soul in the artist.<sup>1</sup>

With Fichte, Friedrich Schlegel and Adam Muller define beauty in the same way. According to Schlegel (1778–1829), beauty in art is understood in too incomplete, one-sided, and disjointed a manner ; beauty is found not only in art, but also in Nature, in love, so that the truly beautiful is expressed in the union of art, Nature, and love. For this reason Schlegel recognizes, inseparable from Esthetic art, a moral and a philosophic art.<sup>2</sup>

According to Adam Müller (1779–1829), there are two beauties : one – social art, which attracts men, as the sun attracts the planets, – this is preeminently the antique art, – and the other – individual beauty, which becomes such because the one who contemplates himself becomes the sun which attracts beauty, – this is the beauty of the new art. The world, in which all the contradictions are harmonized, is the highest beauty, and every production of art is a repetition of this universal harmony.<sup>8</sup> The highest art is the art of life.<sup>4</sup>

1 lb. pp. 769–771. » lb. p. 87. • Kralik, p. 148.

4 lb. p. 820.

The next philosopher after Fichte and his followers, and contemporaneous with him, was Schelling (1775–1854), who had a great influence on the æsthetic concepts of our time. According to Schelling, art is the product or consequence of that world conception according to which the subject is transformed into its object, or the object itself becomes its subject. Beauty is the representation of the infinite in the finite. The chief character of the product of art is unconscious infinitude. Art is the union of the subjective with the objective, – of Nature and reason, of the unconscious with the conscious. Thus art is the highest means of cognition. Beauty is the contemplation of things in themselves, as they are found in the basis of all things (in den Urbildern). The beautiful is not produced by the artist through his knowledge or will, but by the idea of beauty itself in him.<sup>1</sup>

Of Schelling's followers the most noticeable was Solger (1780–1819) ( Vorlesungen uber Æsthetik). According to Solger, the idea of beauty is the fundamental idea of anything. In the world we see only the distortion of the fundamental idea, – but art through fancy may

rise to the height of the fundamental idea. And so art is the similitude of creativeness.<sup>2</sup>

According to another follower of Schelling, Krause (1781–1832), true real beauty is the manifestation of the idea in the individual form ; but art is the realization of beauty in the sphere of the free human spirit. The highest degree of art is the art of life, which directs its activity to the adornment of life, so that it may be a beautiful place of abode for a beautiful man.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Schasler, pp. 828–829. 834, 841. – Id. p. 891.

<sup>3</sup> lb. p. 917.

After Schelling and his followers begins Hegel's æsthetic doctrine, which, consciously in many and unconsciously in the majority, has remained new until the present. This doctrine not only fails to be clearer and more definite than the former doctrines, but, if that is at all possible, is even more hazy and mystical.

According to Hegel (1770–1831), God is manifested in Nature and in art in the form of beauty. God expresses himself in a twofold manner, – in the object and in the subject, – in Nature and in the spirit. Beauty is the idea made transparent through matter. Truly beautiful is only the spirit and all that which partakes of the spirit: the beautiful has only spiritual contents. But the spiritual has to be manifested in a sensuous form ; and the sensuous manifestation of the spirit is only semblance (Schein). This semblance is the only reality of the beautiful. Thus art is the realization of this semblance of the idea, and is a means, together with religion and philosophy, for bringing to consciousness and expressing the profoundest problems of men and the highest truths of the spirit.

Truth and beauty are, according to Hegel, one and the same : the only difference is that truth is the idea itself, in so far as it exists and is thinkable in itself. But the idea, as it is manifested without, becomes for consciousness, not only true, but also beautiful. The beautiful is the manifestation of the idea.<sup>1</sup>

After Hegel come his numerous followers, Weisse, Arnold Ruge, Rosenkranz, Theodor Vischer, and others.

According to Weisse (1801–67), art is the introduction (Einbildung) of the absolutely spiritual essence of beauty into the external, dead, and indifferent matter, the concept of which, outside of the beauty introduced into it, represents in itself the negation of every existence for oneself (Negation ailes Fiirsichseins).

In the idea of truth, says Weisse, lies the contradiction of the subjective and the objective sides of cognition, in that the single ego cognizes the All-being. This contradiction may be removed by the concept which would unite 1 Id. pp. 946, 1085, 984–985, 990.

into one the moment of universality and unity, which in the concept of truth falls into two parts. Such a concept would be truth harmonized (aufgehoben), – beauty is such harmonized truth.<sup>1</sup>

According to Hume (1702–1776), a strict adherent of Hegel, beauty is a self-expressing idea. The spirit, contemplating itself, finds itself expressed, either in full, – and then this full expression of oneself is beauty, or not in full, – and then there appears in him the necessity of changing his incomplete expression, and then the spirit becomes creative art.<sup>2</sup>

According to Vischer (1807–87), beauty is the idea in the form of the limited manifestation. But the idea itself is not indivisible, but forms a system of ideas, which present themselves as an ascending and descending line. The higher the idea, the more beauty does it contain ; but even the lowest contains beauty, because it forms a necessary link of the system. The highest form of the idea is personality, and so the highest art is that which has the highest personality for its object.<sup>3</sup>

Such are the German theories of Esthetics in the one Hegelian direction ; but the Esthetic considerations are not exhausted with this : side by side with the Hegelian theories there appear simultaneously in Germany theories of beauty which not only do not recognize Hegel's propositions in regard to beauty as the manifestation of an idea, and of art as an expression of this idea, but which are even directly opposed to this view, and which deny and ridicule it. Such are those of Herbart and especially Schopenhauer.

According to Herbart (1776–1841), there is no beauty in itself, and there can be none ; but what there is, is our judgment, and it is necessary to discover the foundations of this judgment (ästhetisches Elementarurtheil). And these foundations of judgments are found in the relation of impressions. There are certain relations, which we call beautiful, and art consists in finding these relations, which are coexisting in painting, plastic art, and architecture, and consecutive and coexisting in music, and only consecutive in poetry. In opposition to former aestheticians, beautiful objects are, according to Herbart, frequently such as express absolutely nothing, as, for example, the rainbow, which is beautiful on account of its fine and colours, and by no means in relation to the significance of its myth, as Iris, or Noah's rainbow.<sup>1</sup>

Another opponent of Hegel was Schopenhauer, who rejected Hegel's whole system and his aesthetics.

According to Schopenhauer (1788–1860), the will objectifies itself in the world at various stages, and, although the higher the degree of its objectivation is, the more beautiful it is, each degree has its beauty. The renunciation of one's individuality and the contemplation of one of these degrees of the manifestation of the will give us the consciousness of beauty. All men, according to Schopenhauer, possess the ability to cognize this idea at its

various stages and thus to free themselves for a time from their personality. But the genius of the artist has this ability in the highest degree, and so manifests the highest beauty.<sup>2</sup>

After these more prominent authors there follow in Germany less original ones, who had less influence, such as Hartmann, Kirchmann, Schnasse, Helmholtz partly (as an æsthetician), Bergmann, Jungmann, and an endless number of others.

According to Hartmann (1842), beauty does not lie in the external world, not in the thing itself, nor in man's soul, but in what is seeming (Schein), which is produced by the artist. The thing in itself is not beautiful, but the artist changes it into beauty.<sup>8</sup>

1 lb. pp. 1097–1100. 8 Id. pp. 1124, 1107.

8 Knight, pp. 81–82.

According to Schnasse (1798–1875), there is no beauty in the world. In Nature there is but an approximation to it. Art gives what Nature cannot give. Beauty is manifested in the activity of the free ego, which is conscious of a harmony that does not exist in Nature.<sup>1</sup>

Kirchmann wrote a whole experimental Esthetics. According to Kirchmann (1802–84), there are six spheres of history : (1) the sphere of knowledge, (2) the sphere of wealth, (3) the sphere of morality, (4) of religion, (5) of politics, and (6) of beauty. The activity in this sphere is art.<sup>2</sup>

According to Helmholtz (1821), who wrote of beauty in relation to music, beauty is attained in a musical composition invariably only through following the laws,— but these laws are unknown to the artist, so that beauty is manifested in the artist unconsciously, and cannot be subjected to analysis.<sup>3</sup>

According to Bergmann (1840), in his Ueber das Schöne (1887), it is impossible objectively to determine beauty : beauty is cognized subjectively, and so the problem of Esthetics consists in determining what it is that pleases this or that man.<sup>4</sup>

According to Jungmann (died 1885), beauty is, in the first place, a suprasensible property of things ; in the second, beauty produces in us pleasure through mere contemplation ; in the third, beauty is the foundation of love.<sup>6</sup>

The French and the English theories of aesthetics and those of other nations for recent times are, in their chief representatives, the following :

In France, the prominent authors on aesthetics for this time were : Cousin, Jouffroy, Petit, Ravaisson, Lévêque.

1 26. p. 83. 2 Schasler, p. 1122. 8 Knight, pp. 85–86.

6 26. p. 88. 8 26. p. 88.

Cousin (1792–1867) is an eclectic and a follower of the German idealists. According to his theory, beauty has always a moral basis. Cousin refutes the proposition that art is imitation, and that the beautiful is that which pleases. He asserts that beauty may be determined in itself, and that its essence consists in diversity in unity.<sup>1</sup>

After Cousin, Jouffroy (1796–1842) wrote on aesthetics. Jouffroy is also a follower of German aesthetics and a disciple of Cousin. According to his definition, beauty is the expression of the invisible by means of visible signs, which make it manifest. The visible world is the garment by means of which we see beauty.<sup>2</sup>

The Swiss Pictet,<sup>3</sup> who wrote on art, repeats Hegel and Plato, assuming beauty to lie in the immediate and free manifestation of the divine idea which makes itself manifest in sensuous images.

Lévêque is a follower of Schelling and of Hegel. According to Lévêque, beauty is something invisible which is concealed in Nature. Force or spirit is the manifestation of organized energy.<sup>4</sup>

Similarly indefinite judgments about the essence of beauty were uttered by the French metaphysician Ravaisson, who recognizes beauty as the final aim of the world. "La beauté la plus divine et principalement la plus parfaite contient le secret."<sup>6</sup> According to his opinion, beauty is the aim of the world.

"Le monde entier est l'œuvre d'une beauté absolue, qui n'est la cause des choses que par l'amour qu'elle met en elles."

1 26. p. 112. 2 26. p. 116. 8 26. p. 118.

4 26. pp. 123–124. 8 philosophie en France, p. 232.

I purposely do not translate these metaphysical expressions, because, no matter how hazy the Germans may be, the French, when they fill themselves with the contents of German books and imitate them, surpass them by far, as they unite into one the heterogeneous concepts and indiscriminately substitute one for the other. Thus, the French philosopher Renouvier, who also discusses beauty, says: "Ne craignons pas de dire, qu'une vérité, qui ne serait pas belle, n'est qu'un jeu logique de notre esprit et que la seule vérité solide et digne de ce nom c'est la beauté."<sup>6</sup>

Besides these idealistic æstheticians, who have written under the influence of German philosophy, Taine, Guyau, Cherbuliez, Coster, Véron, have of late had in France an influence on the comprehension of art and beauty.

According to Taine (1828–93), beauty is the manifestation of the essential character of some important idea, which is more perfect

than its expression in reality.<sup>7</sup>

According to Guyau (1854–88), beauty is not something foreign to the object itself, nor a parasitical plant upon it, but the florescence itself of the being on which it is manifested. But art is the expression of rational and conscious life, which calls forth in us, on the one hand, the profoundest sensations of existence, on the other, the highest and most elevated of ideas. Art raises man from his personal life to the universal, not only through a participation in the same ideas and beliefs, but also through the same sentiments.<sup>8</sup>

According to Cherbuliez, art is an activity which (1) satisfies our inherent love of images (apparences), (2) introduces ideas into these images, and (3) offers enjoyment simultaneously to our feelings, our heart, and our reason. But beauty, according to Cherbuliez, is not inherent in the objects, but is an act of our soul. Beauty is an illusion. There is no absolute beauty, and that appears beautiful which to us seems to be characteristic and harmonious.

According to Coster, the ideas of beauty, goodness, and truth are inborn. These ideas enlighten our intellect and are identical with God, who is goodness, truth, and beauty. The idea of beauty includes the unity of essence, the diversity of the component elements, and order, which introduces unity into the diversity of the manifestations of life.<sup>6</sup>

For completeness' sake I will quote a few more recent writings on art.

La psychologie du Beau et de l'Art, by Mario Filo (1895). According to Mario Filo, beauty is the product of our physical sensations, and the aim of art is enjoyment, but this enjoyment is for some reason sure to be considered highly moral

Then Essais Sur l'art contemporain, by H. Fierens–Gevaert (1897), according to whom art depends on its connection with the past and on the religious ideal which the artist of the present sets before himself, giving to his production the form of his individuality.

Then Sar Peladan's L'art idéaliste et mystique (1894). According to Peladan, beauty is one of the expressions of God. " Il n'y a pas d'autre Réalité que Dieu ; il n'y a pas d'autre Vérité que Dieu ; il n'y a pas d'autre Beauté que Dieu " (p. 33). This book is very fantastic and very ignorant, but it is characteristic on account of its propositions and on account of a certain success which it has among the French youth.

Such are the Esthetics which were most current in France until recently, from which Véron's book, L'esthétique (1878), forms an exception on account of its lucidity and sensibleness ; although it does not precisely define art, it at least removes from Esthetics the hazy concept of absolute beauty.

According to Véron (1825–89), art is a manifestation of feeling (émotion), which is transmitted from without through combinations of lines, forms, colours, or through the consecutiveness of gestures, sounds, or words, which are subject to certain rhythms.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Knight, p. 134. <sup>7</sup> L'esthétique, p. 106.

In England the writers on Esthetics of this time more and more frequently define beauty, not by its characteristic properties, but by taste, and the question of beauty gives way to the question of taste.

After Reid (1704–96), who recognized beauty only in dependence on the person contemplating it, Alison, in his book, *On the Nature and Principles of Taste* (1790), proves the same. The same, but from another side, is affirmed by Erasmus Darwin (1731–1802), the uncle of the famous Charles. He says that we find beautiful what in our conception is united with what we love. The same tendency is found in Richard Knight's book, *Analytical Inquiry on the Principles of Taste* (1805).

The same tendency is to be found in the majority of the theories by the English æstheticians. In the beginning of the present century, Charles Darwin in part, Spencer, Mozley, Grant Allen, Ker, Knight, were prominent writers in Esthetics in England.

According to Charles Darwin (1809–83), *Descent of Man* (1871), beauty is a sentiment which is not peculiar to man alone, but also to animals, and so also to man's ancestors. The birds adorn their nests and appreciate beauty in their mates. Beauty has an influence on marriages. Beauty includes the concept of various characters. The origin of the art of music is the call of the males for their females.<sup>1</sup>

According to Spencer (1820), the origin of art is play, a thought which was expressed before by Schiller. In the lower animals all the energy of life is spent on the support and continuation of life ; but in man there appears, after the gratification of his needs, a surplus of strength. This surplus is used for play, which passes into art. Play is a simulation of the real act, – and so is art.

The source of Esthetic enjoyment is : (1) what exercises the senses (vision or any other sense) in the completes 1

<sup>1</sup> Knight, p. 238.

manner, with the least loss and the greatest amount of exercise ; (2) the greatest diversity of sensations evoked, and (3) the union of the first two with the representation arising from it.<sup>1</sup>

According to Todhunter (*The Theory of the Beautiful*, 1872), beauty is infinite attractiveness, which we cognize with reason and with the enthusiasm of love. The recognition of beauty as such depends on

taste and cannot be defined by anything. The only approximation to a definition is the greatest culture of men ; but there is no definition of what culture is. The essence of art, of what moves us through lines, colours, sounds, words, is not the product of blind forces, but of rational forces striving, while aiding one another, toward a rational aim. Beauty is a harmonization of contradictions.<sup>2</sup>

According to Mozley (Sermons Preached before the University of Orford, 1876), beauty is found in the human soul. Nature tells us of what is divine, and art is the hieroglyphic expression of the divine.<sup>3</sup>

According to Grant Allen (Physiological Aesthetics, 1877), the continuator of Spencer, beauty has a physical origin. He says that Esthetic enjoyment is due to the contemplation of the beautiful, and the concept of the beautiful results from a physiological process. The beginning of art is play ; with the surplus of physical forces man abandons himself to play, and with the surplus of receptive forces man abandons himself to the activity of art. Beautiful is that which gives the greatest excitation with a minimum of loss. The difference in the appreciation of the beautiful is due to taste. Taste may be educated. It is necessary to believe in the judgment of " the finest nurtured and most discriminative men," that is, those who are best capable to appreciate. These men form the taste of the future generation.<sup>4</sup>

1 lb. 239-240. - lb. pp. 240-243. » lb. p. 247.

4 Id. 250-262.

According to Ker (Essay on Philosophy of Art, 1883), beauty gives us the means of a full comprehension of the objective world without references to other parts of the world, as is inevitable for science. And so science destroys the contradiction between unity and multiplicity, between the law and the phenomenon, between the subject and the object, uniting them into one. Art is the manifestation and assertion of freedom, because it is free from the obscurity and incomprehensibility of finite things.<sup>1</sup>

According to Knight (.Philosophy of the Beautiful, II., 1893), beauty is, as with Schelling, the union of the object with the subject, an extraction from Nature of what is proper to man, and the consciousness in oneself of what is common to all Nature.

The opinions on beauty and art which are quoted here by no means exhaust everything which has been written about this subject. Besides, every day there appear new writers on Esthetics, and in the opinions of these new writers there is the same enchanted obscurity and contradictoriness in the definition of beauty. Some from inertia continue Baumgarten's and Hegel's mystical Esthetics with various modifications, others transfer the question into the subjective sphere and seek for the bases of the beautiful in matters of art; others - the æstheticians of the very latest formation - find the beginning of beauty in physiological laws; others again discuss the

question quite independently of the concept of beauty. Thus, according to Sully (*Studies in Psychology and Aesthetics*, 1874), the concept of beauty is completely set aside, since art, according to Sully's definition, is the product of a permanent or passing subject, capable of affording active pleasure and agreeable impressions to a certain number of spectators or bearers, independently of the advantages derived from it. *U&A*. pp. 255-259. -â p. 243.

#### IV.

Now, what results from all these definitions of beauty as enunciated by the science of Esthetics ? If we leave out of consideration the definitions of beauty, which are entirely inexact and do not cover the concept of art, and which assume it to be, now in usefulness, now in fitness, now in symmetry, now in order, now in proportion, now in smoothness, now in the harmony of the parts, now in unity, now in diversity, now in the various combinations of these principles, if we leave out of consideration these unsatisfactory attempts at objective definitions, - all the Esthetic definitions of beauty reduce themselves to two fundamental conceptions: the first is this, that beauty is something which exists in itself, one of the manifestations of the absolutely perfect, - the Idea, the Spirit, the Will, God, - and the other - that beauty is a pleasure of a certain kind, experienced by us, which has no aim of personal advantage.

The first definition was accepted by Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, Schopenhauer, and the philosophizing Frenchmen, Cousin, Jouffroy, Ravaisson, and others, not to mention the philosophical æstheticians of secondary importance. The greater half of the educated people of our time hold to the same objectively mystical definition of beauty. This conception of beauty has been very popular, especially among men of the former generation.

The second conception of beauty, as of a pleasure of a certain kind, derived by us, which has not for its aim any personal advantage, is preeminently popular among the English æstheticians, and is shared by the other half, mainly the younger, of our society.

Thus there exist, as indeed it cannot be otherwise, only two definitions of beauty : one - the objective, mystical definition, which blends this connection with the higher perfection, with God, - a fantastical definition, which is not founded on anything; the other, on the contrary, is very simple and comprehensible, and subjective ; it considers beauty to be what pleases us (to the word " pleases " I do not add " without any aim, or advantage," because the word " pleases " naturally includes this absence of considerations of advantage).

On the one hand, beauty is understood as something mystical and very

elevated, but, unfortunately, something very indefinite, and so including philosophy, and religion, and life itself, as is the case with Schelling and Hegel and their German and French followers ; or, on the other hand, as it must be accepted, according to the definition of Kant and his followers, beauty is nothing but an unselfish enjoyment of a peculiar kind, which we experience. In this case, beauty, though, it seems to be very clear, is unfortunately again inexact, because it expands in another direction, namely, it includes the enjoyments derived from drink, food, the touch of a tender skin, and so forth, as it is accepted by Guyau, Kralik, and others.

It is true that, in following the evolution of the doctrine of beauty in Esthetics, we can observe that in the beginning, ever since the time when the science of Esthetics was established, there predominated the metaphysical definition of beauty, and that the nearer we approach our time, the more and more is there worked out an experimental definition, which of late has been assuming a physiological character, so that we meet with such aestheticians as Véron's and Sully's, who try to get along entirely without the concept of beauty. But such æstheticians have very little success, and the majority, both of the public and the artists and the scholars, hold firmly to the concept of beauty as it is defined in the majority of the aesthetics, that is, as something mystical or metaphysical, or as some special kind of enjoyment.

But what, in reality, is the concept of beauty to which the men of our circle and time hold so stubbornly in their definition of art ?

Beauty in the subjective sense we call what furnishes us enjoyment of a certain kind. In the objective sense, we call beauty something which is absolutely perfect, and we accept it as such only because we derive from the manifestation of this absolute perfection a certain kind of enjoyment, so that the objective definition is nothing but a differently expressed subjective definition. In reality both concepts of beauty reduce themselves to a certain kind of pleasure derived by us, that is, we accept as beauty what pleases us, without evoking desire in us. It would seem that, with such a state of affairs, it would be natural for the science of art not to be satisfied with the definition of art as based on beauty, that is, on what pleases, and to seek a common definition, applicable to all products of art, on the basis of which it would be possible to determine the pertinency or non-pertinency of objects to art. But, as the reader may see from the extracts quoted by me from the Esthetics, and still more clearly from the æsthetical works themselves, if he will take the trouble to read them, there is no such definition. All the attempts at defining absolute beauty in itself, as imitation of Nature, as fitness, as correspondence of parts, symmetry, harmony, unity in diversity, etc., either define nothing, or define only certain features of certain products of art and are far from covering everything which all men have always regarded as art.

There is no objective definition of art ; but the existing

definitions, both the metaphysical and the experimental, reduce themselves to a subjective definition and, however strange it may seem to say so, to this, that that is considered to be art which manifests beauty ; but beauty is what pleases (without evoking desire). Many æstheticians have felt the insufficiency and weakness of such a definition, and, in order to find a basis for it, have asked themselves why this or that pleases, and have transferred the question of beauty to that of taste, as was done by Hutcheson, Voltaire, Diderot, and others. But all the attempts at defining what taste is, as the reader may see from the history of aesthetics and from experience, cannot bring us to anything, and there is no explanation, and there can be none, as to why such and such a thing pleases one and does not please another, and vice versa. Thus the whole existing aesthetics does not consist in what one could expect from the mental activity which calls itself science, – namely, in defining the properties and laws of art or of the beautiful, if this is the contents of art, or the property of taste, if taste decides the question of art and its value, and then in recognizing as art, on the basis of these laws, those productions which fit in with these laws, and in rejecting those which do not fit in with them ; – it consists in this, that, having come to recognize a certain kind of production as good, because it pleases us, we form a theory of art, according to which all the productions which please a certain circle of men should be included in this theory. There exists an artistic canon, according to which favourite productions are in our circle recognized as art (Phidias, Sophocles, Homer, Titian, Raphael, Bach, Beethoven, Dante, Shakespeare, Gothe, and others), and the Esthetic judgments must be such as to take in all these productions. Opinions as to the value and significance of art, which are not based on certain laws, according to which we consider this or that good or bad, but on this, whether it coincides with the canon of art, as established by us, are constantly met with in Esthetic literature. The other day I read a book by Volkelt : it is not at all bad. In discussing the demands of the moral in the productions of art, the author says outright that the putting forward of demands of morality in art is wrong, and in proof of this he mentions that, if we were to admit this demand, Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet and Goethe's Wilhelm Meister would not fit in with the definition of good art. But since both do enter into the canon of art, this demand is not right. And so, it is necessary to find a definition of art into which these productions would fit, and so Volkelt, in the stead of the demand of what is moral, places at the base of art the demand of what is important ( Bedeutungsvoile).

All existing aesthetics are composed according to this plan. Instead of giving a definition of true art, and then, judging from this, whether a production fits in with this definition, or not, or judging as to what is art, and what not, a certain series of productions, which for some reason please men of a certain circle, is recognized as art, and they invent a definition of art which would cover all these productions. A remarkable confirmation of this method I found lately in a very good book, History of Painting in the Nineteenth Century, by Muther. While approaching the description of the Præraphaélites, decadents, and symbolists, who have already

been taken into the canon of art, he not only fails to have the courage to condemn this tendency, but is also zealously trying to expand his frame, so as to include in it the Préraphaélites, and decadents, and symbolists, who appear to him as a legitimate reaction against the excesses of naturalism. No matter what the madness in art may be, the moment it is accepted among the higher classes of our society, there is at once worked out a theory which explains and legitimizes this madness, as though there never existed periods in history when in certain exclusive circles of men there was accepted and approved a false, monstrous, senseless art, which left no traces and was completely forgotten later on ; and what senselessness and monstrosity art may reach, especially when it knows that it is considered, as in our day, infallible, we may see from what is going on now in the art of our circle.

Thus the theory of art, based on beauty and expounded in Esthetics and in dim outlines professed by the public, is nothing but the acknowledgment that that is good which pleased and still pleases us, that is, a certain circle of men.

In order to define any human activity, we must understand its meaning and significance. But in order to understand the meaning and significance of any human activity, we must necessarily first of all view this activity in itself, in dependence on its causes and consequences, and not merely in relation to the pleasure which we derive from it.

But if we acknowledge that the aim of any activity is nothing but our enjoyment, and define it only in reference to this enjoyment, this definition will obviously be false. The same took place in the definition of art. In analyzing the question of food, it will not occur to any one to see the significance of food in the enjoyment which we derive from its consumption. Everybody understands that the gratification of our taste can in no way serve as a basis for the definition of the value of food, and that, therefore, we have no right whatever to assume that those dinners with Cayenne pepper, Limburger cheese, alcohol, and so forth, to which we are accustomed and which please us, form the best human food.

Similarly beauty, or what pleases us, can in no way serve as a basis for the definition of art, and a series of objects which afford us pleasure can by no means be a sample of what art ought to be.

To see the aim and mission of art in the enjoyment which we derive from it, is the same as ascribing – as is done by men who stand on the lowest stage of moral development (savages, for example) – the aim and significance of food to the enjoyment which we derive from its consumption.

Just as people who think that the aim and mission of food is enjoyment cannot learn the true meaning of eating, so people who think that the aim of art is enjoyment cannot learn its meaning and destination, because to an activity which has its meaning in connection with other phenomena of life they ascribe a false and

exclusive aim of enjoyment. Men came to understand that the meaning of food is the nutrition of the body, only when they stopped regarding enjoyment as the aim of this activity. The same is true of art. Men will understand the meaning of art only when they will cease to regard beauty, that is, enjoyment, as the aim of this activity. The recognition of beauty, or of a certain kind of enjoyment which is derived from art, as the aim of art, not only fails to contribute the definition of what art is, but, on the contrary, by transferring the question into a sphere which is entirely alien to art, – into metaphysical, psychological, physiological, and even historical reflections as to why such and such a production pleases some, and such and such does not please them, or pleases others, makes this definition impossible. And as the reflection as to why one person likes a pear and another meat in no way contributes to the definition as to what the essence of nutrition consists in, so the solution of the questions of taste in art (to which the discussions about art are involuntarily reduced) not only fails to contribute to the elucidation of what that special human activity which we call art consists in, but makes this elucidation completely impossible.

In reply to the questions as to what art is, for which the labours of millions of men, human lives themselves, and even morality are sacrificed, we received from the existing Esthetics answers which all reduce themselves to this, that the aim of art is beauty, – but beauty is recognized through the enjoyment which we derive from it, – and that the enjoyment from art is good and important, that is, that the enjoyment is good because it is an enjoyment. Thus, what is regarded as a definition of art is not at all a definition of art, but only a device for the justification of the existing art. And so, no matter how strange it may seem, in spite of the mountains of books written on art, there has so far not been made any exact definition of art. The cause of it is this, that at the basis of the concept of art they have been placing the concept of beauty.

V.

What, then, is art, if we reject the concept of beauty, which brings confusion into the whole matter ? The last and most comprehensible definition of art, which is independent of the concept of beauty, will be as follows : art is an activity, which arose in the animal kingdom from the sexual feeling and the proneness to play (Schiller, Darwin, Spencer), which is accompanied by a pleasurable excitation of the nervous energy (Grant Allen). This will be a definition of physiological evolution. Or: art is the manifestation from without, by means of lines, colours, gestures, sounds, words, of emotions experienced by man (Véron). This will be an experimental definition. According to the very latest definitions by Sully, art will be : " the production of some permanent object or passing action, which is fitted not only to supply an active enjoyment to the producer, but

to convey a pleasurable impression to a number of spectators or listeners quite apart from any personal advantage to be derived from it."

In spite of the superiority of these definitions over the metaphysical definitions, which are based on the concept of beauty, these definitions are none the less far from being exact. The first, the definition of physiological evolution, is inexact, because it does not speak of the activity itself which forms the essence of art, but of the origin of art. The definition according to the physiological effect on man's organism is inexact, because many other human activities may be brought under this definition, as is the case in the new æsthetics, in which the

preparation of pretty garments and pleasant perfumes and even food is counted in as art. The experimental definition, which assumes art to lie in the manifestation of «motions, is inexact, because a man may by means of lines, colours, sounds, and words manifest his emotions, without acting through this manifestation upon others, and then this manifestation will not be art.

The third definition, Lully's, is inexact, because with the production of objects supplying enjoyment to the producer and a pleasurable impression to the spectators and listeners without any advantage to them, may be classed the performance of sleight of hand and of gymnastic exercises, and other activities, which do not form art, and, on the contrary, many objects, from which we derive a disagreeable impression, as, for example, a gloomy and cruel scene in a poetical description or in the theatre forms an unquestionable production of art.

The inexactness of all these definitions is due to this, that in all these definitions, just as in the metaphysical definitions, the aim of art is found in the enjoyment derived from it, and not in its destination in the life of man and of humanity.

In order exactly to define art, it is necessary first of all to cease looking upon it as a means for enjoyment, but to view art as one of the conditions of human life. In viewing life thus, we cannot help but see that art is one of the means of intercourse among men.

Every product of art has this effect, that the receiver enters into a certain kind of intercourse with the producer of art and with all those who contemporaneously with him, before him, or after him, have received or will receive the same artistic impression.

As the word which conveys the thoughts and experiences of men serves as a means for the union of men, so also does art act. The peculiarity of this means of intercourse, which distinguishes it from intercourse by means of the word, consists in this, that by means of the word one man communicates his thoughts to another, while by means of art they communicate their feelings to one another.

The activity of art is based on this, that man, by receiving through hearing or seeing the expressions of another man's feelings, is capable of experiencing the same feeling which was experienced by the man who expresses his feeling.

Here is the simplest kind of an example : a man laughs, and another man feels happy ; he weeps, and the man who hears this weeping feels sad ; he gets excited and irritated, and another, looking at him, comes to the same state. A man with his motions, with the sounds of his voice, expresses vivacity, determination, or, on the contrary, gloom, calm, and this mood is communicated to others. A man suffers, expressing his suffering by means of groans and writhing, and this suffering is communicated to others; a man expresses his feeling of delight, awe, fear, respect for certain objects, persons, phenomena, and other men are infected and experience the same feelings of delight, awe, fear, respect, for the same objects, persons, and phenomena.

It is on this property of men to be infected by the feelings of other men that the activity of art is based.

If a man infects another or others directly, immediately, by his look or by sounds produced by him at the moment that he experiences the feeling ; or causes another man to yawn, when he himself is yawning, or to laugh or weep, when he himself is laughing or weeping over something, or to suffer, when he himself is suffering, that is not yet art.

Art begins when a man, with the purpose of conveying to others the feeling which he has experienced, evokes it in himself and expresses it by means of well-known external signs.

Here is the simplest kind of a case : a boy, who, let us say, has experienced fear from having met a wolf, tells of this encounter and, in order to evoke in others the sensation which he has experienced, pictures himself, his condition before this encounter, the surroundings, the forest, his carelessness, and then the looks of the wolf, his motions, the distance between him and the wolf, and so forth. All this, if during the recital the boy again lives through the sensation experienced by him, infects his hearers, and causes them to go through everything through which the narrator has passed, is art. Even if the boy did not see the wolf, but frequently was afraid of him, and, wishing to evoke in others the sensation of fear experienced by him, invented the encounter with the wolf and told of it in such a way that by his recital the same sensation was evoked in his hearers which he experienced in picturing the wolf to himself, this is also art. Similarly it will be art, when a man, having in reality or in his imagination experienced the terror of suffering or the charm of enjoyment, has represented these sensations on canvas or in marble, so that others are infected by it. And similarly it will be art if a man has experienced or imagined to himself the sensation of mirth, joy, sadness, despair, vivacity, gloom, or the transitions of these sensations from one to another, and has represented these sensations in words in such a way

that the hearers are infected by them and pass through them just as he passed through them.

The most varied sensations, the strongest and the weakest, the most important and the most insignificant, the worst and the best, so long as they infect the reader, spectator, hearer, form the subject of art. The feeling of self-renunciation and submission to fate or to God, as conveyed in the drama ; or of the ecstasy of lovers, as described in the novel ; or the feeling of lust, as represented in a picture ; or of vivacity, as communicated in a solemn march in music ; or of merriment, as evoked by a dance ; or of humour, as evoked by a funny anecdote ; or the sensation of quiet, as conveyed by yesterday's landscape or cradle-song, – all this is art.

The moment the spectators, the hearers, are infected by the same feeling which the composer experienced, we have art.

To evoke in oneself a sensation which one has experienced before, and, having evoked it in oneself by means of motions, lines, colours, sounds, images, expressed in words, to communicate this sensation in such a way that others may experience the same sensation, – in this does the activity of art consist. Art is a human activity which consists in this, that one man consciously, by means of certain external signs, communicates to others the sensations experienced by him, so that other men are infected by these sensations and pass through them.

Art is not, as the metaphysicians say, the manifestation of any mysterious idea, beauty, God ; it is not, the physiological æstheticians say, a play, in which a man lets out the surplus of his accumulated energy ; it is not the manifestation of emotions by means of external signs ; it is not the production of agreeable objects, above all else, not an enjoyment, but a means for the intercourse of men, necessary for man's life and for the motion toward the good of the separate man and of humanity, which unites men in the same feelings.

Just as, thanks to the ability of man to understand the ideas which are expressed in words, every man is able to find out everything which in the sphere of thought all humanity has done for him, is able in the present, thanks to the ability of understanding other men's thoughts, to become a participant in the activity of other men, and himself, thanks to this ability, is able to communicate to his contemporaries and to posterity those ideas which he has acquired from others and his own, which have arisen in him ; even so, and thanks to man's ability to be infected by other people's feelings through art, there is made accessible to him, in the field of sentiments, everything which humanity passed through before him, the sentiments which are experienced by his contemporaries, the sentiments experienced by men thousands of years ago, and there is made possible the communication of his own sentiments to other people.

If men did not have the ability of receiving all the thoughts which

are communicated in words and which have been thought out by men who lived before him, and to communicate his ideas to others, they would be like animals and like Kaspar Hauser.

If there did not exist man's other ability, to be infected by art, men would be almost more savage still, and, above all else, disunited and hostile.

And so the activity of art is a very important activity, as important as the activity of speech, and just as universal.

As the word acts upon us, not only in sermons, orations, and books, but also in every speech in which we communicate our thoughts and experiences to one another, so art, in the broad sense of the word, penetrates all our life, but only a few manifestations of this art do we call art, in the narrower sense of this word.

We are accustomed to understand under art only what we read, hear, and see in theatres, at concerts, and at exhibitions, – buildings, statues, poems, novels. But all this is only a very small part of that art by means of which we commune with one another in life. The whole human life is filled with products of art of every kind, from a cradle-song, a jest, mocking, adornments of houses, garments, utensils, to church services, solemn processions. All this is the activity of art. Thus, we call art in the narrower sense of the word not all human activity, which communicates feelings, but only such as we for some reason segregate from this whole activity and which we invest with a special significance.

Such a special significance all men have at all times ascribed to the activity which has conveyed feelings which arise from the religious consciousness of men, and this small part of all art has been called art in the full sense of this word.

Thus art was looked upon by the men of antiquity, by Socrates, Plato, Aristotle. Thus art was looked upon by the Jewish prophets and by the ancient Christians ; thus it is also understood by the Mohammedans, and thus it is understood by the religious people of our time,

Some teachers of humanity, like Plato in his Republic, and the first Christians, and the Mohammedans, and the Buddhists, frequently denied all art.

Men who look upon art in an opposite manner from the present view, according to which every art is considered good so long as it affords enjoyment, have thought that art, in contradistinction to the word, which one may avoid hearing, is to such a degree dangerous by infecting people against their will, that humanity will lose much less if all art shall be expelled than when all arts shall be admitted.

Such men, who have rejected all art, have obviously been wrong, because they have denied what cannot be denied, – one of the

indispensable means of intercourse, without which humanity could not live. But not less wrong are the men of our European civilized society, circle, and time, who admit all art, provided it serves beauty, that is, affords men pleasure.

Formerly men were afraid that among the subjects of art there might get such as corrupt people, and so it was all prohibited. But now they fear only lest they may lose some enjoyment, which art gives, and so protect every art. And I think that this latter error is much more gross than the first, and that its consequences are much more harmful.

## VI.

But how could it have happened that that art itself, which in antiquity was either admitted or entirely denied, in our day began to be regarded as always good, if only it afforded pleasure ?

This happened from the following causes.

The appreciation of the value of art, that is, of the sensations which it conveys, depends on the comprehension by men of the meaning of life, on what they see their good in, and on what they see the evil of life. But the good and the evil of life are defined by what is called religion.

Humanity moves without interruption from the lower, less private, and less clear to the higher, less common, and clearer comprehension of life. And, as in all motion, there are advanced men in this motion, too: there are men who understand the meaning of life more clearly than others, and of all these advanced men there is always one who more lucidly, accessibly, and forcibly – in words and in his life – expresses this meaning of life. The expression by this man of this meaning of life, together with those superstitious traditions and ceremonies which generally group themselves about the memory of this man, is called religion. The religions are the indices of that higher comprehension of life, accessible at a given time and in a given society to the best advanced men, which all other men of this society invariably and inevitably approach. And so it is only the religions that have always served as a foundation for the valuation of men's sentiments. If the sentiments bring the men nearer to the ideal indicated by religion, agree with it, and do not contradict it, they are good ; if they remove men from it, do not agree with it, and contradict it, they are bad.

If religion puts the meaning of life in the worship of the one God and in the performance of what is considered His will, the sentiments which arise from the love of this God and His law, as conveyed by art, – the sacred poetry of the prophets, the psalms, the narration of the Book of Genesis, – are good and elevated art.

But everything which is opposed to it, like the communication of the sentiments of the worship of foreign gods and of feelings which are not in agreement with the law of God, will be considered bad art. But if religion takes the meaning of life to be in earthly happiness, in beauty, and in force, the joy and alacrity of life, as conveyed by art, will be considered good art; but art which communicates the sentiment of effeminacy or dejection will be bad art, and so it was considered by the Greeks. If the meaning of life lies in the good of one's nation or in the prolongation of that life which one's ancestors have led, and in respect for them, then the art which conveys the sentiment of the joy of sacrifice to personal gods for the good of the nation or for the honour of the ancestors and the support of their traditions will be considered good art ; but the art which expresses sentiments which are contrary to it will be bad, and such it was considered to be by the Romans and by the Chinese. If the meaning of life is in the liberation of self from the bonds of animality, the art which conveys sentiments which elevate the soul and debase the flesh will be good art, and such it is considered by the Buddhists, and everything which conveys sentiments which intensify the passions of the body will be bad art.

Always, at all times and in every human society, there is a religious consciousness, common to all men of this society, of what is good and what bad, and this religious consciousness defines the worth of the sentiments conveyed by art. And so with all nations the art which conveys sentiments arising from the religious consciousness common to the men of that nation has been recognized as good and has been encouraged ; but the art which conveys sentiments which do not agree with this religious consciousness has been considered bad and has been rejected ; but all the remaining enormous field of art, by means of which men have intercourse among themselves, has not been at all appreciated and has been rejected only when it was contrary to the religious consciousness of its time. Thus it was with all the nations, – with the Greeks, the Jews, the Hindoos, the Egyptians, the Chinese ; and thus it was at the appearance of Christianity.

The Christianity of the first times regarded as good products of art only such legends, lives of saints, sermons, prayers, songs, as evoked in men the feeling of love for Christ, a sentiment of meekness in contemplating his life, a desire to follow his example, a renunciation of the worldly life, humility, and love of men ; but all the productions which transmitted sentiments of personal enjoyments were regarded by it as bad, and so it rejected all pagan plastic art, permitting only symbolical plastic representations.

Thus it was among the Christians of the first centuries, who accepted Christ's teaching, if not in its absolutely true form, at least not in the form corrupted by paganism, in which it was accepted later.

But besides these Christians, there appeared, after the time of the wholesale conversion of the nations to Christianity, by order of the authorities, – as was the case under Constantine, Charlemagne, and

Vladimir, – the ecclesiastic teaching, which was much nearer to paganism than to the teaching of Christ. And this ecclesiastic Christianity, which is quite distinct from the other, began, on the basis of its doctrine, to change the appreciation of men's sentiments and the productions of the arts which conveyed them. This ecclesiastic Christianity not only did not recognize the fundamental and essential propositions of true Christianity, – the immediate relation of each man to the Father, and the brotherhood and equality of all men, resulting from it, and the substitution of humility and love for all kinds of violence, – but, on the contrary, by establishing a celestial hierarchy, similar to the pagan mythology, and a worship of this hierarchy, of Christ, the Holy Virgin, the angels, apostles, saints, martyrs, and not only of these divinities, but also of their representations, established as the essence of its teaching blind faith in the church and its decrees.

No matter how foreign this doctrine was to true Christianity, no matter how low it was, not only in comparison with true Christianity, but also with the world conception of such Romans as Julian and his like, – it was none the less for the barbarians who received this Christianity a higher teaching than their former worship of God, heroes, and good and bad spirits. And so this teaching was a religion for those barbarians who accepted it, and on the basis of this religion was the art of that time appreciated; the art which communicated a pious worship of the Holy Virgin, of Jesus, of saints, of angels, a blind faith and submission to the church, terror before the torments, and hope in the bliss of the life beyond the grave, was considered good ; and the art which was contrary to it was all considered bad. The doctrine on the basis of which this art arose was the corrupted teaching of Christ, but the art which arose on this corrupted teaching was none the less true because it contributed to the religious world conception of the nation in which it originated.

The artists of the Middle Ages, living by the same basis of sentiments, by the same religion, as the masses of the nation, and transmitting the sentiments and moods experienced by them in architecture, sculpture, painting, music, poetry, the drama, were true artists, and their activity, being based on the highest comprehension accessible at the time and shared by the whole nation, may be low for our time, but is none the less true art, which is common to the whole nation.

And so it was up to the time when there appeared in the highest, wealthy, more educated classes of European society a doubt about the truth of that comprehension of life which was expressed in the ecclesiastic Christianity. But where, after the Crusades, the higher development of the papal power, and its misuse, after the acquaintance with the wisdom of the ancients, the men of the wealthy classes saw, on the one hand, the rational clearness of the teaching of the ancient sages, and on the other, the lack of correspondence between the church doctrine and the teaching of Christ, they lost the power of believing, as before, in the church doctrine.

Even though outwardly they preserved the forms of the church doctrine, they no longer were able to believe in it and held on to it only through inertia, and for the sake of the people, who continued to believe blindly in the church doctrine, and whom the men of the higher classes considered it indispensable for their own advantage to maintain in these beliefs. Thus the Christian teaching of the church ceased at a certain time to be a common religious teaching of the whole Christian people ; so the higher classes, those in whose hands was the power, the wealth, and so the leisure and the means for the production and encouragement of art, ceased to believe in the religious teaching of their church, while the people continued to believe in it blindly.

The higher classes of the Middle Ages found themselves as regards religion in the condition in which the cultured Romans found themselves before the appearance of Christianity, that is, they no longer believed in what the people believed in; they themselves had no faith which they could put in the place of the church teaching, which had outlived and lost its significance.

The only difference was this, that while for the Romans, who had lost their faith in their gods, emperors, and domestic gods, it was impossible to extract anything else from that complicated mythology which they had borrowed from all the conquered nations, and it was necessary to accept an entirely new world conception, – the men of the Middle Ages, who had come to doubt the truths of the church doctrine, did not have to look for a new faith. The Christian teaching, which in a distorted form they professed as the church faith, had outlined the path to humanity so far ahead that they needed only to reject those distortions which obscured the teaching revealed by Christ, and to make it their own, if not as a whole, at least in a small part of its whole meaning (but yet greater than what the church had made its own). Precisely this was partly done, not only by the reforms of Wyclif, Huss, Luther, Calvin, but also by the whole current of the non-ecclesiastic Christianity, the representatives of which, in the first times, were the Paulicians and Bogomils, and later the Waldenses and all the other non-ecclesiastic Christians, the so-called sectarians. But this could be done, and was done, only by the poor, the men not in power. Only very few from the rich and powerful classes, like Francis d'Assisi and others, though this teaching destroyed their advantageous position, accepted the Christian teaching in all its significance. But the majority of the men from the higher classes, though in their hearts they had lost the faith in the church doctrine, were unable or unwilling to accept the Christian teaching because the essence of the Christian world conception which they would have to accept, in rejecting the church faith, was the teaching of the brotherhood and so of the equality of men, and such a teaching denied their privileges, by which they lived, in which they had grown up and had been educated, and to which they were used. As they, in the depth of their hearts, did not believe in the church doctrine which had outlived its age and no longer had for them a true meaning, and as they did not have the strength to accept the true Christianity, the men of these wealthy, ruling classes, the Popes, kings, dukes, and

all the mighty of the world, were left without any religion whatever, only with its external forms, which they supported, considering this not only advantageous, but also indispensable for themselves, since this doctrine justified those privileges which they enjoyed. In reality these men did not believe in anything, just as the Romans of the first centuries did not believe in anything. At the same time the power and wealth was in their hands, and it is these men who encouraged art and guided it.

Among these people there began to flourish art, which was valued, not to the extent to which it expressed the sentiments which arise from the religious consciousness of men, but only to the extent to which it was beautiful ; in other words, to the extent to which it afforded enjoyment.

Being unable to believe any longer in the church religion, since its lie was made manifest, and being unable to accept the true Christian teaching, which rejected their whole lives, these wealthy and ruling people, who were left without any religious conception of life, involuntarily turned to that pagan world conception which assumes the meaning of life to lie in enjoyment. And there took place in the higher classes what is called the "renaissance of sciences and arts," which in reality is nothing but the rejection of all religion, and even the recognition of its uselessness.

The ecclesiastic, especially the Catholic, faith, is a connected system which cannot be changed or mended without destroying it. The moment there arose a doubt as to the infallibility of the Popes, – and this doubt did at that time arise in all cultured men,– there inevitably arose a doubt also as to the truth of the Tradition. And the doubt as to the truth of the Tradition destroyed not only Popery and Catholicism, but also the whole church faith, with all its dogmas, with the divinity of Christ, the resurrection, the Trinity, and destroyed the authority of the Scriptures, because the Scriptures were recognized as sacred because Tradition taught so.

Thus the majority of the men of the higher classes of that time, even the Popes and clerical persons, in reality did not believe in anything. These men did not believe in the church teaching, because they saw its inadequacy ; but they were unable to recognize the moral, social teaching of Christ, which was recognized by Francis d'Assisi, Chelcický, and a few others, because this teaching destroyed their public position. And so these men were left without any religious world conception. And having no religious world conception, these men could have no standard for the estimation of good and of bad art, except that of enjoyment. In recognizing as the standard of goodness enjoyment, that is, beauty, the men of the highest classes of European society returned in their conception of art to the rude conception of the original Greeks, which already Plato had condemned. And the theory of art was formed among them in conformity with this comprehension among them.

## VII.

Ever since the men of the highest classes lost their faith in the church Christianity, the standard of what is good and bad in art became beauty, that is, the enjoyment which is derived from art. And in conformity with this view on art, there naturally arose among the higher classes an aesthetic theory, which justified such a comprehension, – a theory according to which the aim of art consists in the manifestation of beauty. The followers of the Esthetic theory affirm, in confirmation of its truth, that this theory was not invented by them, that it lies in the essence of things, and that it was accepted even by the ancient Greeks. But this assertion is quite arbitrary and has no other foundation than this, that with the Greeks, on account of the low stage of their moral ideal, as compared with the Christian ideal, the concept of goodness (to dyaGov) was not yet sharply distinguished from the concept of the beautiful (ro koàov).

The highest perfection of goodness, which not only does not coincide with beauty, but for the most part is opposed to it, which the Jews knew even in the days of Isaiah, and which is fully expressed in Christianity, was altogether unknown to the Greeks ; they assumed that the beautiful must by all means be also the good. It is true, the advanced thinkers, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, felt that goodness may not coincide with beauty. Socrates directly subordinated beauty to goodness ; Plato, in order to unite the two concepts, spoke of spiritual beauty ; Aristotle demanded of art a moral action upon men (xdtfapcriç), but none the less even these thinkers were unable fully to renounce the concept that beauty and goodness coincide.

And so they began in the language of that time to use the compound word xoAoxd-ya^ui (beauty and goodness), which expressed this union.

The Greek thinkers apparently were beginning to approach that concept of goodness which is expressed in Buddhism and in Christianity, and lost themselves in the establishment of relations of goodness and beauty. Plato's judgments about beauty and goodness are full of contradictions. This very confusion of ideas the men of the European world, who had lost all faith, tried to raise to a law, and they tried to prove that this union of beauty with goodness lies in the very essence of the matter, that beauty and goodness must coincide, that the word and the concept of xaAoxaya&a, which had a meaning for a Greek, but has no meaning whatever for a Christian, forms the highest ideal of humanity. On this misunderstanding was built the new science, – Esthetics. In order to justify this new science, the teaching of the ancients about art was so interpreted as to make it appear that this newly invented science, Esthetics, had already existed with the Greeks.

In reality, the reflections of the ancients on art do not at all resemble ours. Thus, Bénard, in his books on the aesthetics of

Aristotle, says quite correctly, " Pour qui veut y regarder de près, la théorie du beau et celle de l'art sont tout-à-fait séparés dans Aristote, comme elles le sont dans Platon et chez leurs successeurs." 1

Indeed, the reflections of the ancients on art not only fail to confirm our Esthetics, but rather reject its teaching of beauty. And yet it is affirmed in all Esthetics, beginning with Schasler and ending with Knight, that the science of the beautiful, aesthetics, was begun by the an-

1 Bénard, L'esthétique d'Aristote et de ses successeurs, Paris, 1789, p. 28.

cients, by Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and was continued in part by the Epicureans and Stoics, by Seneca, Plutarch, and up to Plotinus ; but that by some unfortunate accident this science suddenly disappeared in the fourth century, and for fifteen hundred years was absent and was regenerated, only after an interval of fifteen hundred years, in Germany, in the year 1750, in Baumgarten's teaching.<sup>9</sup>

After Plotinus, says Schasler, there pass fifteen centuries, during which time there is not the slightest scientific interest in the world of beauty and of art. These fifteen hundred years, he says, are lost for Esthetics and for the development of the scientific mood of this science.

In reality there is nothing of the kind. The science of Esthetics, the science of what is beautiful, has never disappeared and never could have disappeared, because it never existed ; what did exist was this, that the Greeks, precisely like all other people, always and everywhere regarded art, like anything else, as good only when this art served goodness (as they understood goodness), and bad when it was opposed to this goodness. But the Greeks themselves were so little developed that goodness and beauty seemed to them to coincide, and on this obsolete world conception of the Greeks is based the science of Esthetics, invented by men of the eighteenth century and specially worked into a theory by Baumgarten. The Greeks never had any science of aesthetics (as any one may become convinced who will read Bénard's beautiful book on Aristotle and his followers, and Walter's on Plato).

The aesthetic theories and the name of the science itself arose about 150 years ago among the wealthy classes of the Christian European world, and simultaneously among several nations, among the Italians, the Dutch, the French, the English. But its founder and establisher, who vested it in a scientific, theoretic form, was Baumgarten.

With characteristically German external, pedantic circumstantiality and symmetricalness he invented and expounded this remarkable theory, and nobody's theory pleased so much the cultured masses, in spite of its startling baselessness, or was accepted with such

readiness and absence of critical judgment. This theory was so much to the taste of the higher classes that, in spite of its complete arbitrariness and the insufficiency of its propositions, it is repeated by the learned and the unlearned as something indubitable and a matter of course.

Habent sua fata libelli pro capite lectoris, and even more separate theories habent sua fata on account of the condition of error in which society is, amidst which and for the sake of which these theories are invented. If a theory justifies that false state in which a certain part of society happens to be, no matter how unfounded and even obviously false a theory may be, it is accepted and becomes the faith of that part of society. Such, for example, is the famous unfounded theory of Malthus about the tendency of the population of the globe to increase in a geometric progression, while the means of subsistence increase in an arithmetic progression, and consequently about the overpopulation of the globe ; such also is the theory of the struggle for existence and of natural selection, as the basis of human progress, which has grown up on this theory. Such also is at present Marx's popular theory about the inevitableness of economic progress, which consists in the absorption of all private production by capitalism. No matter how unfounded such theories may be and how opposed they may be to everything which is known to humanity and is cognized by it ; no matter how immoral they may be, these theories are taken on faith without criticism, and are preached with impassioned bias, sometimes for centuries, until the conditions are destroyed which they justify, or the insipidity of the theories preached becomes too obvious. Such is the remarkable theory of the Baumgartenian triad, Goodness, Beauty, and Truth, from which it turns out that the best that the art of the nations who have lived a Christian life for eighteen hundred years can do consists in choosing for the ideal of its life the one which two thousand years ago was held by a half-savage slave-holding little people, which very well represented the nudity of the human body and built handsome buildings. All these inconsistencies are not observed by any one. Learned men write long, hazy treatises on beauty as one of the members of the æsthetic triad of beauty, truth, and goodness. " Das Schone, das Wahre, das Gute," " Le Beau, le Vrai, le Bon," with capital letters, is repeated by philosophers, and æstheticians, and artists, and private people, and novelists, and writers of feuilletons, and it seems to all of them that, in pronouncing these sacramental words, they are speaking of something definite and firmly established, – something on which our judgments may be based. In reality these words not only have no definite meaning, but also are in the way of ascribing any definite meaning to the existing art, and are needed only in order to justify that false meaning which we ascribe to the art which transmits all kinds of sensations, so long as these sensations afford us pleasure.

We need but for a time renounce the habit of considering this triad as true as the religious Trinity, and ask ourselves what it is we all understand by the three words which form this triad, in order to convince ourselves beyond any doubt of the complete fantasticalness of the union of these three words and concepts, absolutely different

and, above all, incommensurable in meaning, into one.

Goodness, beauty, and truth are placed on one height, and all these three concepts are acknowledged to be fundamental and metaphysical. But in reality there is nothing of the kind.

Goodness is the eternal, highest purpose of our life. No matter how we may understand goodness, our life is nothing but a striving after goodness, that is, toward God.

Goodness is actually a fundamental concept which metaphysically forms the essence of our consciousness, a concept which is not definable by reason.

Goodness is what cannot be defined by anything, but which defines everything else.

But beauty, if we are not satisfied with words, but speak of what we comprehend, – beauty is nothing but what pleases us.

The concept of beauty not only does not coincide with goodness, but is rather opposed to it, since goodness for the most part coincides with victory over bias, while beauty is the foundation of all our bias.

The more we abandon ourselves to beauty, the more do we depart from goodness. I know that in reply to this we are always told that beauty may be moral and spiritual, but that is only a play of words, because by moral or spiritual beauty nothing but goodness is meant. Spiritual beauty, or goodness, for the most part, not only does not coincide with what we generally understand under beauty, but is even opposed to it.

But as to truth, we can still less ascribe to this member of the imaginary triad either unity with goodness and beauty, or even any independent existence.

What we call truth is only a correspondence of the expression or definition of the subject with its essence, or with all men's universal comprehension of the subject. Now what is there in common between the concepts of beauty and truth on the one side, and of goodness on the other ?

The concepts of beauty and truth are not only not equal to that of goodness, not only do not form one essence with goodness, but even do not coincide with it.

Truth is the correspondence of the expression with the essence of the subject, and so is one of the means for the attainment of goodness, but truth is in itself neither goodness nor beauty, and does not even coincide with them.

Thus, for example, Socrates and Pascal, and many others, considered the cognition of truth about useless things incompatible with

goodness. But with beauty truth has even nothing in common, and is, for the most part, opposed to it, because truth, which generally dispels deception, destroys illusion, the chief condition of beauty.

And so the arbitrary union of these three incommensurable and mutually alien conceptions into one has served as the foundation of that remarkable theory according to which there was completely wiped out the distinction between good art, which conveys good sensations, and bad art, which conveys evil sensations ; and one of the lowest manifestations of art, the art for enjoyment only, – against which all the teachers of humanity have warned men, – began to be regarded as the very highest art. And art did not become that important work which it was destined to be, but an idle amusement for idle people.

#### VIII.

But if art is a human activity which has for its aim the conveyance to men of those highest and best sensations which men have attained, how could it have happened that humanity should have passed a certain, sufficiently long period of its life, – ever since people stopped believing in the church teaching and up to our time, – without this important activity, and should have been contented in its place with the insignificant activity of the art which affords only enjoyment?

In order to answer this question it is necessary first of all to correct a customary error which men make when they ascribe to our art the significance of a true universal art. We are so used naïvely to regard not only the Caucasian race as the very best race of men, but even only the Anglo-Saxon, if we are Englishmen or Americans, and the Germanic, if we are Germans, and the Gallo-Latin, if we are Frenchmen, and the Slavic, if we are Russians, that we, in speaking of our art, are fully convinced that our art is not only true, but even the best and only art, just as the Bible was regarded as the only book. But our art is not only not the only art, but is not even the art of the whole Christian humanity, but only the art of a very small division of this part of humanity. It was possible to talk of a national – Jewish, Greek, Egyptian – art, and now it is possible to speak of Chinese, Japanese, Hindoo art, which is common to the whole nation. Such art, common to the whole people, existed in Russia before Peter, and such also existed in the European societies of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries ; but from the time that the men of the higher classes of European society, having lost the faith in the church teaching, did not accept true Christianity, and remained without any faith, it is impossible to speak of the art of the higher classes of the Christian nations, meaning by it all art. Ever since the higher classes of the Christian nations lost their faith in the ecclesiastic Christianity, the art of the higher classes separated from the art of the whole people, and there grew up two arts : popular art and lordly art. And so the answer to the

question as to how it could have happened that humanity should have passed a certain period of time without true art, substituting for it an art which serves only for enjoyment, consists in this, that it is not all humanity, nor even a considerable part of it, but only the higher classes of the Christian European society, that has lived without true art, and that, too, for but a comparatively short period of time.

As the consequence of this absence of true art there took place what could not help but take place, – the corruption of that class which made use of this other art. All the complicated, incomprehensible theories of art, all the fallacious and contradictory judgments about it, and, above all else, that self-confident stagnation of our art on this false path, – all that is due to this assertion, which has entered into universal use and is accepted as undoubted truth, but is striking on account of its obvious fallacy, that the art of our higher classes is all art, the true and exclusively universal art. In spite of the fact that this assertion, which is quite identical with the assertions of religious people of various denominations who think that their religion is the one true religion, is quite arbitrary and obviously incorrect, it is calmly repeated by all the men of our circle, with full confidence in its infallibility.

The art which we possess is all the art, the true, the one art, but at the same time not only two-thirds of the human race, all the nations of Asia, of Africa, live and die without knowing this one, higher art, but, moreover, in our Christian society hardly one hundredth part of the men make use of that art which we call all art ; the other ninety-nine hundredths of our own European nations live and die for generations in tense labour, without ever tasting of this art, which, besides, is such that, even if they were able to make use of it, they would not understand anything about it. We, according to the Esthetics professed by us, acknowledge that art is either one of the highest manifestations of the Idea, God, Beauty, or the highest spiritual enjoyment ; besides, we acknowledge that all men have equal rights, if not to material, at least to spiritual goods, while in the meantime ninety-nine hundredths of our European people live and die generation after generation in tense labour, which is necessary for the production of our art, without making use of it, and yet we calmly assert that the art which we produced is real, true, one, all art.

In reply to the statement that if our art is true art, all the people ought to make use of it, we generally get the reply that if not all men at present enjoy the existing art, it is not the fault of art, but of the false structure of society ; that it is possible to imagine for the future that physical labour will be partly relegated to machines and partly lightened by its regular distribution, and that the labour for the production of art will alternate ; that there is no need for some to sit under the stage all the time, moving the scenery, to raise machines, to work the piano and French horns, and to set up and print books, but that those who do all this will be able to work a small number of hours a

day, and in their leisure to enjoy all the benefits of art.

Thus say the defenders of our exclusive art, but I think that they themselves do not believe in what they say because they cannot know that our refined art could have arisen on nothing but the work of the popular masses, and can be continued only so long as there shall be this slavery, and also this, that only under conditions of the tense labour of the workingmen, the specialists – authors, musicians, dancers, actors – can reach that refined degree of perfection, which they do reach, and by which they are able to produce their refined works of art, and that only under these conditions can there be a refined public which appreciates these productions. Free the slaves from capital, and it will be impossible to produce this refined art.

But even if we admit the inadmissible, that there can be found methods with which art – that which with us is considered to be art – will be enjoyed by all the people, there presents itself another consideration, according to which the modern art cannot be all art, and that is that it is entirely incomprehensible to the people. Formerly they used to write poetical productions in the Latin language ; but the modern productions of art are as incomprehensible to the people as if they were written in Sanscrit. In reply to this we are generally told that if the people do not now understand this our art, it only proves their insufficient development, and that precisely the same happened with every new step in art. At first it was not understood, and later the people got used to it.

" The same will happen with the modern art : it will be comprehensible when the whole people shall be as cultured as we are, we, the men of the higher classes, who produce art," say the defenders of our art. But this assertion is obviously even more incorrect than the first, because we know that the majority of the products of art of the higher classes, which, like all kinds of odes, epics, dramas, cantatas, pastorales, pictures, and so forth, delighted the men of the higher classes of their time, were later never understood, nor appreciated by the large masses, and remained, as they had been, the amusement of the rich of that time, and had a meaning only for them ; from this we may conclude that the same will happen with our art. But when, in proof of the fact that the masses will in time understand our art, they adduce that certain productions of the so-called classical poetry, music, art, which formerly did not please the masses, later, when they are offered to the masses on all sides, begin to please them, this proves only that the crowd, especially the city crowd, which is half-corrupted, could always be easily taught, by having its taste corrupted, any art you please. Besides, this art is not produced by this crowd of people, and is not chosen by it, but is forcibly obtruded upon it in those places in which art is accessible to it.

For the great majority of the whole labouring class our art, inaccessible to them on account of its costliness, is also foreign to them on account of its contents themselves, since it conveys the sensations of people who are removed from the conditions of a life

of labour, which are peculiar to the great majority of humanity. What forms an enjoyment for a man of the wealthy classes is, as an enjoyment, incomprehensible to the workingman, and does not evoke any sensation in him, or evokes sensations which are the very opposite to those which they evoke in an idle and satiated man. Thus, for example, the feelings of honour, patriotism, enamourment, which form the chief contents of modern art, evoke in a workingman nothing but perplexity and contempt, or indignation. Thus, even if the majority of the workingmen were given the chance, during the time which is free from labour, to see, read, hear, as is indeed partly the case in the cities, in picture-galleries, popular concerts, books, ever) 'thing which forms the flower of modern art, the workingmen, in so far as they are working people and have not yet partly passed into the class of people corrupted by idleness, would understand nothing of our refined art, and if they did, the greater part of what they understood would not only fail to elevate their souls, but would even corrupt them.

Thus there can be no doubt whatsoever for thinking and sincere men that the art of the higher classes can never become the art of the whole people ; and so, if art is an important matter, a spiritual good, indispensable for all men, like religion (as the devotees of art are fond of saying), it must be accessible to all men. And if it cannot become the art of the whole people, one of two things is true : either art is not that important matter which it is claimed to be, or the art which we call art is not this important matter.

This dilemma is not capable of solution, and so clever and immoral men boldly solve it by denying one side of it, namely, the right of the popular masses to enjoy art. These men express outright what is lying in the essence of the matter, namely this, that only the " scheme Geis-ter," the chosen ones, as the Romanticists called them, or the " Uebermenschen," as the followers of Nietzsche call them, may be participants and enjoyers of what, according to their conception, is highly beautiful, that is, of the highest enjoyment of art ; but all the others, the common herd, which is incapable of experiencing these enjoyments, must minister to the high enjoyments of this higher breed of men. The men who express such views are at least not feigning and do not wish to unite what cannot be united, and admit outright that which is, namely, that our art is only the art of the higher classes. Thus, in reality, art has been understood by all men who in our society busy themselves with art.

The unbelief of the higher classes of the European world has had this effect, that in place of that activity of art which had for its aim the conveyance of those higher sensations which result from the religious consciousness attained by humanity, there has come an activity which has for its aim the bestowal of the greatest enjoyment to a certain society of men. And from the whole enormous mass of art there was segregated and began to be called art what afforded enjoyment to the men of a certain circle.

Not to speak of those moral consequences which such a segregation from the whole sphere of art and the recognition as important art of

what did not deserve that valuation have had for European society, this distortion of art weakened and reduced almost to annihilation art itself. The first consequence of it was this, that art was deprived of its characteristic, infinitely varied, and profoundly religious contents. The second consequence was this, that, having in view nothing but a small circle of men, it lost the beauty of form, and became artificial and obscure ; and the third, the chief consequence, was, that it ceased being sincere and became fictitious and reasoned.

The first consequence – the impoverishment of contents– was achieved for the reason that a true product of art is only that which conveys new sensations, such as have not yet been experienced by men. As a product of thought is a product of thought only when it communicates new considerations and thoughts, and does not repeat what is known, even so a product of art is a product of art only when it introduces a new sensation (no matter how insignificant it may be) into the habitual course of human life. It is for this reason that the products of art are so strongly felt by children and youths, when they for the first time afford them sensations which they had not experienced before.

An entirely new, never before expressed sensation acts with the same force upon grown people. The art of the higher classes has deprived itself of this source of sensations, by valuing the sensations not in correspondence with the religious consciousness, but according to the degree of enjoyment which they afford. There is nothing more antiquated and trite than enjoyment, and nothing more new than sensations which arise on the religious consciousness of a certain time. Nor can it be otherwise : man's enjoyment has a limit which is put to it by his nature ; but the forward movement of humanity, that which is expressed by the religious consciousness, has no limitation. With every step in advance which humanity makes,– and these steps are achieved through an ever greater and greater elucidation of the religious consciousness, – men experience all the time new sensations. And so only on the basis of religious consciousness, which shows the highest degree of men's comprehension of life at a certain period, can there arise new sensations, such as have never before been experienced by men. From the religious consciousness of the ancient Greek there resulted actually new and important and infinitely varied sensations for the Greeks, which were expressed by Homer and by the tragic authors. The same was true of the Jew, who rose to the religious consciousness of monotheism. From this consciousness resulted all those new and important sensations which were expressed by the prophets. The same was true of the man of the Middle Ages, who believed in the ecclesiastic commune and the celestial hierarchy ; and the same is true of the man of our time, who has attained to the religious consciousness of true Christianity, – the consciousness of the brotherhood of men.

The diversity of feelings which result from the religious consciousness is infinite, and they are all new, because the religious consciousness is nothing but an indication of a new relation of man to the world in the process of creation, whereas the

sensations which arise from the desire to enjoy oneself are not only limited, but were long ago explored and expressed. And so the unbelief of our higher European classes has led them to an art which is exceedingly poor in contents.

The impoverishment of the contents of the art of the higher classes has increased even through this, that, ceasing to be religious, the art has ceased to be national, and so has still more diminished the circle of sensations which it has conveyed, since the circle of sensations which the ruling people, the rich who do not know the labour of supporting life, experience is much smaller, poorer, and more insignificant than that of the sensations characteristic of the labouring people.

The men of our circle, the æstheticians, generally think and say the opposite. I remember how the author Gon-chardv, a clever, cultured, but absolutely urban man, an æsthetician, told me that after Turgénev's Memoirs of a Hunter there was nothing left to write about from the life of the people. Everything was exhausted. The life of the labouring people seemed to him so simple that after Turgénev's popular tales there was nothing left to describe from it. But the life of the wealthy people, with its enamourment and self-discontent, seemed to him to be full of endless contents. One hero kissed his lady's palm, another her elbow, a third kissed a lady in some other way. One pines away from idleness, another, because he is not loved. And it seemed to him that in this sphere there was no end to the variety. And this opinion, that the life of the labouring classes is poor in contents, while our life, that of idle men, is full of interest, is shared by many people of our circle. The life of the workingman, with its endlessly varied forms of labour and its perils underground and on the sea, which are connected with it, with his travels, with his intercourse with masters, the authorities, companions, and men of other religions and nationalities, with his struggle with Nature and wild animals, with his relations to domestic animals, with his work in the forest, the steppe, the field, the garden, with his relations to his wife and his children, not only as near and beloved people, but also as colabourers, helpers, and substitutes in work, with his relations to all the economic questions, not as subjects of sophistry and ambition, but as questions of life for himself and his family, with his pride of contentment and service of men, with his enjoyments of rest, with all these interests permeated by the religious relation to these phenomena, – appears to us, who have not these interests and no religious comprehension, as monotonous in comparison with those petty enjoyments, insignificant cares of our life, not of labour, nor of creation, but of exploiting and destroying that which others have done for us. We think that the sensations which are experienced by the men of our time and circle are very important and varied, whereas, in reality, nearly all the sensations of the men of our circle reduce themselves to three very insignificant and uncomplicated sensations, – to the sensation of pride, of sexual lust, and of the dejection of spirits. These three sensations and their ramifications form almost the exclusive contents of the art of the wealthy classes.

Formerly, in the very beginning of the segregation of the exclusive art of the higher classes from popular art, the sentiment of pride was the chief contents of art. Thus it was during the time of the renaissance and after it, when the chief subject of the products of art was the laudation of the mighty, – the Popes, the kings, the dukes. They wrote madrigals, which lauded the mighty, cantatas, hymns ; they painted their portraits and sculptured their statues in all kinds of forms which glorified them. Then art began more and more to be invaded by the element of sexual lust, which now became an indispensable condition of every production of the art of the wealthy classes (with exceedingly few exceptions, and in novels and dramas without exception).

Later on, a third sensation, which forms the contents of the art of the wealthy classes, namely, the sensation of despondency, entered among the number of sensations expressed by art. This sensation was in the beginning of this century expressed only by exclusive men, Byron, Leopardi, then Heine, but of late it has become fashionable and is being expressed by the coarsest and commonest of men. The French critic Doumic says quite correctly that the chief character of the productions of the new writers, " c'est la lassitude de vivre, le mépris de l'époque présente, le regret d'un autre temps aperçu à travers l'illusion de l'art, le goût du paradoxe, le besoin de se singulariser, une aspiration de raffinés vers la simplicité, l'adoration enfantine du merveilleux, la séduction malade de la rêverie, l'ébranlement des nerfs, surtout l'appel exaspéré de la sensualité " (Les jeunes, by René Doumic). And, indeed, of these three sensations, sensuality, as the lowest of sensations, accessible not only to men, but also to all animals, forms the chief subject of all the productions of art of modern times.

From Boccaccio to Marcel Prévost, all the novels and poetic productions are sure to express the sensations of sexual love in its various forms. –Adultery is not only the favourite, but even the only theme of all novels. A performance is not a performance if in it there do not, under some pretext, appear women who are nude above or below. Romances, songs, – all these are expressions of lust in various stages of poetization.

The majority of the pictures of the French artists represent feminine nudity in its various forms. In modern French literature there is hardly a page or a poem in which there is not a description of nudity, and in which the fond concept and word " nu " is not used at least twice. There is a writer, René de Gourmont, who is considered talented, and whose works are printed. In order to have an idea about the modern authors, I read his novel, Les chevaux de Diomede. It is through and through a detailed description of sexual intercourses which a certain gentleman had with a number of women. There is not a page without descriptions that fan lust. The same is true of a book which had success, by Pierre Louis, Aphrodite ; the same – of a book which lately fell into my hands, by Huysmans, Certains, which was to be a criticism of painters; the same, with very rare exceptions, of all French novels. They are all productions

of people suffering from an erotic mania. These men are evidently convinced that, since their whole life is, in consequence of their morbid condition, centred on expatiating on sexual abominations, the whole life of the world is centred on the same. And it is these men who are suffering from the erotic mania that the whole artistic world of Europe and of America is imitating.

Thus, in consequence of the unbelief and the exclusiveness of the life of the wealthy classes, the art of these classes has become impoverished in contents and has all reduced itself to the expression of the sensations of vanity, of despondency, and, above all, of sexual lust.

X.

In consequence of the unbelief of the higher classes, the art of these men has become poor in contents. Besides, becoming more and more exclusive, it has at the same time become more and more complex, artificial, and obscure.

When a national artist, – such as were the Greek artists and the Jewish prophets, – composed his production, he naturally tried to say what he had to say, so that his production might be understood by all men. But when the artist composed for a small circle of men, who were under exclusive conditions, or even for one person and his courtiers, for the Pope, the cardinal, the king, the duke, the queen, the king's paramour, he naturally had nothing else in view but producing an effect upon these men he knew, who lived under definite conditions with which he was acquainted. This easier method of evoking sensations involuntarily drew the artist to expressing himself in hints which were obscure to all and comprehensible only to the initiated. In the first place, in such a way it was possible to say more, and in the second, such a mode of expression included a certain charm of haziness for the initiated. This method of expression, which is shown in euphemism, in mythological and historical allusions, has entered more and more into use, and of late has reached what seems to be the extreme limits in the art of so-called decadence. Of late, it is not only the haziness, enigmaticalness, obscurity, and incomprehensibility for the masses, but also the inexactness, indefiniteness, and absence of style that are regarded as an advantage and a condition of the poetic quality of the subjects of art.

Théophile Gautier, in his introduction to the famous *Fleurs du Mai*, says that Baudelaire did his best to drive out of poetry eloquence, passion, and truth, too well represented, " l'éloquence, la passion, et la vérité calquée trop exactement."

And Baudelaire not only gave utterance to this, but also proved it by his verses, and still more by his prose in his *Petits poèmes en*

prose, the meaning of which one has to guess like rebuses, and the majority of which are left unsolved.

The next poet after Baudelaire, who is also considered great, Verlaine, even wrote a whole *Art poétique*, in which he advises men to write as follows :

" De la musique avant toute chose, Et pour cela préfère l'impair  
Plus vague et plus soluble dans l'air, Sans rien en lui qui pèse ou  
qui pose.

" Il faut aussi que tu n'aïlle point

Choisir tes mots sans quelque méprise: Rien de plus cher que la  
chanson grise Où l'indécis au Précis se joint."

And farther:

« De la musique encore et toujours,

Que ton vers soit la chose envolée, Qu'on sente qu'il fuit d'une âme  
en allée Vers d'autres deux à d'autres amours.

« Que ton vers soit la bonne aventure Eparsé au vent crispé du  
matin, Qui va fleurant la menthe et le thym . . . Et tout le reste  
est littérature."

The next after these two, the poet Mallarmé, who is considered the most prominent of the younger poets, says distinctly that the charm of a poem consists in guessing its meaning, and that in poetry there must always be an enigma :

"Je pense qu'il faut qu'il n'y ait qu'allusion. La contemplation des  
objets, l'image s'envolant des rêveries suscitées par eux, sont le  
chant : les Parnassiens, eux, prennent la chose entièrement et la  
montrent; par là ils manquent de mystère; ils retirent aux esprits  
cette joie délicieuse de croire qu'ils créent. Nommer un objet,  
c'est supprimer les trois quarts de la jouissance du poète qui est  
faite du bonheur de deviner peu à peu ; le suggérer – voilà le rêve.  
C'est le parfait usage de ce mystère qui constitue le symbole :  
évoquer petit à petit un objet pour montrer un état d'âme, ou  
inversement, choisir un objet et en dégager un état d'âme par une  
série de déchiffrements.

" Si un être d'une intelligence moyenne et d'une préparation  
littéraire insuffisante ouvre par hasard un livre ainsi fait et  
prétend en jouir, il y a malentendu, il faut remettre les choses à  
leur place. Il doit y avoir toujours énigme en poésie, et c'est le  
but de la littérature; il n'y en a pas d'autre, – d'évoquer les  
objets" (*Enquête sur révolution littéraire*, Jules Huret, pp. 60-61).

Thus obscurity is among the modern poets raised to a dogma, as the French critic Doumic, who does not yet recognize the truth of this dogma, remarks quite correctly.

" Il serait temps aussi de finir," – he says, – " avec cette fameuse théorie de l'obscurité que la nouvelle école a élevée en effet à la hauteur d'un dogme " (Les jeunes, études et portraits par René Doumic).

And it is not only the French writers who think so.

So think and act the poets of all other nationalities, – the Germans, Scandinavians, Italians, Russians, English; so think all the artists of modern times in all branches of art, – in painting, in sculpture, in music. Learning on Nietzsche and Wagner, the artists of modern times assume that they need not be understood by the rude masses, – that it is enough for them to evoke poetical conditions in the "best nurtured men," as the English æsthetician says.

In order that what I say may not appear bold, I will quote here at least a few samples of French poets who have led in this movement. The name of these poets is legion.

I have chosen the modern French authors, because they more glaringly than any others express the new tendency in art, and because the majority of the Europeans imitate them.

Besides those whose names are considered famous, such as Baudelaire and Verlaine, I give here a few names of these poets : Jean Moréas, Charles Maurice, Henri de Régnier, Charles Vignier, Adrien Romaille, René Ghil, Maurice Maeterlinck, C. Albert Aurier, René de Gourmont, St. Paul, Roux le Magnifique, Georges Rodenbach, le Comte Robert de Montesquiou-Fézansac. These are symbolists and decadents. Then come the magi : Joséphin Peladan, Paul Adam, Jules Bois, M. Papus, and so forth.

Besides these, there are 141 other poets counted out by Doumic in his book.

Here are samples from those of the poets who are considered to be the best. I begin with the most famous, Baudelaire, who is recognized to be a great man, worthy of a monument. Here, for example, is his poem from his famous *Fleurs du Mai* :

" Je t'adore à l'égal de la voûte nocturne, O vase de tristesse, ô grande taciturne, Et t'aime d'autant plus, belle, que tu me fuis, Et que tu me parais, ornement de mes nuits, Plus ironiquement accumuler les lieues, Qui séparent mes bras des immensités bleues. Je m'avance à l'attaque, et je grimpe aux assauts, Comme après un cadavre un chœur de vermisseaux. Et je chéris, ô bête implacable et cruelle !

Jusqu'à cette froideur par où tu m'es plus belle ! "

Here is another, by the same Baudelaire :

" DUELLUM

" Deux guerriers ont couru l'un sur l'autre ; leurs armes ont éclaboussé l'air de leurs et de sang.

– Ces jeux, ces cliquetis du fer sont les vacarmes d'une jeunesse en proie à l'amour vagissant.

" Les glaives sont brisés ! comme notre Jeunesse,

Ma chère I Mais les dents, les ongles acérés, Vengent bientôt l'épée et la dague traîtresse.

– O fureur des cœurs mûrs par l'amour ulcérés!

" Dans le ravin hanté des chats-pards et des onces, Nos héros, s'étreignant méchamment, ont roulé, Et leur peau fleurira l'aridité des ronces.

" – Ce gouffre, c'est l'enfer, de nos amis peuplé 1 Roulons y sans remords, amazone inhumaine, Afin d'éterniser l'ardeur de notre haine ! "

To be exact, I must say that in the collected volume there are some poems which are less incomprehensible, but there is not one that is simple or that could be understood without some effort, – an effort which is seldom rewarded, since the sentiments expressed by the poet are bad and very low.

These sentiments are intentionally always expressed in an original and insipid manner. This intentional obscurity is particularly noticeable in prose, where the author might have spoken simply, if he had so wished.

Here, for example, from his *Petits poèmes en prose*, is the first piece " *L'étranger*."

" *l'étranger*

« « Qui aimes-tu le mieux, homme énigmatique, des: ton père, ta mère, ton frère ou ta sœur? '

« « Je n'ai ni père, ni mère, ni sœur, ni frère.'

" < Tes amis? ' "

« 'Vous vous servez là d'une parole dont le sens m'est resté jusqu'à ce jour inconnu.'

" « Ta patrie ? ' "

" 'J'ignore sous quelle latitude elle est située.'

« ' La beauté ? ' "

« « Je l'aimerais volontiers, déesse et immortelle.'

" » L'or ? '

« 'Je le hais, comme vous haïssez Dieu.'

" ' Eh I qu'aimes tu donc, extraordinaire étranger?'

« ' J'aime les nuages ... les nuages qui passent . . . là-bas ... les merveilleux nuages !...'"

The piece, " La soupe et les nuages," is no doubt intended to express the poet's incomprehensibility even by her whom he loves. Here it is :

" Ma petite folle bien-aimée me donnait à diner, et par la fenêtre ouverte de la salle à manger je contemplais les mouvantes architectures que Dieu fait avec les vapeurs, les merveilleuses constructions de l'impalpable. Et je me disais à travers ma contemplation : ' Toutes ces fantasmagories sont presque aussi belles que les yeux de ma belle bien-aimée, la petite folle monstrueuse aux yeux verts.'

" Et tout-à-coup je reçus un violent coup de poing dans le dos, et j'entendis une voix rauque et charmante, une voix hystérique et comme enrouée par l'eau de vie, la voix de ma chère petite bien-aimée, qui disait : ' Allez-vous bientôt manger votre soupe, s---- b----de marchand de nuages ? \* "

However artificial this production may be, it is possible with some effort to guess what it is the poet meant to convey by it; but there are some pieces which are entirely incomprehensible, at least for me.

Here, for example, is " Le galant tireur," the meaning of which I was not able to grasp completely :

" LE GALANT TIREUR

" Comme la voiture traversait le bois, il la fit arrêter dans le voisinage d'un tir, disant qu'il lui serait agréable de tirer quelques balles pour tuer le Temps.

" Tuer ce monstre-là, n'est-ce pas l'occupation la plus ordinaire et la plus légitime de chacun?— Et il offrit galamment la main à sa chère, délicieuse et exécrationnelle femme, à cette mystérieuse femme, à laquelle il doit tant de plaisirs, tant de douleurs, et peut-être aussi une grande partie de son génie.

" Plusieurs balles frappèrent loin du but proposé : l'une d'elles s'enfonça même dans la plafond ; et comme la charmante créature riait follement, se moquant de la maladresse de son époux, celui-ci se tourna brusquement vers elle, et lui dit : ' Observez cette poupée, là-bas, à droite, qui porte le nez en l'air et qui a la mine si hautaine. Eh bien I cher ange, je me figure que c'est vous.' Et

il ferma les yeux et il lâcha la détente. La poupée fut nettement décapitée.

“ Alors s’inclinant vers sa chère, sa délicieuse, son exécrationnelle femme, son inévitable et impitoyable Muse, et lui baisant respectueusement la main, il ajouta :

“ Ah, mon cher ange, combien je vous remercie de mon adresse I ’ ”

The productions of another celebrity, Verlaine, are not less artificial and not less incomprehensible. Here, for example, is the first from the division of " Ariettes oubliées."

Here is the first ariette :

« « Le vent dans la plaine Suspend son haleine ' (Favart).

" C'est l'extase langoureuse, C'est la fatigue amoureuse, C'est tous les frissons des bois Parmi l'étreinte des brises, C'est vers les ramures grises, Le chœur des petites voix. O le frêle et frais murmure ! Cela gazouille et susure, Cela ressemble au cri doux Que l'herbe agitée expire . . . Tu dirais, sous l'eau qui vire, Le roulis sourd des cailloux. Cette âme qui se lamente En cette plainte dormante,

C'est la nôtre, n'est-ce pas ? La mienne, dis, et la tienne, Dont s'exhale l'humble antienne Par ce tiède soir, tout bas."

What is this " chœur des petits voix " ? And what is " cri doux l'herbe agitée expire " ? And it remains absolutely incomprehensible to me what meaning the whole may have.

Here is another ariette :

" Dans l'interminable Ennui de la plaine, La neige incertaine Luit comme du sable. Le ciel est de cuivre, Sans lueur aucune. On croirait voir vivre Et mourir la lune. Comme des nuées Flottent gris les chênes Des forêts prochaines Parmi les buées. Ce ciel est de cuivre, Sans lueur aucune. On croirait voir vivre Et mourir la lune. Corneille poussive Et vous, les loups maigres, Par ces bises aigres, Quoi donc vous arrive ? Dans interminable Ennui de la plaine, La neige incertaine Luit comme du sable."

How does the moon live and die in the copper sky, and how does the snow shine like sand ? All this is not only incomprehensible, but, under the pretext of conveying a mood, a compilation of inexact comparisons and words.

Besides these artificial and obscure poems, there are some that are comprehensible, but very bad in form and contents. Such are all the poems under the title of " La sagesse." In these poems the largest space is occupied by very poor expressions of the tritest of Catholic and patriotic sentiments. In them there are, for example, such stanzas :

“ Jo ne veux plus penser qu'à ma mère Marie, Siège de la sagesse et source de pardons, Mère de France aussi de qui nous attendons, Inébranlablement l'honneur de la patrie.”

Before quoting examples from other poets, I cannot refrain from dwelling on the remarkable fame of these two poets, Baudelaire and Verlaine, who are now acknowledged to be great poets. How could the French, who had a Chenier, Musset, Lamartine, and, above all, a Hugo, who but lately had so-called Parnassians, Leconte de Lisle, Sully-Prud'homme, and others, have ascribed such meaning to these two versifiers and consider them to be great poets, who are very inartistic in form and very low and trite as to their contents? The world conception of the one, Baudelaire, consists in raising coarse egoism to a theory, and putting in the place of morality the concept of beauty, which is as indefinite as the clouds, a beauty which has by all means to be artificial. Baudelaire prefers a woman's painted face to the natural, and metallic trees and the theatrical imitation of water to the natural.

The world conception of the other poet, Verlaine, consists in a limp laxity of morals, the recognition of his moral impotence, and, as a salvation from this impotence, the coarsest Catholic idolatry. Both are at the same time not only deprived of naïveté, sincerity, and simplicity, but also full of artificiality, striving after originality, and self-conceit. Thus one sees, in their less bad productions, more of Mr. Baudelaire or Mr. Verlaine than what they represent. And these two bad versifiers form a school and lead after them hundreds of followers.

There is but one explanation of this phenomenon: it is this, that the art of that society in which these versifiers are active is not a serious, important matter of life, but only play. But every play grows tiresome with every repetition. In order to make a tiresome game again possible, it is necessary to renovate it: if boston is tiresome, they invent whist; if whist is tiresome, they invent preference; if preference is tiresome, they invent something new, and so on. The essence of the thing remains the same, but the form changes. Even so it is in this art: its contents, becoming more and more limited, have finally reached such a stage that it seems to the artists of these exclusive classes that everything has been said and nothing new can be said. And so, in order to renovate this art, they seek for new forms.

Baudelaire and Verlaine invent a new form and, in addition, renovate it by heretofore unused pornographic details. And the critique and the public of the higher classes recognize them as great writers.

Only in this way can we explain the success, not only of Baudelaire and Verlaine, but also of all the decadents.

There are, for example, some poems of Mallarmé and Maeterlinck which have no meaning whatever, and, in spite of it, or, perhaps, in consequence of it, are printed not only in tens of thousands of

separate editions, but also in the collections of the best productions of the young poets.

Here, for example, is a sonnet by Mallarmé (Pan, 1895, No. 1):

“ A la nue accablante tu

Basse de basalte et de laves A même les échos esclaves Par une trompe sans vertu. Quel sépulcral naufrage (tu Le soir, écume, mais y brave)

Suprême une entre les épaves Abolit le mât dévêtu.

Ou cela que furibond faute De quelque perdition haute, Tout l'abime vain éployé Dans le si blanc cheveu qui traîne Avarement aura noyé Le flanc enfant d'une sirène.”

This poem is not an exception for its incomprehensibility. I have read several poems by Mallarmé. They are all equally deprived of all sense.

Here is a sample of another famous contemporary poet, a song by Maeterlinck. I copy it also from the periodical Pan, 1895, No. 2.

“ Quand il est sorti (J'entendis la porte) Quand il est sorti Elle avait souri.

Mais quand il rentra (J'entendis la lampe) Mais quand il rentra Une autre était là . . . Et j'ai vu la mort (J'entendis son âme) Et j'ai vu la mort Qui l'attend encore . . . On est venu dire (Mon enfant, j'ai peur) On est venu dire Qu'il allait partir . . . Ma lampe allumée (Mon enfant, j'ai peur) Ma lampe allumée Me suis approchée . . . A la première porte (Mon enfant, j'ai peur) A la première porte, La flamme a tremblé . . . A la seconde porte (Mon enfant, j'ai peur) A la seconde porte, La flamme a parlé . . . A la troisième porte (Lion enfant, j'ai peur) A la troisième porte, La lumière est morte . . . Et s'il revenait un jour Que faut-il lui dire ? Dites lui qu'on l'attendit Jusqu'à s'en mourir . . . Et s'il interroge encore Sans me reconnaître, Parlez lui comme une sœur, Il souffre peut-être . . .

Et s'il demande où vous êtes Que faut-il répondre?

Donnez lui mon anneau d'or Sans rien lui répondre . . . Et s'il veut savoir pourquoi La salle est déserte?

Montrez lui la lampe éteinte Et la porte ouverte . . . Et s'il m'interroge alors Sur la dernière heure ? Dites lui que j'ai souri De peur qu'il ne pleure . . .

Who went out, who came, who told, who died ?

I beg the reader to take the trouble to read what I copied in Appendix I., – the specimens from the better known and esteemed

young poets, – Griffin, Régnier, Moréas, and Montesquiou. This is necessary in order to form a clear conception of the present condition of art, and not to think, as many do, that the decadence is an accidental, temporary phenomenon.

In order to avoid a reproach of having chosen the worst poems, I copied from all these books such poems as were found on page 28.

All the poems of these poets are equally incomprehensible, or comprehensible only with great effort and then not fully.

Of the same kind are all the productions of those hundreds of poets from whom I have quoted a few names. Similar poems are printed by the Germans, the Scandinavians, the Italians, and us Russians. Of such productions there are printed and distributed, if not millions, at least hundreds of thousands of copies (some of them are sold by the ten thousand). For the setting up, printing, composition, binding of these books, millions are wasted, and millions of work-days, I think not less than was spent on building the great pyramid. But that is not all : the same takes place in all other arts, and millions of work-days are wasted on the productions of similarly incomprehensible subjects in painting, music, and the drama.

Painting not only does not fall behind poetry in this, but even precedes it. Here is an extract from a diary of a lover of painting, who in 1894 visited the Paris exhibitions :

“ I was to-day at three exhibitions, – of the symbolists, impressionists, and neo-impressionists. I looked conscientiously and carefully at the pictures, but again the same perplexity and finally indignation. The first exhibition by Camille Pissaro is the most comprehensible, though there is no drawing, no contents, and the colouring is most improbable. The drawing is so indefinite that at times it is hard to make out which way a hand or a head is turned. The contents are for the most part ‘ effets.’ Effet'de brouillard, Effet du soir, Soleil couchant. A few pictures were with figures, but without any subject.

“ In the colouring there predominates the bright blue and bright green. In each painting there is a fundamental tone with which the whole picture seems to be bespattered. For example, in a shepherdess watching the geese, the fundamental tone is ‘ vert de gris,’ and everywhere there occur little blots of this colour, on the face, the hair, the hands, the dress. In the same gallery < Durand Ruel ’ other paintings are by Puvis de Chavannes, Manet, Monet, Renoir, Sisley, – all of them impressionists. One of them, – I did not make out the name, – it was something like Redon, – painted a blue face in profile. In the whole face there is nothing but this blue tone with white in it. Pissaro’s water-colour is all made in dots. In the foreground a cow is all painted in many-coloured dots. It is impossible to catch the general tone, no matter how far you recede or approach it.

“ From there I went to see the symbolists. I looked for a long time,

asking nobody about them, and trying to guess myself what it was all about, – but that is above human reason. One of the first things that attracted my attention was a wooden haut-relief, monstrously executed, representing a (naked) woman, who with both her hands is pressing two streams of blood out of her teats. The blood flows down and passes into lilac-coloured flowers. The hair is at first falling down, then rises, when it is changed into trees. The statue is painted solid yellow, the hair – brown.

" Then a picture : a yellow sea, – on it sails something like a ship, or a heart, – on the horizon is a profile with an aureole and with yellow hair, which passes into the sea and is lost in it. The paint is on some pictures put on so thick that the result is something intermediate between painting and sculpture. The third is still less comprehensible : a male profile, in front of it a flame and black streaks, – leeches, as I was told later. Finally I asked a gentleman who was there what it meant, and he explained to me that the statue was a symbol, that it represented ' La terre ; ' the sailing heart in the yellow sea was ' Illusion perdue,' and the gentleman with the leeches ' Le mal.' There are here also some impressionist pictures : primitive profiles with some kind of flower in their hands, – of one tone, not painted, and either absolutely indefinite or surrounded by a broad black contour."

That was in the year 1894 ; now this tendency has been more strongly defined : Rocklin, Stuck, Klinger, Sàsha Schneider, and others.

The same is taking place in the drama. They either represent an architect, who for some reason has not fulfilled his former high resolves and in consequence of this climbs on the roof of a house built by him and from there flies down headlong ; or some incomprehensible old woman, who raises rats and for some unknown reason takes a poetic child to the sea and there drowns it ; or some blind people, who, sitting at the seashore, for some reason all the time repeat one and the same thing; or a bell, which flies into a lake and there keeps ringing.

The same takes place in music, in that art which, it would seem, ought to be more than any other comprehensible to all alike.

A musician whom you know and who enjoys a reputation sits down at the piano and plays for you, as he says, a new production of his own or of a new artist. You hear strange loud sounds, and marvel at the gymnastic exercises of his fingers, and see clearly that the composer wishes to impress you with the idea that the sounds produced by him are poetical strivings of the soul. You see his intention, but no other sensation than ennui is communicated to you. The performance lasts long, or, at least, you think that it lasts very long, since you, receiving no clear impression, involuntarily think of A. Karr's words : " Plus ça va vite, plus ça dure longtemps." And it occurs to you that this may be a mystification, that the performer is trying you, whirling his hands and fingers over the keys, in the hope that you will be caught and will praise, while he will laugh and confess that he has been trying you. But

when it is at last finished, and the perspiring and agitated musician, evidently expecting praise, gets up from the piano, you see that all this was in earnest.

The same takes place at all concerts with the productions of Liszt, Wagner, Berlioz, Brahms, and the modern Richard Strauss, and an endless number of others, who compose uninterruptedly one after another operas and symphonies.

The same takes place in the sphere where, it would seem, it is hard to be incomprehensible, – in the sphere of the novel and the story.

You read Huysmans' *Là bas*, or Kipling's stories, or Villier de ITsle Adam's *L'annonciateur* from his *Contes cruels*, and so forth, and all this is for you not only "abscons" (a new word of the new writers), but completely incomprehensible, both in form and in contents. Such, for example, is E. Morel's novel, *Terre Promise*, which has just appeared in the *Revue blanche*, and also the majority of the modern novels: the style is flowery, the sentiments seem to be elevated, but it is absolutely impossible to understand how, when, and to whom things happen.

Such is all the young art of our time.

The men of the first part of our century, the appreciates of Goethe, Schiller, Musset, Hugo, Dickens, Beethoven, Chopin, Raphael, Vinci, Michelangelo, Delaroche, who cannot make out anything in this latest art, frequently consider the productions of this art to be downright tasteless madness, and want to ignore it. But such a relation to modern art is quite unfounded, because, in the first place, this art is being disseminated more and more and has already conquered for itself a firm place in society, such as romanticism conquered in the thirties; in the second place, and chiefly, because, if it is possible to judge thus of the productions of the later, the decadent art because we do not understand it, there is an enormous number of men, – all the working people, and many who are not working people, – who similarly do not understand those productions of art which we consider beautiful, – the poetry of our favourite artists, Goethe, Schiller, Hugo, the novels of Dickens, the music of Beethoven and Chopin, the paintings of Raphael, Michelangelo, Vinci, and others.

If I have the right to think that large masses of people do not understand and do not like what I indubitably recognize as good, because they are not sufficiently developed, I have not the right to deny even this, that possibly I do not understand and like the new productions of art only because I am not sufficiently developed in order to understand them. But if I have the right to say that, with the majority of men sharing my views, I do not understand the productions of modern art, only because there is nothing in them to understand and because it is bad art, then a still greater majority, the whole mass of the working people, who do not understand what I regard as beautiful art, may say with precisely the same right that what I consider to be good art is bad art, and that there is nothing in it to understand.

I saw with peculiar clearness the injustice of condemning the modern art, when once a poet, who composed incomprehensible verses, at one time in my presence with merry self-confidence made fun of incomprehensible music, and soon after this a musician, who composed incomprehensible symphonies, with the same self-confidence made fun of incomprehensible verses. I have not the right, and I am not able, to condemn modern art, because I, a man educated in the first half of the century, do not understand it ; all I can say is that it is incomprehensible to me. The only superiority of the art which I acknowledge over the decadent art consists in this, that the art which I acknowledge is comprehensible to a somewhat larger number of men than the modern.

Because I am used to a certain exclusive art and understand it, but do not understand a more exclusive art, I have no right whatsoever to conclude that this, my art, is the true one, and the one I do not understand is not true, but bad ; from this I can conclude only this, that art, becoming more and more exclusive, has become more and more incomprehensible for an ever growing number of men, in this its movement toward a greater and ever greater incomprehensibility, on one of the steps of which I find myself with my customary art, and has reached a point where it is understood by the smallest number of the elect, and the number of these elect is growing smaller and smaller.

As soon as the art of the higher classes segregated itself from the popular art, there appeared the conviction that art may be art and at the same time incomprehensible to the masses. The moment this supposition was admitted, it had to be inevitably admitted that art may be comprehensible only for a very small number of the elect and, finally, only for two or one, - one's own best friend, oneself. This is precisely what the modern artists say : " I create, and understand myself, and if some one does not understand me, so much the worse for him."

The assertion that art may be good art, and yet be incomprehensible to a great majority of men, is to such a degree incorrect, its consequences are to such a degree pernicious for art, and, at the same time, it is so diffused, has so corroded our conception, that it is impossible sufficiently to elucidate its whole incompatibility.

There is nothing more common than to hear of supposed productions of art that they are very good, but that it is hard to understand them. We have become accustomed to such an assertion, and yet, to say that a production of art is good, but not comprehensible, is the same as to say of a certain food that it is very good, but that men cannot eat it. People may dislike rotten cheese, decaying partridges, and so forth, food which is esteemed by gastronomers with a corrupt taste, but bread and fruit are good only when people like them. The same is true of art:

corrupted art may be comprehensible to men, but good art is always

comprehensible to all men.

They say that the very best productions of art are such as cannot be understood by the majority and are accessible only to the elect, who are prepared for the comprehension of these great productions. But if the majority do not understand, it is necessary to explain to them, to convey to them that knowledge which is necessary for comprehension. But it turns out that there is no such knowledge and that it is impossible to explain the productions, and so those who say that the majority do not understand the good productions of art do not give any explanations, but say that in order to understand, it is necessary to read, to see, to hear the same productions again and again. But this does not mean explaining, but training, and people may be trained for the very worst. As men may be trained to eat decayed food, to use whiskey, tobacco, or opium, so they can be trained for bad art, which is actually being done.

Besides, we cannot say that the majority of men have no taste for the appreciation of the highest productions of art. The majority of men have always understood what we consider to be the highest art ; the artistically simple stories of the Bible, the parables of the Gospel, the national legends, the fairy-tales, the popular songs, are understood by everybody. Why have the masses suddenly been deprived of the ability to understand what is high in our art ?

Of a speech we may say that it is beautiful, but incomprehensible to those who do not know the language in which it is enunciated. A speech made in Chinese may be beautiful and still remain incomprehensible to me, if I do not know Chinese ; but a production of art is distinguished from any other spiritual activity by this very fact, that its language is comprehensible to all, that it infects all without distinction. The tears, the laughter, of a Chinaman will infect me as much as the laughter and the tears of a Russian, just like painting and music and a poetical production, if it is translated into a language which I understand. The song of a Kirgiz and a Japanese moves me, though more feebly than it touches the Kirgiz or Japanese. Similarly am I affected by Japanese painting and Hindoo architecture and an Arabian fable. If I am little moved by a Japanese song and a Chinese novel, it is not because I do not understand these productions, but because I know and am trained to higher subjects of art, and not because this art is too high for me. Great subjects of art are great for this very reason, that they are accessible and comprehensible to all. The story of Joseph, translated into Chinese, affects the Chinese. The story of Sakya Muni affects us. The same is true of buildings, pictures, statues, music. And so, if some art does not move us, we cannot say that this is due to the hearer's and spectator's lack of comprehension, but must conclude from this that it is bad art, or no art at all.

Art differs from a reasoning activity demanding preparation and a certain consecutiveness of knowledge (thus it is impossible to teach a man trigonometry if he does not know geometry) in that art acts upon men independently of their degree of development and education, in that the charm of a picture, of sounds, of images, infects every

man, no matter at what stage of development he may be.

The business of art consists in making comprehensible and accessible what in the form of reasoning may remain incomprehensible and inaccessible. VAs a rule, in receiving a truly artistic impression the person so impressed imagines that he knew that before, but was unable to express it. [

And Such the highest art has always been : the Iliad, the Odyssey, the history of Jacob, Isaac, Joseph, the Jewish prophets, the psalms, the Gospel parables, the story of Sakya Muni, and the Vedic hymns, all these convey very elevated sentiments, and, in spite of this, are quite comprehensible at the present time to us, the cultured and the uncultured, and were comprehensible to the men of that time, who were even less enlightened than the working people of our day. They talk of the incomprehensibility. But if art is a conveyance of sentiments which result from the religious consciousness of men, how can a sentiment be incomprehensible if it is based on religion, that is, on the relation of man to God ? Such art must have been, and in reality has been, at all times comprehensible, because the relation of every man to God is one and the same. And so the temples and the images and the singing in them has always been comprehensible to all men. An obstacle to the comprehension of the highest, the best sentiments, as it says in the Gospel, is by no means in a lack of development and teaching, but, on the contrary, in a false development and a false teaching. A good and high artistic production may indeed be incomprehensible, but not to simple, uncorrupted working people (to them everything which is very high is comprehensible) ; a truly artistic production may be, and frequently is, incomprehensible to overlearned, corrupted men, who are deprived of religion, as all the time takes place in our society, where the highest religious sentiments are directly incomprehensible to men. I know, for example, some men who consider themselves extremely refined and who say that they do not understand the poetry of love for their neighbour and of selfsacrifice,- that they do not understand the poetry of chastity.

Thus good, great, universal, religious art may be incomprehensible only to a small circle of corrupted men, and not the contrary.

The reason why art cannot be incomprehensible to the masses is not because it is very good, as the artists of our time are fond of saying. It would be more correct to suppose that art is incomprehensible to the great masses, only because this art is very bad or even no art at all. Thus the favourite proof, naively accepted by the cultivated crowd, that in order to feel art we must understand it (what in reality means only to become trained to it), is the surest indication that what it is proposed to understand in such manner is either very bad, exclusive art, or no art at all.

They say: "The productions of art are not liked by the people, because they are incapable of understanding it. But if the productions of art have for their aim the infection of men with the sentiment which the artist experienced, how can we speak of lack of

comprehension ? "

A man of the masses reads a book, looks at a picture, hears a drama or a symphony, and receives no impressions whatever. He is told that it is so, because he cannot understand. A man is told that he shall see a certain spectacle, – he goes there, and sees nothing. He is told that this is so because his vision is not prepared for this spectacle. But the man knows that he has excellent sight. If he does not see what he was promised he would see, he concludes only this (which is quite correct), that the men who undertook to show him the spectacle have not fulfilled what they undertook to do. Exactly so and with exactly as much justice does the man from the people judge of the productions of the art of our time, which evoke no sentiments of any kind in him. And so to say that a man is not moved by my art, because he is still too stupid (which is very self-confident and very bold to say), means to change parts, and to throw the onus of the guilty on the innocent.

Voltaire has said that, " Tous les genres sont bons, hors le genre ennuyeux ; " with much greater right we can say of art that, " Tous les genres sont bons, hors celui qu'on ne comprends pas ; " or, " qui ne produit pas son effet," because, what worth can there be in a subject which does not do what it is destined for ?

But the chief thing is, that the moment we admit that art may be art, while it remains incomprehensible to some mentally healthy persons, there is no reason why some circle of corrupted men should not create productions which tickle their corrupt sensations and are incomprehensible to any one but themselves, calling these productions art, which is actually done at present by the so-called decadents.

The road which art has traversed is like the superposition of circles of diminishing diameters on a circle of greater diameter, so that a cone is formed, the apex of which is no longer a circle. Precisely this has been done by the art of our time.

XL

Becoming poorer and poorer in contents and less and less comprehensible in form, it has in its last manifestations lost all the properties of art and has given way to semblances of art.

Not only has the art of the higher classes, in consequence of its segregation from the national art, become poor in contents and bad in form, that is, more and more incomprehensible, but the art of the higher classes has in the course of time ceased to be art and has given place to an imitation of art.

This has taken place from the following causes. National art arises only when some man from the people, having experienced some strong sensation, feels the necessity of communicating it to men. But the art of the wealthy classes does not arise because the artist feels the necessity for it, but chiefly because the men of the higher

classes demand diversions for which they reward well. The men of the wealthy classes demand from art the communication of sensations which are agreeable to them, and the artists try to satisfy these demands. But it is very hard to satisfy these demands, since the men of the wealthy classes, passing their lives in idleness and luxury, demand constant diversions from art ; it is, however, impossible at will to produce art, even though of the lowest description. And so the artists, to satisfy the demands of the men of the higher classes, had to work out methods by means of which they could produce subjects which resemble art, and so these methods were worked out.

These methods are the following: (1) borrowing, (2) imitation, (3) effectiveness, and (4) entertainingness.

The first method consists in borrowing from former productions of art either whole subjects, or only separate features of former, well-known poetical productions, and in so transforming them that with certain additions they might represent something new.

Such productions, evoking in the men of a certain circle recollections of artistic sensations experienced before, produce an impression like that from art, and pass among men who seek enjoyment from art for such, if with them other necessary conditions are observed. The subjects which are borrowed from previous artistic productions are generally called poetical subjects, and objects and persons borrowed from previous artistic productions are called poetical objects. Thus, in our circle, all kinds of legends, sagas, ancient traditions, are called poetical subjects ; and as poetical persons and objects are regarded maidens, warriors, shepherds, hermits, angels, devils in every form, moonlight, storms, mountains, the sea, precipices, flowers, long hair, lions, a lamb, a dove, a nightingale ; as poetical in general are regarded all those objects which more than any other were employed by previous artists for their productions.

Some forty years ago a not clever, but very cultured lady, " ayant beaucoup d'acquis " (she is dead now), called me to listen to a novel which she had written. In this novel the story began with a heroine in a poetical forest, near the water, in a poetical white garment, with poetical flowing hair, reading verses. The whole took place in Russia, and suddenly, from behind some bushes, there appeared the hero in a hat with a feather à la Guillaume Tell (so it said) and with two poetical dogs accompanying him. It seemed to the authoress that all this was very poetical ; and all would be well if the hero did not have to say something. The moment the gentleman in the hat à la Guillaume Tell began to talk with the maiden in the white dress, it became clear that the authoress had nothing to say, and that she was affected by the poetical recollections from previous productions, and was thinking that by rummaging through these recollections she could produce an artistic impression. But the artistic impression, that is, the infection, is had only when the author has in his own way experienced some kind of a sensation and is conveying it, and not when he communicates a foreign

sensation, which has been communicated to him. Such poetry from poetry cannot infect men, but only gives the semblance of art, and that, too, only to men with a corrupted Esthetic taste. This lady was very stupid and not at all talented, and so it was easy to see at once where the trouble was ; but when this borrowing is taken up by well-read and talented men, who, besides, have worked out the technique of their art, we get those borrowings from the Greek, the ancient, the Christian, and the mythological worlds, which have been breeding so extensively and especially now continue to appear so much, and which are taken by the public to be productions of art, if these borrowings are well worked out by the technique of that art in which they are made.

As a characteristic example of such a kind of imitation of art in the sphere of poetry may serve Rostand's Princess Lointaine, in which there is not a spark of art, but which appears to many and, no doubt, to its author as exceedingly poetical.

The second method which gives a semblance of art is what I called imitation. The essence of this method consists in rendering the details which accompany that which is described or represented. In the literary art this method consists in describing, down to the minutest details, the appearance, faces, garments, gestures, sounds, apartments of the acting persons, with all those incidents which occur in life. Thus, in novels and stories, they describe, with every speech of the acting person, in what voice he said it, and what he did then. And the speeches themselves are not told so as to make the best sense, but as incoherently as they are in life, with interruptions and abrupt endings. In dramatic art this method consists in this, that, in addition to the imitation of the conversations, all the concomitant circumstances, all the actions of the persons, should be precisely such as they are in real life. In painting and sculpture this method reduces painting to photography, and destroys the difference between photography and painting. However strange this may appear, this method is used also in music : music attempts to imitate, not only by its rhythm, but even by its sounds, those sounds which in life accompany that which it wishes to represent.

The third method is the appeal to the external senses, which frequently is of a purely physical nature, – it is what is called effectiveness. These effects in all arts consist mainly in contrasts, – in the juxtaposition of the terrible and the tender, the beautiful and the monstrous, the loud and the quiet, the dark and the light, the most common and the most uncommon. In literary art there are, besides the effects of contrast, other effects which consist in the description and representation of what has never been described or represented before, especially in the description and the representation of details which evoke the sexual passion, or of the details of suffering and death, which evoke the sensation of terror, – so that, for example, in the description of a murder there should be a coroner's description of the laceration of tissues, of the swelling, of the odour, of the amount and form of the blood. The same happens in painting : besides the contrasts of every kind,

there enters into painting a contrast which consists in the careful execution of one subject and carelessness in regard to everything else. But the chief and most usual effect in painting is the effect of light and of the representation of the terrible. In the drama the most common effects, besides the contrasts, are storms, thunder, moonlight, actions upon the sea or near the sea, the change of costumes, the laying bare of the feminine body, insanity, murder, and, in general, death, during which the dying give detailed accounts of all the phases of the agony. In music the most usual effects consist in beginning a crescendo with the feeblest and most monotonous sounds, and in rising to the strongest and most complicated sounds of the whole orchestra, or in repeating the same sounds arpeggio in all the octaves and with all the instruments, or in making the harmony, the time, and the rhythm entirely different from those which naturally result from the train of the musical thought, so as to startle us by their suddenness. Besides, the commonest effects in music are produced in a purely physical way, by the force of the sounds, especially in the orchestra.

Such are some of the more common effects in all the arts; but, in addition to these, there is still another method, common to all arts, and this is, the representation by one art of what is proper for another art to represent, such as, that music should "describe," as all programme music and that of Wagner and his followers does, or that painting, the drama, and poetry should "produce a mood," as all decadent art does.

The fourth method is entertainingness, that is, a mental interest united with the production of art. Entertainingness may consist in an intricate plot, – a method which until lately was used in English novels and French comedies and dramas, but now has begun to go out of fashion and has given way to documentality, that is, to detailed descriptions of some historic period or some especial branch of contemporary life. Thus, for example, entertainingness consists in describing in a novel the Egyptian or the Roman life, or the life of the miners, or of the clerks of some large establishment, and the reader is interested, and this interest is taken for an artistic impression. Entertainingness may consist in the mere methods of expression. This kind of entertainingness has now become exceedingly common. Poetry and prose, and pictures, and the drama, and musical compositions are produced in such a way that they have to be guessed like rebuses, and this process of guessing also affords pleasure and gives the semblance of an impression received from art.

Frequently it is said that a production of art is very good, because it is poetical or realistic, or effective or interesting, when neither the first, nor the second, nor the third, nor the fourth can be a standard of the value of the art or has anything in common with it.

"Poetical" means "borrowed." Now, every borrowing is only a leading up of the readers, spectators, or hearers to some dim recollection of those artistic impressions which they received from previous productions of art, and not an infection with the sensation which

the artist has experienced. A production which is based on borrowing, as, for example, Goethe's Faust, may be worked out very beautifully, replete with sallies of wit and all kinds of beauties, but it cannot produce a real artistic impression, because it wants the chief property of a production of art, – completeness, organicalness, – that is, that the form and the contents should form one uninterrupted whole, expressive of the sensations experienced by the artist. By the borrowing the artist conveys no other sensation than what was impressed upon him by the production of some previous art, and so every borrowing of whole subjects or different scenes, situations, descriptions, is only a reflection of art, its semblance, and not art. And so to say of a certain production that it is good because it is poetical, that is, because it resembles a production of art, is the same as saying of a coin that it is good, because it resembles a real coin. Just as little can the imitation of realism, as many think, be a standard of the value of art. Imitation cannot serve as a standard of the value of art, because, if the chief property of art is the infection of others with the sensation described by the artist, the infection with the sensation not only does not coincide with the description of the details of what is being conveyed, but for the most part is impaired by a superabundance of details. The attention of him who receives artistic impressions is distracted by all these well-observed details, and on account of them the author's feeling, if he has any, is not communicated.

It is just as strange to value the production of art by the degree of its realism and truthfulness of details communicated, as it is to judge of the nutritive value of food by its appearance. When we define the value of a production by its realism, we merely show by this that we are not speaking of a production of art, but of an imitation of it.

The third method of imitating art, effectiveness, like the first two, does not coincide with the concept of true art, because in effectiveness, in the effect of novelty, suddenness of contrast, terror, no sentiment is conveyed, and there is only an effect upon the nerves. When a painter paints beautifully a wound with blood, the sight of this wound will startle me, but there will be no art in this. A prolonged note on a mighty organ will produce a striking impression, will frequently even evoke tears, but there is no music in this, because no sensation is conveyed. And yet it is just such physiological effects that are constantly taken by men of our circle to be art, not only in music, but also in poetry, painting, and the drama. They say that modern art has become refined. On the contrary, thanks to the hunt after effects, it has become extraordinarily gross. They are performing, let us say, the new production of Hannele, which has made the round of the theatres of the whole of Europe, and in which the author wants to convey to the public compassion for a tortured girl. To evoke this feeling in the spectators by means of art, the author ought to have made one of his persons express compassion so that it would infect all men, or correctly describe the girl's sensations. But he is either unable or unwilling to do so, and chooses another, more complicated method for

the stage-manager, but one that is easier for the artist. He makes the girl die on the stage ; and with that, to increase the physiological effect on the audience, he puts out the lights in the theatre, leaving the audience in the dark, and to the sounds of pitiful music shows how the drunken father persecutes and beats this girl. The girl writhes, squeaks, groans, falls. There appear angels who carry her off. And the audience, experiencing some agitation at this, is fully convinced that this is an Esthetic sensation. But in this agitation there is nothing æsthetical, because there is no infection of one man by another, but only a mingled feeling of compassion for another and of joy for myself because I am not suffering, – something like what we experience at the sight of an execution, or what the Romans experienced in their circuses.

The substitution of effectiveness for the Esthetic feeling is particularly noticeable in the musical art, that art which by its nature has an immediate physiological effect upon the nerves. Instead of conveying in melody the author's sensations as experienced by him, the modern musician accumulates, interweaves sounds, and now intensifying, and now weakening them, produces upon the public a physiological effect, such as may be measured by an apparatus invented for the purpose.<sup>1</sup> And the public receives this physiological effect as the effect of art.

1 There exists an apparatus by means of which a very sensitive needle, brought in relation to the tension of the muscle of the hand, indicates the physiological effect of music upon the nerves and the muscles.

As regards the fourth method, entertainingness, this method, though more foreign to art than any other, is more frequently than any other mistaken for art. To say nothing of the intentional concealment by the author in his novel of what the author has to guess about, we very frequently get to hear about a picture or about a musical production, that it is interesting. What is meant by "interesting" ? An interesting production of art means either that the production evokes in us unsatisfied curiosity, or that, in being impressed by a production of art, we receive information which is new to us, or that the production is not quite comprehensible and we by degrees and with an effort make our way to its comprehension and in the divination of its meaning derive a certain amount of pleasure. In neither case has the entertainingness anything in common with artistic impressions. Art has for its aim the infection of men with the sensation experienced by the artist. But the mental effort which the spectator, the hearer, the reader, has to make for the gratification of the curiosity evoked, or for the acquisition of new information to be gained from the production, or for the comprehension of the meaning of the production, in absorbing the reader's, spectator's, hearer's attention, impedes the infection. And so the entertainingness of a production has not only nothing in common with the worth of a production of art, but rather impedes the artistic impression than cooperates with it.

Poeticalness, and imitation, and effectiveness, and entertainingness may be found within a production of art, but they cannot take the place of the chief property of art, of the sensation experienced by the artist. Of late the majority of subjects in the art of the higher classes, which are given out as subjects of art, are precisely such as only resemble art, and lack in their foundation the chief characteristic of art, – the sensation experienced by the artist.

To produce a true subject of art, many conditions are needed. This man must stand on the level of the highest world conception of his time, and must have experienced a sensation and have had the desire and the chance to communicate it, and also possess the talent for some kind of art. All these conditions, necessary for the production of true art, are rarely combined. But in order, with the aid of methods worked out, borrowing, imitation, effectiveness, and entertainingness, to produce semblances of art, which in our society are well rewarded, one needs only to have a talent in some sphere of art, which is of very frequent occurrence. By talent I mean the ability, in literary art, – easily to express one's ideas and impressions, and to notice and remember characteristic details ; in plastic art, – the ability to distinguish, remember, and reproduce lines, forms, colours ; in musical art, – the ability to distinguish intervals, and to remember and reproduce the consecutiveness of sounds. The moment a man in our day possesses such a talent, he is able, after having learned the technique and the methods of the imitation of his art (if his Esthetic sense, which would make his productions loathsome to him, is atrophied, and if he has patience), without interruption, to the end of his days, to compose productions which in our society are considered to be art.

For the production of such imitations there exist in every kind of art special rules or recipes, so that a talented man, having acquired them, is able à froid, coldly, without the slightest feeling, to produce these articles. In order to write poems, a man talented in literature needs only to train himself to be able in the place of each, one, real, necessary word to use, according to the demand of rhyme or measure, other ten words which have approximately the same meaning, and to train himself to be able to say every sentence, which, to be clear, has only one proper arrangement of words, with all possible permutations of words, so that it should resemble some sense : to train himself besides, being guided by words which occur to him on account of their rhyming, to invent for these words a semblance of ideas, sentiments, and pictures, and then such a man may without interruption compose poems, according to the need, short or long ones, religious, amatory, or patriotic songs.

But if the man with a talent for literature wants to write stories and novels, he need only elaborate a style, that is, train himself to describe everything he sees, and to remember or note down details. When he has mastered this, he can without cessation write novels or stories, according to his desire or according to demand, – historical, naturalistic, social, erotic, psychological, or even religious stories, such as there are a demand and fashion for. His

subjects he can take from reading or from his own experiences, and the characters of the acting persons he may copy from his acquaintances.

Such novels and stories, so long as they are decked out with well-observed and well-copied details, best of all, erotic details, will be regarded as productions of art, though there may not be a spark of sentiment in them.

For the production of art in the dramatic form, a talented man must, in addition to everything needed for the novel or story, learn also to put in the mouth of his acting persons as many bright and witty remarks as possible, make use of theatrical effects, and be able so to interweave the actions of persons that there shall not be one single long conversation on the stage, but as much bustle and motion as possible. If the writer is able to do so, he can without cessation write dramatic productions, one after another, choosing subjects from the criminal chronicles or from the last question which interests society, like hypnotism, heredity, and so forth, or from the most ancient and even fantastic spheres.

A talented man in the sphere of painting or sculpture can still more easily produce articles resembling art. For this purpose he need only learn to draw, paint, and sculpture, especially naked bodies. Having learned this, he may without cessation paint one picture after another, and sculpture one statue after another, according to his inclinations, choosing either mythological, or religious, or fantastic, or symbolical subjects; or representing what they write about in newspapers, – a coronation, a strike, the Turko-Russian War, the calamities of a famine ; or, what is most common, representing everything which seems beautiful, – from a naked woman to brass basins.

For the production of musical art, a talented man needs even less that which forms the essence of art, that is, of a sentiment which may infect others ; but, on the other hand, physical, gymnastic labour he needs more than for any other art, unless it be the art of dancing. For a musical production of art a man has to learn to move his fingers on some instrument as rapidly as those do who have reached the highest degree of perfection on it ; then he must find out how they used in antiquity to write music for many voices, which is called to learn counterpoint, the fugue ; then he must learn to orchestrate, that is, to make use of the effects of the instruments. Having learned all this, a musician can without cessation write one production after another: either some programme music, or operas and romances, inventing sounds which more or less correspond to words, or chamber music, that is, taking other men's themes and working them over by means of the counterpoint and fugue within definite forms ; or, what is most common, he can write fantastic music, that is, take any combination of sounds that happens to occur to him and upon these accidental sounds build up all kinds of complications and adornments.

Thus, adulterations of art, which the public of our higher classes

accepts as real art, are produced in all the spheres of art according to a well-defined recipe.

It is this substitution of adulterations of art for the productions of art that has been the third and most important consequence of the segregation of the art of the highest classes from the national art.

## XII.

There are three conditions which contribute to the production in our society of articles of adulterated art. These conditions are : (1) the considerable reward of the artists for their productions, and so the established professionalism of the artists, (2) the criticism of art, and (3) the schools of art.

So long as art was not divided, and nothing but religious art was valued and encouraged, while indifferent art was not encouraged, so long did there exist no adulterations of art ; if they did exist, they immediately fell, as they were condemned by the whole people. But the moment this division took place, and every art, so long as it afforded enjoyment, was considered good by the men of the wealthy classes, and, affording enjoyment, began to be rewarded more than any other public activity, a greater number of men at once devoted themselves to this activity, and it assumed an entirely different character from what it had before, and became a profession.

The moment art became a profession, the chief and most precious property of art, its sincerity, was considerably weakened and partially destroyed.

The professional artist lives by his art, and so he must without cessation invent subjects for his productions, and he invents them. It is obvious what a difference there must be between the products of art, when they were created by men like the Jewish prophets, the authors of the psalms, Francis d'Assisi, the author of the Iliad and the Odyssey, the authors of all the national fairy-tales, legends, songs, who not only received no reward for their

productions, but even did not connect their names with them, or when art was produced at first by court poets, dramatists, and musicians, who received for it honour and rewards, and that art which later has been produced by official artists, who live by their trade and receive rewards from journalists, editors, impresarios, in general from mediators between the artists and the urban public,— the consumers of art.

In this professionalism, the first condition is the diffusion of the adulterated, false art.

The second condition, is the lately arisen criticism of art, that is, the valuation of art, not by all, certainly not by simple, men, but by learned, that is, by corrupted and, at the same time, self-confident men.

A friend of mine, in expressing the relation of the critics to the artists, semi-jestingly defined it like this : " Critics are stupid, who are discussing the wise." This definition, however one-sided it is, is inexact and gross, but none the less includes a measure of truth and is incomparably more correct than that according to which critics are supposed to explain artistic productions.

" The critics explain." What do they explain ?

An artist, if he is a real artist, has in his production conveyed to men the feeling which he has lived through ; what is there here to explain ?

If the production is good, as art, the sentiment which the artist has expressed will, independently of its being moral or immoral, be communicated to other men. If it has been communicated to other men, they experience it, and all interpretations are superfluous. But if the production does not infect men, no interpretations will make it infectious. It is impossible to interpret an artist's production. If it were possible to explain in words what the artist wanted to say, he would have said it in words. But he spoke by means of his art, because it was impossible in any other way to convey the sensation which he experienced. An interpretation in words of a product of art proves only that he who is interpreting is unable to be infected by art. So it is and, no matter how strange it may seem, critics have always been men who less than any one else are able to be infected by art. For the most part they are men who write fluently, cultured, clever men, but with an absolutely corrupted or atrophied ability to be infected by art. And so these men have with their writings considerably contributed to the corruption of the taste of the public, which reads them and believes in them.

There has never been any art criticism, and there could have been none and can be none in a society where art has not divided and so is esteemed by the religious world conception of the whole nation. The art criticism arose and could have arisen only in the art of the higher classes who do not recognize the religious consciousness of their time.

National art has a definite and indubitable inner criterion, - religious consciousness ; but the art of the higher classes does not have it, and so the appreciators of this art were inevitably compelled to hold to some external criterion. And as such criterion there appears to them, as the English æsthetician has expressed it, the taste of " the best nurtured men," that is, the authority of the men who consider themselves cultured, and not only this authority, but also the tradition of the authority of these men. But this

tradition is very faulty, because the judgments of these " best nurtured men " are frequently very faulty and because the judgments which were correct for a certain time cease to be such after awhile. But the critics, who have no foundations for their judgments, repeat them all the time. There was a period when the ancient tragic writers were considered good, and criticism regards them as such. Dante was thought to be a great poet, Raphael a great painter, Bach a great musician, and the critics, having no standard by which to separate good from bad art, not only regard these artists as great, but also all the productions of these artists do they regard as great and worthy of imitation. Nothing has to such an extent contributed to the corruption of art as these authorities, as established by criticism. A man produces some artistic production, like any artist, expressing in it in his peculiar way the sensations experienced by him, – and the majority of men are infected by the artist's sensations, and his production becomes famous. And criticism, in passing judgment on the artist, begins to say that his production is not bad, but he is none the less no Dante, no Shakespeare, no Goethe, no Beethoven of the later period, no Raphael. And the young artist, hearing such judgments, begins to imitate those who are given him as models, and produces not only feeble, but even adulterated, false productions.

Thus, for example, our Pushkin writes his minor poems, Evgénie Onyégine, The Gipsies, his stories, and they are productions of various worth, but none the less productions of true art. But under the influence of that false criticism which lauds Shakespeare he writes Boris Godunov, a reflectingly cold production, and this production of criticism is praised and put up as a model, and there appear imitations of imitations, Ostrdovski's Minin, A. Tolstoy's Tsar Boris, and others. Such imitations of imitations fill all the literatures with the most insignificant, absolutely useless productions.

The chief harm of the critics consists in this, that, being men who are devoid of the ability to be infected by art (and all critics are such : if they were not devoid of this ability, they could not undertake the impossible interpretation of artistic productions), the critics direct their attention to reflective, invented productions, which they laud and adduce as models worthy of imitation. For this reason they with such assurance praise the Greek tragic writers, Dante, Tasso, Milton, Shakespeare, Goethe (nearly the whole of him without exception); of the moderns – Zola, Ibsen ; the music of the latest period, Beethoven's, Wagner's. For the justification of their laudations of these reflective, invented productions they invent whole theories (such also is the famous theory of beauty), and not only dull, talented men according to these theories compose their productions, but also true artists, using violence on themselves, frequently surrender themselves to these theories.

Every false production which is lauded by the critics is a door through which the hypocrites of art at once make their way.

Only thanks to the criticisms which in our day praise the gross, wild, and in our day senseless productions of the ancient Greeks, of Sophocles, Euripides, Æschylus, and especially Aristophanes, – or of the moderns, of Dante, Tasso, Milton, Shakespeare ; in painting – all of Raphael, all of Michelangelo with his insipid “ The Last Judgment in music– all of Bach and all of Beethoven with his last period, there have become possible in our day men like Ibsen, Maeterlinck, Verlaine, Mallarmé, Puvis de Chavannes, Klinger, Bocklin, Stuck, Schneider ; in music – Wagner, Liszt, Berlioz, Brahms, Richard Strauss, and so forth, and all the enormous mass of entirely useless imitators of these imitators.

As the best illustration of the harmful influence of criticism may serve its relation to Beethoven. Among his numberless productions, which are frequently written to order, there are, in spite of the artificiality of their forms, some artistic productions ; but he grows deaf, is unable to hear, and begins to write imaginary, unfinished productions, and so those which frequently are insipid and incomprehensible in a musical sense. I know that musicians can quite vividly imagine sounds and hear what they are reading ; but the imagined sounds can never take the place of the real ones, and every composer must hear his production, in order to be able to give it the finishing touches. Beethoven could not hear, could not give the finishing touches, and so sent out into the world these productions, which represented an artistic delirium. But criticism, having once recognized him as a great composer, takes special delight in sticking to these same monstrous productions, and discovers in them unusual beauties. As a justification of its laudations, it ascribes to musical art, distorting the very concept of musical art, the property of representing what it cannot represent, and there appear imitators, an endless number of imitators, of those monstrous attempts at artistic productions which are written by deaf Beethoven.

And there appears Wagner, who at first, in his critical essays, lauds Beethoven, particularly during his last period, and brings this music in connection with Schopenhauer’s mystical theory, which is as insipid as Beethoven’s music itself, – namely, that music is the expression of the will, – not of separate manifestations of the will on various stages of objectification, but of its very essence, – and then on the basis of this very theory writes his own music in connection with a still falser system of the union of all the arts. After Wagner there appear still other imitators, who still more depart from art: a Brahms, a Richard Strauss, and others.

Such are the results of criticism. But the third condition for the corruption of art, – the schools which teach art, are, if anything, even more harmful.

The moment art became art for the class of wealthy people, and not for the whole nation, it became a profession, and as soon as it became a profession, there were worked out methods which teach this profession, and the men who chose for themselves the profession of art began to study these methods, and there appeared professional

schools, – classes of rhetoric, or classes of literature, in the gymnasia, academies for painting, conservatories for music, theatrical schools of dramatic art.

In these schools they teach art. But art is the conveyance to other people of a special sensation experienced by the artist. How, then, is one to be taught this in schools ?

No school can evoke in a man any sensation, and still less can it teach a man what the essence of art consists in, – the manifestation of sensations in his own, peculiar way.

There is but one thing the school can teach, and that is, how to convey sensations experienced by other artists in the same way as the other artists conveyed them. It is precisely this that they teach in the schools of art, and this instruction not only does not contribute to the diffusion of true art, but, on the contrary, in disseminating adulterations of art, more than anything else deprives men of the possibility of understanding true art.

In the literary art men are taught how, without wishing to say anything, to write a composition of many pages on a theme on which they have never reflected, and to write it in such a way that it may resemble the compositions of authors who are acknowledged to be famous. It is this that the pupils are taught in the gymnasia.

In painting, the chief instruction consists in drawing and painting from originals and from Nature, particularly the naked body, which is never seen, and which a man who is occupied with true art hardly ever has occasion to represent, and to draw and paint as previous masters used to draw and to paint ; and they are taught to compose pictures, giving them themes the like of which have been treated before by acknowledged celebrities. Similarly, pupils in dramatic schools are taught to pronounce monologues just as they were pronounced by such as were considered to be famous tragedians. The same is true of music. The whole theory of music is nothing but a disconnected repetition of those methods which the acknowledged masters of composition used for their musical themes.

I have already somewhere mentioned the profound utterance of the Russian painter Bryulov about art, and I cannot refrain from quoting him again, because it shows better than anything what they can and what they ought to teach in the schools. In correcting a pupil's study, Bryulov barely touched it up in a few places, and the poor, dead study suddenly revived. " You have barely touched it up, and all is changed," said one of the pupils. " Art begins where the barely begins," said Bryulov, giving with these words utterance to the most characteristic feature of art. This remark is true for all the arts, but its correctness is particularly noticeable in the execution of music. In order that a musical execution may be artistic, may be art, that is, that it may produce an infection, three chief conditions have to be observed. (Besides these conditions, there are many other conditions for musical perfection : it is necessary that the transition from one sound to another should

be abrupt or blending, that the sound should evenly increase or decrease, that it should combine with such a sound and not with another, that the sound should have such and such a timbre, and many other things.) But let us take the three chief conditions, – the height, the time, and the force of the sound. A musical execution is an art and infects a person, only when the sound is neither higher nor lower than what it ought to be, that is, when there is taken that infinitely small medium of the note demanded, and when the note shall be protracted precisely as much as it ought to be, and when the force of the note shall be neither stronger nor weaker than what is necessary. The least deviation in the height of the sound in either direction, the slightest increase or decrease of time, and the slightest intensification or weakening of the sound in comparison with what is demanded, destroys the perfection of the execution, and so the infectiousness of the production. Thus the infection through the art of music, which it seems is so simple and so easily evoked, is received by us only when the performer finds those infinitely small moments which are demanded for the perfection of music. The same is true of all arts : barely brighter, barely darker, barely higher, lower, more to the right, more to the left, – in painting ; barely weakening or intensifying the intonation, – in dramatic art; or something is done just a little earlier, just a little later, barely underdone, overdone, exaggerated, – in poetry, and there is no infection. Infection is obtained only when, and to the extent in which, the artist finds those infinitely small moments of which the production of art is composed. But there is no possibility of teaching one in an external way to discover these infinitely small moments: they are found only when a man abandons himself to a sensation. No instruction can make a dancer fall in with the beat of the music, and a singer or violin player take the infinitely small mean of a note, and a person who draws draw the one possible and necessary line, and a poet find the one needed permutation of the one needed series of words. All this is discovered by the feeling alone. And so the schools can teach only what is needed in order to do something which resembles art, but by no means art itself.

The instruction of the schools stops where the barely begins, consequently, where art begins.

The training of men to do what resembles art disaccustoms them to understand true art. From this results the fact that there are no duller persons in art than those who have passed through the professional schools of art and have made the best progress in them. These professional schools produce a hypocrisy of art, precisely like the religious hypocrisy which is produced by the schools which instruct preachers and all kinds of religious teachers in general. Just as impossible as it is to teach men to become religious teachers of men, so it is impossible to teach a man to become an artist.

Thus the art schools are doubly pernicious to art : in the first place, by killing the ability of reproducing true art in the men who have had the misfortune of getting into these schools and taking a

course of seven, eight, or ten years in them ; in the second, by breeding at an enormous rate that adulterated art which corrupts the taste of the masses, such as our world is full of. But in order that men, bom artists, may be able to learn the methods of all kinds of arts, as they have been worked out by previous artists, all primary schools ought to have such classes of drawing and of music, – of singing, – so that any talented man, who has gone through them, may make use of the existing and accessible models and then independently perfect himself in his art.

It is these three conditions, the professionalism of the artists, the criticism, and the schools of art that have produced this result, that the majority of the men of our time absolutely fail to comprehend what art is and accept the grossest adulterations of art for art itself.

### XIII.

To what extent the men of our circle and of our time have become devoid of the ability to perceive true art and have become accustomed to accept as art such objects as have nothing in common with it, can best of all be seen in the productions of Richard Wagner, which of late have come to be esteemed and acknowledged more and more, not only by the Germans, but also by the French and the English, as the very highest art, which has opened new horizons.

The peculiarity of Wagner's music, as is well known, consists in this, that music must serve poetry, by expressing all the shades of a poetic production.

The union of the drama with music, invented in the fifteenth century in Italy for the purpose of reestablishing the imagined old Greek drama with its music, is an artificial form, which has had success only among the highest classes, and then only when talented musicians, like Mozart, Weber, Rossini, and others, inspired by the dramatic subject, freely abandoned themselves to their inspiration, subordinating the text to the music, for which reason it was the music to a given text that in their operas was of importance to the hearer, and by no means the text, which, even though it was most senseless, as, for example, in the Magic Flute, none the less did not interfere with the artistic impression of the music.

Wagner wants to improve the opera by subordinating the music to the demands of poetry and blending it with them. But every art has its definite sphere, which does not coincide with the other arts, but only touches upon

them ; and so, if the manifestations, not only of many, but even of only two, arts, the dramatic and the musical, are united into one whole, the demands of one art will not give a chance to execute the

demands of another, which indeed has always been the case with the common opera, where the dramatic art was subordinated, or rather, gave way, to the musical art. But Wagner wants the musical art to be subordinated to the dramatic, and both to manifest themselves in all their force. This is impossible, because every production of art, if it is a true production of art, is the expression of the artist's intimate feelings, and exclusive, resembling nothing else. Such is the production of music, and such is the production of dramatic art, if it is true art. And so, for the production of one art to coincide with that of another, the impossible has to happen. Two productions of art from different spheres have to be absolutely exclusive and different from anything which has existed before, and at the same time they are to coincide and must absolutely resemble one another.

This cannot be, just as there cannot be two men, or even two leaves on a tree, that are perfectly alike. Still less can two productions of various spheres of art – of the musical and the literary – be absolutely alike. If they coincide, either one is an artistic production and the other an adulteration, or both are adulterations. Two living leaves cannot perfectly resemble one another, but two artificial leaves may. The same is true of productions of art. They can fully coincide only when neither the one nor the other is art, but both are an invented semblance of art.

If poetry and music may unite more or less in a hymn, a song, a romance (and even then not in such a way that the music follows every verse of the text, as Wagner wants, but that each of them produces the same mood), this is due to the fact that poetry and music have partly one and the same aim, – the evoking of a mood, and the moods produced by lyrical poetry and music may more or less coincide. But even in these combinations the centre of gravity is always in one of the two productions, so that only one produces an artistic impression, while the other remains unnoticed. Much less can there be such a union between epic or dramatic poetry and music.

Besides, one of the chief conditions of artistic creation is the artist's complete liberty from all preconceived demands. But the necessity to adapt one's musical production to the production of poetry, or vice versa, is such a preconceived demand that every possibility of creation is destroyed, and so productions of this kind, which are adapted to one another, have always been, and always must be, productions, not of art, but only of its semblance, like music in melodramas, legends under pictures, illustrations, librettos in operas.

And such also are Wagner's productions. We see the confirmation of this in the fact that in Wagner's new music there is absent the chief feature of every true artistic production, – completeness, organicalness, – when the least change of form impairs the meaning of the whole production. In a true artistic production, – in a poem, drama, picture, song, symphony, – it is impossible to take a single verse, or scene, or figure, or beat out of its place and put it into another without impairing the meaning of the whole production, just as it is impossible to avoid impairing the life of an organic being,

if an organ is taken out of its place and is put into another. But with Wagner's music of the last period, with the exception of a few, quite insignificant passages, which have an independent, musical meaning, it is possible to make all kinds of permutations and transpose what was in the beginning to the end, and vice versa, without altering the musical sense. The reason why with this

the sense of Wagner's music is not altered is because it lies in the words, and not in the music.

The musical text of Wagner's operas is like what a versifier would do, – such as there are plenty of to-day, – who, having contorted his tongue in such a way that he is able for every theme, for every rhyme, for every measure to write verses which resemble verses that make sense, should take it into his head with his verses to illustrate some one of Beethoven's symphonies or sonatas, or a ballad by Chopin, by writing for the first beats of one character such verses as in his opinion correspond to these first beats ; and then should for the following beats of another character write other corresponding verses, without any inner connection with the first verses and, besides, without rhyme and without any measure. Such a production without music would in a poetical sense precisely resemble Wagner's operas in a musical sense, if they were listened to without any text.

But Wagner is not only a musician, he is also a poet, or both at the same time, and so, to judge Wagner, we must also know his text, – that very text to which the music is to minister. Wagner's chief poetical production is the poetical elaboration of the Nibelung. This production has in our time received such an enormous importance and has such an influence on everything which is now given out as art, that it is necessary for every man of our time to have an idea about it. I have attentively read the four little books in which this production is printed, and have made a short extract from it, which I give in the second appendix, and I earnestly advise the reader, if he has not read the text itself, a thing which would be best of all, at least to read my exposition, in order to form an idea of this remarkable production. This production is a specimen of the grossest adulteration of poetry, so gross as even to be ridiculous.

But, they say, it is not possible to judge Wagner's productions, unless one has seen them on the stage. This winter they gave in Moscow the second day, or the second act, of this drama, which, I was told, was the best of all, and I attended this performance.

When I arrived, the immense theatre was already full from top to bottom. Here were grand dukes and the flower of the aristocracy, and of the merchant class, and of the learned profession, and of the middle class official urban public. The majority had librettos in their hands, trying to make out the meaning of the opera. The musicians, – some of them old, gray-haired men, – with the scores in their hands, followed the music. Apparently the execution of this production was an important event.

I was a little late, but I was told that the short prelude, with which the act begins, has little significance, and that this omission was not important. On the stage, amidst scenery which was supposed to represent a cave in a rock, in front of an object which was supposed to represent a blacksmith's arrangement, there sat an actor dressed in tights and in a mantle of skins, in a wig, with a false beard, and with his white, feeble hands, unwonted to work (by his agile movements, but chiefly by his belly and absence of muscles, the actor may be told), he was striking with a hammer, such as never has existed, at a sword, such as can positively not exist, and he was striking in a manner in which no one ever strikes with a hammer, and, while doing this, he opened his mouth in a strange manner and sang something which could not be understood. Music from various instruments accompanied these strange sounds which he uttered. From the libretto one could learn that the actor was supposed to represent a mighty dwarf who was living in a grotto and forging a sword for Siegfried, whom he had brought up. You could tell that he was a dwarf, because he walked all the time bending at the knee his legs in the tights. Opening his mouth in the same strange manner, this actor for a long time did something intermediate between singing and shouting. The music at the same time ran over something strange, some beginnings of something, which did not last and did not end with anything. From the libretto one could learn that the dwarf was talking to himself about a ring which a giant had got possession of and which he wished to obtain through Siegfried ; now, Siegfried needed a good sword, and so the dwarf was busy forging that sword.

After this character's long talk or singing to himself, other sounds are suddenly heard in the orchestra, and they, too, somehow have no beginning and no end. There appears another actor with a horn over his shoulder, and a man running on his hands and feet, disguised as a bear, and with this bear he attacks the blacksmith-dwarf, who runs away without unbending his knees in the tights. This other actor is supposed to represent the hero Siegfried himself. The sounds which are heard in the orchestra at the entrance of this actor are supposed to represent Siegfried's character and are called Siegfried's Leit-motiv. These sounds are repeated every time that Siegfried makes his appearance. There is one certain combination of sounds into a Leit-motiv for every person. Thus the Leit-motiv is repeated every time when the person represented by it makes his appearance; even at the mention of a person the Motiv corresponding to that person is heard. More than this: every object has its Leit-motiv or chord. There is a Motiv of the ring, a Motiv of the helmet, a Motiv of the apple, the fire, the spear, the sword, the water, etc., and the moment mention is made of the ring, the helmet, the apple, we get the Motiv or the chord of the helmet, the apple.

The actor with the horn opens his mouth as unnaturally as the dwarf, and for a long time yells out his words in a singsong way, and is answered in the same singsong way by Mime, – that is the name of the dwarf. The meaning of this conversation, which one can learn only from the libretto, is this, that Siegfried was brought up by the

dwarf and for this somehow despises him and wants to kill him. The dwarf has forged the sword for Siegfried, but Siegfried is dissatisfied with the sword. From the ten-page conversation (according to the libretto), which for half an hour is conducted with the same strange singsong openings of the mouth, it can be seen that Siegfried's mother bore him in the forest, and that of his father nothing is known but that he had a sword, which was broken and fragments of which are in Mime's possession, and that Siegfried knows no fear and wants to get out of the forest, while Mime does not let him go. During this musical conversation there are never forgotten, at the mention of the father, the sword, and so forth, the Motifs of these persons and objects.

After these conversations on the stage there resound new sounds, those of the God Wotan, and a pilgrim makes his appearance. This pilgrim is God Wotan. This God Wotan, himself in a wig and in tights, standing in a stupid attitude with his spear, for some reason is telling everything which Mime cannot help but know, but which the spectators have to be told about. He does not tell all this in a simple way, but in the form of riddles, which he commands to be put to him, for some reason pledging his head that he will guess them. With this the pilgrim strikes his spear against the ground, and every time he does so, fire issues from the earth, and in the orchestra are heard the sounds of the spear and of the fire. The conversation is accompanied by the orchestra, in which are artificially interwoven the Motifs of the persons and the objects spoken of. Besides, the sensations are in a most naïve manner expressed by means of the music : the terrible, - those are the sounds of the bass ; the frivolous, - those are quick passages in soprano, and so forth.

The riddles have no other meaning than to tell the spectators who the Nibelungs, the giants, the gods are, and what was before. This conversation, through strangely opened mouths, takes also place in a singsong manner, and lasts according to the libretto for eight pages, and correspondingly long on the stage. After this the pilgrim goes away, and Siegfried comes back and talks with Mime in thirteen pages. There is not a single tune, but all the time nothing but an interweaving of the Leit-motifs of the persons and objects of the conversation. The conversation turns on this, that Mime wants to teach Siegfried what terror is, while Siegfried does not know what terror is. Having finished this conversation, Siegfried seizes what is to represent a fragment of a sword, saws it to pieces, puts it on what is supposed to represent the forge, melts it, and then forges it, and sings, " Heaho, heaho, hoho! Hobo, hoho, hobo, hoho; hoheo, haho, haheo, hoho," and the first act is ended.

The question for which I had come to the theatre was for me answered indubitably, as indubitably as the question of the worth of the story by my lady acquaintance, when she read to me a scene between the maiden with the flowing hair in a white dress, and the hero with two white dogs and a feathered hat à la Guillaume Tell.

From an author who can compose such false scenes as I witnessed

here, which cut the æsthetic feeling as though with knives, nothing else could be expected ; a man may boldly make up his mind that everything which such an author may write will be bad, because such an author does not apparently know what a true artistic production is. I wanted to go away, but my friends, with whom I was there, begged me to stay, assuring me that it is impossible to form an opinion by this one act, and that it would be better in the second, – and so I remained for the second act.

The act – night. Then it dawns. The whole performance in general is full of dawnsings, mists, moonshines, darkness, magic fires, storms, and so forth.

The scene represents a forest, and in the forest there is a cave. Near the cave sits a third actor, representing another dwarf. It is dawning. God Wotan with the spear comes again, and again in the form of a pilgrim. Again there are his sounds, new sounds, the deepest bass that can be produced. These sounds indicate that the dragon is speaking. Wotan wakens the dragon. The same bass sounds are heard, but deeper and deeper down. At first the dragon says, " I want to sleep," but later he crawls out from the cave. The dragon is represented by two men dressed in a green skin in the form of scales ; on one side they wag a tail, and on the other they open the jaws, like a crocodile's, which is attached to them, and from which issues fire from an electric lamp. The dragon, which is supposed to be terrible, and, no doubt, may appear so to children of five years of age, pronounces certain words in bellowing bass. All this is so stupid and such a cheap show that one only marvels how people of more than seven years of age can seriously attend such a performance ; but thousands of quasi-cultivated people sit and listen attentively, and look, and are delighted.

Enter Siegfried with his horn and Mime. In the orchestra are heard sounds which indicate them, and Siegfried and Mime discuss as to whether Siegfried knows what terror is. After this Mime goes away, and there begins a scene which is supposed to be most poetical. Siegfried, in his tights, lies down in what is supposed to be a beautiful pose, and now is silent, and now talks to himself. He meditates, listens to the singing of the birds, and wants to imitate them. For this purpose he cuts a reed with his sword, and makes himself a pipe. Day dawns more and more, and the birds sing. Siegfried tries to imitate the birds. In the orchestra is heard an imitation of the birds, mingling with the sounds which corre-

spond to the words which he speaks. But Siegfried is not successful with his playing on the pipe, and he blows his horn. This scene is unbearable. There is not even a sign of any music, that is, of the art which serves as a means for the communication of the mood experienced by the author. There is here something perfectly incomprehensible in a musical sense. In a musical sense one constantly experiences hope, after which there immediately follows disappointment ; it is as though a musical thought began, but was immediately cut short. If there is something resembling incipient music, these beginnings are so short, so obstructed with

complications of harmony, orchestration, and effects of contrasts, so obscure, so unfinished, and the falsity of what is taking place on the stage is withal so abominable, that it is difficult to notice them, to say nothing of being infected by them. But above all else, the author's intention is so audible and so visible in every note, from the beginning to the end, that one does not see and hear Siegfried or the birds, but only the narrow-minded, self-conceited, bad tone and taste of a German who has the most absolutely wrong ideas about poetry and who in the grossest and most primitive manner possible wants to convey to me these wrong conceptions of poetry.

Everybody knows that feeling of distrust and opposition which is provoked by the palpable intention of the author. A story-teller need but say in advance, "Get ready to weep or to laugh," and you will be sure not to weep or to laugh ; and when you see that the author prescribes admiration for what is not only not admirable, but even ridiculous or detestable, and when you at the same time see that the author is unquestionably sure that he has captivated you, you get a heavy, painful sensation, something like what a man would experience if an old, ugly woman should attire herself in a ball-dress and should smilingly circle around in front of him, being sure of his sympathy. This impression was increased by the fact that all about me I saw a crowd of three thousand people, who not only submissively listened to this incredible insipidity, but even considered it their duty to go into ecstasies over it.

I somehow managed to sit through the next scene with the appearance of the monster, which was accompanied by his bass notes, interwoven with Siegfried's Motiv, the struggle with the monster, all his bellowings, the fires, the swinging of the sword, but I was absolutely unable to stand it any longer, and ran out of the theatre with an expression of disgust, which I am even now unable to forget.

As I listened to this opera, I involuntarily thought of an honourable, clever, literate village labourer, especially one of those clever, truly religious men whom I know among the masses, and I imagined the terrible perplexity at which such a man would arrive, if he were shown what I saw on that evening.

What would he say, if he learned of all those labours which were spent on this performance, and saw the public, those mighty ones of this world, whom he was in the habit of respecting, those old, bald-headed men with gray beards, who sit six solid hours in silence, listening attentively and looking at all these stupid things. But, to say nothing of a grown labourer, it is hard even to imagine a child of more than seven years, who could busy himself with this stupid, senseless fairy-tale.

And yet an enormous audience, the flower of the cultured men of the highest classes, sit through these six hours of a senseless performance, and go home, imagining that, having paid their tribute to this piece of stupidity, they have acquired a new right to recognize themselves as a leading and enlightened audience.

I am speaking of a Moscow audience. But what is a Moscow audience ?  
It is one hundredth part of that public

which considers itself most enlightened, and which regards it as its desert that it has to such an extent lost the ability to be infected by art, that it not only can without indignation be present at this stupid falsity, but even be in raptures over it.

In Baireuth, where these performances began, people arrived from all the corners of the world, spending as much as one thousand roubles to each person, in order to see this performance, – people who consider themselves to be refined and cultivated, – and for four days in succession they sat each day through six hours, in order to see and hear this insipidity and falsity.

But why have people been travelling, and why do they even now travel, to see these performances, and why are they in raptures over them ? Involuntarily there arises the question: how is the success of Wagner's productions to be explained ?

I explain to myself this success by this, that, thanks to the exclusive position in which Wagner was, having at his command the king's means, he with great cleverness made use of all the methods of adulterated art, which had been worked out by a long practice in false art, and produced a model adulterated production of art. I purposely took this production as a model, because in none of the adulterations of art known to me is there such a masterly and forceful combination of all the methods by means of which art is adulterated, namely, borrowing, imitation, effectiveness, and entertainingness.

Beginning with a subject taken from antiquity, and ending with mists and moon and sun rises, Wagner in this production makes use of everything which is regarded as poetical. Here we find the sleeping beauty, and nymphs, and subterranean fires, and gnomes, and battles, and swords, and love, and incest, and a monster, and the singing of birds, – the whole arsenal of poeticalness is brought into action.

With this, everything is imitative, – the scenery and the costumes are imitative. Everything is done in the way in which, from all the data of archaeology, it must have been done in antiquity, – the very sounds are imitative. Wagner, who was not devoid of musical talent, invented such sounds as precisely imitate the strokes of the hammer, the hissing of iron at white heat, the singing of birds, and so forth.

Besides, in this production everything is to the highest degree strikingly effective – striking by its very peculiarities, by its monsters, its magic fires, its actions which take place in the water, its darkness, in which the spectators are, the invisibility of the orchestra, its new, never before employed, harmonious combinations.

Besides, everything is entertaining. The interest is not only in who

will get killed, and by whom, who will get married and to whom, whose son this man is, and what will happen later – the interest is also in the relation of the music to the text : the waves roll in the Rhine, – how will this be expressed in music ? An evil dwarf makes his appearance, – how will the music express the evil dwarf ? How will the music express the dwarf's sensuality ? How will valour, fire, apples be expressed by music? How does the Leit-motiv of the speaker interweave with the Leit-motivs of the persons and objects of which he speaks? Besides, the music itself is interesting. It departs from all formerly accepted laws, and in it appear the most unexpected and completely new modulations (which is very easy and quite possible in a music which has no inner legality). The dissonances are new, and they are solved in a novel way, and this, too, is interesting.

This poeticalness, imitation, startling effects, and entertainingness are in these productions, thanks to the peculiarities of Wagner's talent and to that advantageous position in which he was, carried to the highest degree of perfection, and act upon the hearer by hypnotizing him, something in the way a man would be hypnotized who for the period of several hours should be listening to an insane man's delirium pronounced with great oratorical art.

I am told, " You cannot judge, if you have not seen Wagner's productions at Baireuth, in the dark, where the music is not visible, being under the stage, and the execution is carried to the highest degree of perfection." This proves that the matter is not in the art, but in the hypno-tization. It is precisely what the spiritualists say. To convince one of the truth of their visions, they generally say : " You cannot judge ; investigate it, be present at several séances, that is, sit in silence in the dark for several hours in succession in the company of half-insane persons, and repeat this about ten times, and you will see everything we see."

How can a man help seeing it ? Put yourself just under such conditions, and you will see everything you wish. It is still easier to attain this by drinking wine or smoking opium. The same is true of listening to Wagner's operas. Sit in the dark for four days in succession, in the company of not quite normal men, subjecting your brain to the most powerful influence, by means of the auditory nerves, of sounds most calculated to irritate the brain, and you will certainly arrive at an abnormal state and will go into ecstasies over insipidities. However, for this purpose one does not need four days : for this the five hours of one day, during which one performance lasts, as was the case in Moscow, are sufficient. And it is not only the five hours that are sufficient ; one hour will do for men who have no clear conception of what art ought to be, and who have formed an opinion in advance that what they will see is beautiful, and that indifference and dissatisfaction with this production will serve as a proof of their lack of culture and of their backwardness.

I watched the audience at the performance which I attended. The men

who guided the whole audience and gave it tone were such as had been hypnotized in advance and who again surrendered themselves to a familiar hypnosis. These hypnotized men, being in an abnormal state, were in full ecstasy. Besides, all the art critics, who are devoid of the ability to be infected by art and so show especial appreciation of productions in which everything is a matter of reason, as in Wagner's opera, also profoundly approved of a production which gives rich food to mental processes. After these two divisions of men there came that great urban crowd, with princes, nabobs, and patrons of art at its head, with its corrupted and partly atrophied ability to be infected by art, and indifferent to it, always, like poor hunting-dogs, clinging to those who most determinately express their opinion.

" Oh, yes, of course! What poetry ! Wonderful ! Particularly the birds ! " – " Yes, yes, I am quite vanquished." These men repeat in all kinds of voices what they have just heard from men whose opinion seems to them to deserve confidence.

If there are people who are offended by the insipidity and falsity, they timidly keep quiet, just as sober people are timid and keep quiet among those who are drunk.

And thus a senseless, gross, false production, which has nothing in common with art, thanks to the mastery of adulterated art, makes the round of the whole world, costs millions in staging it, and more and more corrupts the tastes of the men of the higher classes and their conception of what art is.

#### XIV.

I know that the majority of men who not only are considered to be clever, but who really are so, who are capable of comprehending the most difficult scientific, mathematical, philosophical discussions, are very rarely able to understand the simplest and most obvious truth, if it is such that in consequence of it they will have to admit that the opinion which they have formed of a subject, at times with great effort, – an opinion of which they are proud, which they have taught others, on the basis of which they have arranged their whole life, – that this opinion may be false. And so I have not much hope that the proofs which I adduce in regard to the corruption of art and of taste in our society will be accepted or even seriously discussed ; still, I must finish telling what my investigation has inevitably led me to. This investigation has led me to the conclusion that nearly everything which is considered to be art, – good art and all art in our society, – is not only not true and good art, but not even art at all : it is only an adulteration of art. This proposition, I know, is very strange and sounds paradoxical, but if we only admit the correctness of the statement that art is a human activity by means of which one set of men convey their

sensations to another, and not a ministrations to beauty, or the manifestation of an idea, etc., we shall be obliged to admit it. If it is true that art is an activity by means of which one man, having experienced a sensation, consciously conveys it to another, we shall be forced to admit that in everything which among us is called the art of the higher classes, – in all those novels, stories, dramas, comedies, pictures, sculptures, symphonies, operas, operettas, ballets, etc., which are given out as productions of art, hardly one in a hundred thousand is due to a sensation experienced by its author ; everything else is nothing but factory products, adulterations of art, in which borrowings, imitation, effectiveness, and entertainingness take the place of infection by a sensation.

That the number of true productions of art are to the number of these adulterations as one is to one hundred thousand and even more, may be proved by the following calculation. I read somewhere that in Paris alone there are thirty thousand painters. The same number there must be in England, the same in Germany, the same in Russia and Italy and the other minor countries. Thus there must be something like 120,000 painters in Europe ; there are, no doubt, as many musicians and as many artist authors. If these three hundred thousand men produce no more than three productions a year (many of them produce ten or more), each year will give one million productions of art. How many, then, have there been in the last ten years, and how many for the whole time that the art of the higher classes has been separated from that of the masses ? Obviously millions of them. Who of the greatest connoisseurs of art has really received an impression from all these so-called productions of art ? To say nothing of all the working people, who have no conception about all these productions, the men of the higher classes cannot know one thousandth part, and do not remember those which they knew anything about. All these objects appear under the form of art, produce no impression on anybody, except at times the impression of a diversion on the idle crowd of rich men, and disappear without leaving a trace. In reply to this we are told that, if there were no enormous quantity of failures, there would also be no real productions of art. But such a reflection is like one a baker would make in response to the reproach that his bread is good for nothing, which is, that if there were not hundreds of spoiled loaves, there would not be one well-baked loaf. It is true that where there is gold there is also much sand ; but this can by no means serve as an excuse for saying a lot of insipid things in order to say something clever.

We are surrounded by productions which are considered artistic. We have side by side thousands of poems, thousands of poetic stories, thousands of dramas, thousands of pictures, thousands of musical productions. All poems describe love or Nature, or the author's mental state, and measure and rhyme are observed in them all ; all dramas and comedies are exquisitely staged and beautifully performed by trained actors ; all novels are divided into chapters, and in all love is described, and there are effective scenes, and correct details of life are described ; all symphonies contain an allegro, an andante, a scherzo, and a finale, and all of them consist of

modulations and chords, and are performed by exquisitely trained musicians ; all pictures, in golden frames, give sharply outlined representations of persons and their accessories. But among these productions of all kinds of art there is one among hundreds of thousands, which is not exactly a little better than any other, but is distinguished from all the others as a diamond is distinguished from glass. One cannot be bought at any price, so precious it is ; the other has not only no price, but even a negative value, because it deceives and corrupts taste. But in their appearance they are absolutely the same to a man with a corrupt and atrophied feeling.

The difficulty of telling artistic productions in our society is increased by the fact that the external worth of the work in the false productions is not only not worse, but frequently even better than in the true productions ; an adulterated article often startles a person more than one which is real, and the contents of an adulterated article are more interesting. How is one to choose ? How is one to find this one out of a hundred thousand of productions, which in appearance does in no way differ from such as are intentionally made to look like a real one ?

For a man with an uncorrupted taste, for a labouring man, one who is not from the city, this is as easy as it is easy for an animal with an uncorrupted instinct to discover in the forest or the field the one track, out of thousands, which it needs. The animal will find without fail what it needs ; even so a man, if only his natural qualities are not distorted in him, will out of a thousand objects unerringly choose the true subject of art which he needs, infecting it with the sensation experienced by the artist ; but it is not so for people with a taste which is spoiled by education and by life. The sense which receives art is atrophied in them, and in the valuation of artistic productions they have to be guided by reflection and by study, and this reflection and this study completely confuse them, so that the majority of the men of our society are absolutely unable to distinguish a production of art from the coarsest adulteration of the same. People sit for hours at concerts and in theatres, listening to the productions of new composers, and feel themselves obliged to read the novels of famous new novelists and to examine pictures, which represent either something incomprehensible, or all the time exactly what they see much better in reality ; and, above all, they consider it obligatory to go into raptures over all these things, imagining that all these things are objects of art, and pass by real products of art, not only without attention, but even with contempt, merely because in their circle these are not included among the objects of art.

The other day I was coming home from a walk in an oppressed state of mind. As I approached the house, I heard the loud singing of a large choir of peasant

women. They were welcoming my daughter, who had been married and was visiting at my house. In this singing, with their shouts and striking against the scythes, there was expressed such a definite feeling of joy, alacrity, energy, that I did not notice myself how I

was infected by this sensation, and walked toward the house with greater vivacity and reached it all brightened up and happy. In the same state of excitation I found all the home folk who had heard the singing. That same evening we had a visit from a fine musician who was famous for his execution of classical productions, especially those by Beethoven, and he played for us Beethoven's sonata, Opus 101.

I consider it necessary to remark, for the benefit of those who might refer my judgment in regard to this sonata of Beethoven to my lack of comprehension, that, being very susceptible to music, I understood as well as anybody everything which people understand in this sonata and in the other things of Beethoven's last period. For a long time I put myself into such a mood that I admired these formless improvisations, which make the contents of the compositions of Beethoven's last period ; but I needed only to assume a serious attitude to the matter of art, comparing the impression received from the productions of Beethoven's last period with that pleasant, clear, and strong musical impression which, for example, one receives from the melodies of Bach (his arias), Haydn, Mozart, Chopin, – where their melodies are not obstructed with complications and adornments, – and of the same Beethoven in the first period, but chiefly with the impression received from the Italian, Norwegian, Russian popular song, from the Hungarian Csardas, and so forth, and immediately there was destroyed that obscure and almost morbid irritation artificially evoked by me from the productions of Beethoven's last period.

At the end of the performance, the persons present, though it was evident that it had all been tiresome to them, began, as such things are generally done, vigorously to praise Beethoven's profound production, without forgetting to mention that formerly people had not understood this last period, but that it really was the best. When I allowed myself to compare the impression produced on me by the singing of the peasant women, which had also been experienced by those who had heard that singing, with this sonata, the lovers of Beethoven only smiled contemptuously, considering it unnecessary to answer such strange remarks.

And yet the song of the women was true art, which conveyed a definite and strong sensation, while Beethoven's one hundred and first sonata was only an unsuccessful attempt at art, which contained no definite feeling and so could not infect any one.

For my work on art I diligently and with much labour read this winter the famous novels and stories which are praised by all of Europe, those by Zola, Bourget, Huysmans, Kipling. At the same time I came across a story in a children's periodical, by an entirely unknown writer, which told of the preparations which were being made for Easter in a widow's poor family. The story tells with what difficulty the mother obtained some white flour, which she spread on the table, in order to knead it, after which she went to fetch some yeast, having told the children not to leave the room and to watch the flour. The mother went away, and the neighbouring children ran

with a noise under the window, inviting them to come out into the street to play. The children forgot their mother's command, ran out into the street, and engaged in a game. The mother returns with the yeast ; in the room a hen is on the table, scattering on the earth floor the last of the flour to her chicks, which pick it out of the dust. The mother in despair scolds her children, the children yell. And the mother pities her children ; but there is no white flour left, and, to find help out of the calamity, the mother decides that she will bake Easter bread out of sifted black flour, smearing it with the white of an egg, and surrounding it with eggs.

" Black bread – the white loaf's grandfather," the mother quotes the proverb to the children, to console them for not having an Easter bread baked of white flour. And the children suddenly pass from despair to joyous raptures, and in different voices repeat the proverb and with greater merriment wait for the Easter bread.

Well ? The reading of the novels and stories by Zola, Bourget, Huysmans, Kipling, and others, with the most pretentious of subjects, did not move me for a moment ; I was, however, all the time annoyed at the authors, as one is annoyed at a man who considers you so naïve that he does not even conceal that method of deception with which he wishes to catch you. From the very first lines you see the intention with which the story is written, and all the details become useless, and you feel annoyed. Above all else, you know that the author has no other feeling than the desire to write a story or a novel, and that he never had any other feeling. And so you receive no artistic impression whatever ; but I could not tear myself away from the story of the unknown author about the children and the chicks, because I was at once infected by the sensation which obviously the author had gone through, experienced, and conveyed.

We have a painter, Vasnetsdv. He has painted images for the Kiev Cathedral ; all praise him as the founder of some high, new kind of Christian art. He worked on these pictures for tens of years, he was paid tens of thousands for them, and all these images are a miserable imitation of an imitation of imitations, which does not contain a spark of any sentiment. This same Vasnetsov painted for Turgénev's story, The Quail (it tells of how a father in the presence of his boy killed a quail and was sorry for it), a picture, in which is represented a boy sleeping with wide-open upper lip, while the quail is above him, as a vision. This picture is a true production of art.

In the English Academy there are side by side two pictures, – one of these, by J. C. Dalmas, represents the temptation of St. Anthony. The saint is kneeling, and praying. Behind him stands a naked woman and some animals. It is evident that the painter took a fancy to the woman, but that he had no use for Anthony, and that the temptation was not only not terrible to him (the painter), but even in the highest degree enjoyable. And so, if there is any art in this picture, it is very bad and false. In the same book there is side by side with this a small picture by Langley, representing a transient

beggar boy whom a woman, evidently taking pity on him, has called into the house. The boy is pitifully contracting his bare legs under the bench, and eating ; the woman is looking on, apparently supposing that the boy may want more, and a girl of seven years of age, leaning her head on her hand, is looking attentively and seriously at the boy, without taking her eyes off him, having evidently come to understand for the first time what poverty is, and what the inequality of men is, and for the first time asking herself the question, why she has everything, while this one is barefoot and hungry. She both is sorry for him and feels joy. She loves the boy and the good. And one feels that the artist loved this girl and that which she loved. And this picture, it seems, of a little known artist, is a beautiful, true production of art.

I remember, I once saw Hamlet performed by Rossi ; both the tragedy and the actor who played the chief part are by our critics considered to be the last word of the dramatic art. And yet I experienced all the time, both from the contents of the drama, and from the performance, that peculiar suffering which is produced by false imitations of the productions of art. Lately I read an account of the theatre among the wild people of the Voguls. One of the persons present describes the following performance : one, a tall Vogul, the other, small, both dressed in deerskins, represent, one, a doe, the other, her fawn. A third Vogul represents a hunter on snowshoes and with a bow ; a fourth by his voice represents a bird, which warns the doe of the danger. The drama consists in this, that the hunter is running on the track of the doe with her fawn. The deer run away from the scene and come back again. This performance is taking place in a small felt tent. The hunter comes nearer and nearer to the pursued animals. The fawn is worn out and presses close to his mother. The doe stops to take a rest, the hunter runs up and aims at her. Just then the bird squeaks, warning the deer of the danger. The deer run away. Again there is a pursuit, and again the hunter comes near, catches up with them, and discharges his arrow. The arrow strikes the fawn. The fawn cannot run, presses close to his mother, and she licks his wound. The hunter draws another arrow. The spectators, so the eye-witness tells, become breathless, and in the audience are heard deep sobs and even weeping. I felt from the description alone that this was a true production of art.

What I say will be accepted as a senseless paradox, at which one can only marvel, and yet I cannot help but say what I think, namely, that the people of our circle, of whom some compose verses, stories, novels, operas, symphonies, sonatas, paint pictures of all kinds, chisel sculptures, while others listen and look on, while others again value and criticize all this, discuss, condemn, celebrate, raise monuments to one another, and so for several generations, – that all these people, with exceedingly few exceptions, the artists, the public, and the critics, never, except in their first childhood and youth, when they have not yet heard any discussions about art, have experienced that simple sensation, familiar to the simplest man and even to a child, of infection by the sensations of another person, which makes one rejoice at another man's joy, weep at

another man's sorrow, unite one's soul with that of another man, and which forms the essence of the art, and that, therefore, these men not only are unable to distinguish an object of true art from its adulteration, but always accept the worst and most adulterated art as true and beautiful, while they do not even notice true art, because the adulterations are always more painted up, while true art is always modest.

XV.

In our society art has become so much corrupted, that not only bad art has come to be regarded as good, but there has even been lost the very conception of what art is, so that, in order to speak of the art of our society, it is necessary first of all to segregate true art from the adulterations.

The sign which segregates true art from its adulterations is this indubitable one, – the infectiousness of art. If a man without any activity on his part and without any change of his position, in reading, hearing, seeing the production of another man, experiences a state of mind which unites him with that man and with others who, like him, apperceive the subject of art, then the subject which evokes such a state is a subject of art. No matter how poetical, how seemingly real, how effective or entertaining a subject may be, it is not a subject of art, if it does not evoke in man that sensation of joy which is distinct from all other sensations, that union of one's soul with another (the author) and with others (the hearers or spectators) who perceive the same artistic production.

It is true, this sign is internal, and men who have forgotten the effect produced by true art and expect from art something different, – and there is an immense majority of such in our society, – may think that that feeling of diversion and of some excitement, which they experience from the adulterations of art, is the æsthetical feeling, and although it is impossible to change the minds of these men, just as it is impossible to convince a colourblind person that green is not red, this sign none the less remains fully defined for people with an un corrupted and unatrophied feeling in matters of art, and clearly determines the sensation produced by art from any other.

The chief peculiarity of this sensation is this, that the receiver to such an extent blends with the artist that it seems to him that the subject perceived by him was not made by any one else, but by him, and that everything expressed by this subject is the same which he had been wanting to express for a long time. A true production of art has this effect, that in the consciousness of the per-ceiver, there is destroyed the division between him and the artist, and not

only between him and the artist, but also between him and all men who are perceiving the same production of art. In this liberation of the personality, from its separation from other men, from its seclusion, in this blending of the personality with others does the chief attractive force and property of art consist.

If a man experiences this sensation, is infected by the mental condition in which the author is, and feels his blending with other men, the subject which evokes this state is art ; if this infection is lacking, and there is no blending with the author and with those who perceive the production, there is no art. More than this : not only is the infectiousness a certain sign of art, but the degree of the infection is the only standard of the value of art.

The stronger the infection, the better is the art as art, not to speak of its contents, that is, independently of the value of those sensations which it conveys.

Art becomes more or less infectious in consequence of three conditions : (1) in consequence of a greater or lesser peculiarity of the sensation conveyed ; (2) in consequence of a greater or lesser clearness of the transmission of this sensation ; and (3) in consequence of the sincerity of the artist, that is, of the greater or lesser force with which the artist himself experiences the sensation which he is conveying.

The more the sensation to be conveyed is special, the more strongly does it act upon the perceiver. The perceiver experiences a greater enjoyment, the more special the condition of the mind is, to which he is transferred, and so he more willingly and more powerfully blends with it.

But the lucidity of the expression of the sensation contributes to the infectiousness, because, blending in his consciousness with the author, the one who receives the impression is the more satisfied, the more clearly the sensation is expressed which, it seems to him, he has known and experienced for a long time, and for which he has just found an expression.

Still more is the degree of the infectiousness of art increased with the degree of the artist's sincerity. The moment the hearer, spectator, reader, feels that the artist is himself infected by his production and writes, sings, plays for himself, and not for the purpose of acting upon others, this mental condition of the artist infects the person receiving the impression, and, on the other hand, as soon as the spectator, reader, hearer, feels that the author writes, sings, plays, not for his own satisfaction, but for him, the person receiving the impression, and does not himself feel what he wants to express, opposition makes its appearance, and the most special and the newest sensation and the most intricate technique not only fail to make an impression, but are even repulsive.

I am speaking of three conditions of the infectiousness of art ; in reality there is but the last, which is, that the artist should

experience an inner need of expressing the sensation which is communicated by him. This condition includes the first, for, if the artist is sincere, he will express the sensation as he has received it. And since no man resembles another, this sensation will be different for any one else, and the more peculiar and the deeper the source from which the artist draws, the more intimate and sincere will it be. This sincerity will cause the artist to find a clear expression for the sensation which he wishes to convey.

Therefore this third condition, sincerity, is the most important of the three. This condition is always present in national art, for which reason it acts so powerfully, and is nearly always absent in our art of the higher classes which is continuously manufactured by the artists for their personal, selfish, or vain purposes.

Such are the three conditions, the presence of which separates art from its adulterations, and at the same time determines the value of each production of art independently of its contents.

The absence of one of these conditions has this effect, that the production no longer belongs to art, but to its adulterations. If a production does not render the individual peculiarity of the artist's sensation, especially, if it is not clearly expressed, or if it did not arise from the author's inner necessity, it is not a production of art. But if all three conditions are present, even in the smallest degree, the production, however weak it may be, is a production of art.

The presence of all three conditions, of peculiarity, clearness, and sincerity, in varying degrees, determines the worth of the objects of art as art, independently of its contents. All the productions of art are as to their worth classified in accordance with the presence of one of these three conditions. In one it is the peculiarity of the conveyable subject which predominates ; in another it is the clearness of expression ; in a third - sincerity ; in a fourth - sincerity and peculiarity, but the absence of clearness ; in a fifth - peculiarity and clearness, but less sincerity, and so forth, in all possible degrees and combinations.

Thus is art separated from what is not art, and the worth of art as art determined, independently of its

contents, that is, independently of whether it conveys good or bad sensations.

But by what is good or bad art, as regards its contents, determined ?

XVI.

By what is good or bad art, as regards its contents, determined ?

Art is, together with speech, one of the instruments of intercourse, and so also of progress, that is, of humanity's forward movement toward perfection. Speech makes it possible for the men of the last living generations to know what the preceding generations and the best leading contemporary men have found out by means of experience and by reasoning ; art makes it possible for the men of the last living generations to experience all those sensations which men experienced before them and which the best and leading men are still experiencing. And as there takes place an evolution of knowledge, that is, as the truer and necessary knowledge crowds out and takes the place of faulty and unnecessary knowledge, so also does the evolution of feelings take place by means of art, crowding out the lower, less good feelings, which are less necessary for the good of men, to make place for better feelings, which are more necessary for this good. In this does the mission of art consist ; and so art is according to its contents better, the more it fulfils this mission, and worse, the less it fulfils it.

But the valuation of feelings, that is, the acknowledgment of these or those feelings as better or less good, that is, as necessary for the good of men, is achieved by the religious consciousness of a certain time.

In any given historic time and in every society of men there exists a higher comprehension of the meaning of life, attained by the men of this society, which determines the highest good after which this society is striving.

This comprehension is the religious consciousness of a certain time and society. This religious consciousness is always clearly expressed by some leading men of the society, and is more or less vividly felt by all. Such a religious consciousness, corresponding with its expression, has always existed in every society. If it seems to us that the religious consciousness is absent in a society, it seems so to us, not because it is really lacking, but because we do not wish to see it. And the reason we do not wish to see it is because it arraigns our life, which is not in accord with it.

The religious consciousness in a society is the same as the direction of flowing water. If the water runs, there is a direction in which it flows. If a society lives, there is a religious consciousness, which indicates the direction along which all the men of that society are tending more or less consciously.

For this reason the religious consciousness has always existed in every society. In correspondence with this religious consciousness the sensations which are conveyed by art have always been valued. Only on the basis of this religious consciousness of its time was there segregated from the whole endlessly varied sphere of art that which conveys the sensations that realize in life the religious consciousness of a given time. And such art has always been highly esteemed and encouraged ; but the art which conveys sensations which

result from the religious consciousness of a former time, which is obsolete and outlived, has always been condemned and despised. All other art, which conveys the most varied sensations, by means of which men commune with one another, has not been condemned and has been admitted, so long as it has not conveyed any sensations which are contrary to the religious consciousness. Thus, for example, the Greeks evolved, approved, and encouraged the art which conveyed the sensations of beauty, strength, valour (Hesiod, Homer, Phidias), and condemned and despised the art which conveyed the sensations of gross sensuality, dejection, effeminacy. The Jews evolved and encouraged the art which conveyed the sensations of loyalty and obedience to the God of the Jews, to His commandments (some parts of the Book of Genesis, the prophets, the psalms), and condemned and despised the art which conveyed the sensations of idolatry (the golden calf) ; all other art, – stories, songs, dances, the adornment of the houses, of the utensils, of the wearing apparel, – which was not contrary to the religious consciousness, was not thought of or condemned at all. Thus has art always and everywhere been esteemed according to its contents, and so it ought to be esteemed, because such a relation to art results from the properties of human nature, and these properties do not change.

I know that, according to the opinion which is current in our time, religion is a superstition which humanity has outlived, and that, therefore, it is assumed that in our time there is no religious consciousness common to all men, by which art may be valued. I know that such is the opinion which is diffused among the so-called cultured classes of our time. Men who do not recognize Christianity in its true sense and so invent for themselves all kinds of philosophical and æsthetical theories, which conceal from them the meaninglessness and sinfulness of their lives, cannot help but think thus. These men intentionally, and at times unintentionally, by confusing the concept of the religious cult with the concept of the religious consciousness, think that, by denying the cult, they thereby deny the religious consciousness. But all these attacks on religion and the attempts at establishing a world conception which is contrary to the religious consciousness of our time, prove more obviously than anything else the presence of this religious consciousness, which arraigns the lives of men who do not conform to it.

If in humanity there is such a thing as progress, that is, a forward movement, there must inevitably exist an indicator of the direction of this movement. Religion has always been such an indicator. The whole of history proves that the progress of humanity has taken place only under the guidance of religion, not the religion of the cult, the Catholic, the Protestant, and so forth, but the religious consciousness. And if the progress of humanity cannot take place without the guidance of religion, – the progress is taking place all the time, consequently also at present, – there must also exist a religion of our time. Thus, whether the so-called cultured people of our time like it or not, they must recognize the existence of religion as a necessary guidance to progress even in our time. But if there is among us a religious consciousness, our art must be

valued on the basis of this religious consciousness ; and just as always and at all times, there was segregated from all indifferent art, cognized, highly esteemed, and encouraged that art which conveys sensations that arise from the religious consciousness of our time, and the art which is contrary to this consciousness was condemned and despised, and all other indifferent art was not segregated and not encouraged.

The religious consciousness of our time, in its most general, practical application, is the consciousness of the fact that our good, the material and the spiritual, the individual and the general, the temporal and the eternal, is contained in the fraternal life of all men, in our love-union among ourselves. This consciousness was not only expressed by Christ and all the best men of the past, and is not only repeated in the most varied forms and from the most varied sides by the best men of our time, but has also served as a guiding thread in the whole complex work of humanity, which, on the one hand, consists in the destruction of the physical and moral barriers, which interfere with the union of men, and, on the other, in the establishment of those principles, common to all men, which can and must unite all men into one universal brotherhood. On the basis of this consciousness we must estimate the value of all the phenomena of our life, among them also our art, segregating from its whole sphere that which conveys sensations arising from this religious consciousness, esteeming highly and encouraging this art, rejecting what is contrary to this consciousness, and refraining from ascribing to other art that meaning which is not proper to it.

The chief mistake made by the men of the highest classes of the so-called Renaissance,— a mistake which we are continuing at the present time, did not consist in their having ceased to value religious art and to ascribe any meaning to it (the men of that time could not have ascribed any meaning to it, because, like the men of the higher classes of our time, they could not believe in what was given out as religion), but in this, that in place of this absent religious art they put an insignificant art which had for its aim nothing but man's enjoyment, that is, in that they began to eliminate, value, and encourage as religious art what in no case deserved that valuation and encouragement.

A father of the church said that men's chief trouble is not their not knowing God, but their having placed what is not God in the place of God. The same is true of art. The chief trouble of the men of the highest classes of our time is not so much that they have no religious art, as that in place of the highest religious art, separated from all the rest, as especially important and valuable, they have separated the most insignificant, for the most part harmful, art, which has for its aim enjoyment on the part of the few, which from the very fact of its exclusiveness is contrary to that Christian principle of a universal union, which forms the religious consciousness of our time. In the place of religious art has been put a trifling, frequently corrupt art, and thus was concealed from men that necessity of a true, religious art, which

has to be in life, in order to improve it.

It is true, the art which satisfies the demands of the religious consciousness of our time does not resemble the former art, but, in spite of this dissimilarity, that which forms the religious art of our time is very clear and well defined to a man who does not intentionally conceal the truth from himself. In former times, when the highest religious consciousness united only a certain society of men which, no matter how large it was, was one among others, – the Jewish, Athenian, and Roman citizens, – the sensations conveyed by the art of those times sprang from the desire for the power, grandeur, glory, and welfare of these societies, and the men who contributed to this welfare by means of force, cunning, cruelty (Ulysses, Jacob, David, Samson, Hercules, and all the bogatyr) could be the heroes of art. But the religious consciousness of our time does not segregate any one society of men, – on the contrary, it demands the union of all, absolutely all men without exception, and places brotherly love for all men higher than all other virtues, and so the sensations which are conveyed by the art of our time not only cannot coincide with the sensations which were conveyed by the older art, but must even be contrary to them.

Christian, true Christian art could not establish itself for a long time, and has not yet established itself, because the Christian religious consciousness was not one of those small steps by which humanity moves forward, but an enormous upheaval, which, if it has not yet changed, must finally change the whole life-conception of men and the whole inner structure of their lives. It is true, the life of humanity, as well as that of the individual man, moves evenly ; but in this even motion there are, as it were, turning-points, which sharply separate the previous life from the following. Such a turning-point for humanity was found in Christianity, – at least it must appear as such to us, who are living by the Christian consciousness. The Christian consciousness gave another new direction to all the sentiments of men, and thus completely changed the contents and the significance of art. The Greeks could make use of the art of the Persians, and the Romans of the art of the Greeks, and the Jews of the art of the Egyptians, – the fundamental ideals were one and the same. The grandeur and the good of the Persians, or the grandeur and the good of the Greeks, or of the Romans, were such an ideal. One and the same art was transferred to other conditions and was good for newer nations. But the Christian ideal so changed and upturned everything that, as the Gospel says, what was great before man became an abomination before God. The ideal was no longer the grandeur of a Pharaoh or a Roman emperor, not the beauty of the Greek, nor the wealth of Phoenicia, but meekness, chastity, compassion, love. Not the rich man, but the beggar Lazarus became the hero ; Mary of Egypt, not in the time of her beauty, but in the time of her repentance ; not the acquirers of wealth, but those who distributed it ; not those who lived in palaces, but those who lived in catacombs and huts ; not those who held power over others, but those who recognized no power but God's. And the highest production of art was not a temple of victory with the statues of the victors, but the representation of the human soul, so transformed by love

that the man who is being tortured and killed pities and loves his tormentors.

And so the men of the Christian world find it hard to arrest the inertia of the pagan art, with which their life has grown up. The contents of the Christian religious art are so new to them, so different from the contents of the older art, that it seems to them that the Christian art is a negation of art, and so they desperately hold on to the old art. But this old art, which in our time no longer has any source in religious consciousness, has lost all its meaning, and we are willy-nilly compelled to renounce it.

The essence of the Christian consciousness consists in every man's recognition of his filial relation to God and the resulting union of men with God and among themselves, as it says in the Gospel (John xvii. 21), and so the contents of the Christian art are sentiments which contribute to the union of men with God and with one another.

The expression, " the union of men with God and with one another," may seem obscure to people who are accustomed to hear the frequent misuse of these words, and yet these words have a very clear meaning. These words signify that the Christian union of men, in contradistinction to the partial, exclusive union of only a few men, is that which unites all men without exception.

Art, every art in itself, has the property of uniting men. Every art has this effect, that the men who receive the sensation which the artist conveys unite their souls, in the first place, with the artist, and, in the second, with all men who have received the same impression. But non-Christian art, in uniting some men among themselves, by this very union separates them from other men, so that this partial union frequently serves as a source, not only of disunion, but also of enmity toward other men. Such is all patriotic art, with its hymns, poems, monuments ; such is all ecclesiastic art, that is, the art of certain cults, with their images, statues, processions, services, temples ; such is the military art ; such is all refined, in reality corrupt art, which is accessible only to men who oppress others, – the art of the idle rich. Such art is obsolete, non-Christian art, which unites some men for no other reason than that it may more sharply separate them from others, and even place them in an inimical relation to them. Christian art is only that which unites all men without exception, in that it evokes in men the consciousness of the oneness of their position in regard to God and to their neighbours, or in that it evokes in them one and the same sentiment, be it the simplest, so long as it is not contrary to Christianity, a sentiment which is natural to all men without exception.

The Christian good art of our time may not be understood by men in consequence of the insufficiency of its form or in consequence of the inattention of men toward it, but it must be such that all men may experience the sensations which are conveyed by it. It has to be the art not of some one circle of men, not of one class, not of one nationality, not of one religious cult, that is, it is not to convey

sensations which are only in a certain way comprehensible to an educated man, or only to a nobleman, a merchant, or only a Russian, a Japanese, or a Catholic, a Buddhist, and so forth, but to convey sensations that are accessible to every man. Only such art may in our time be recognized as good art and segregated from all other art and encouraged.

Christian art, that is, the art of our time, must be catholic in the direct sense of the word, that is, universal, and so must unite all men. But there are but two kinds of sensations which unite all men, the sensations which arise from the recognition of one's filial relation to God and of the brotherhood of men, and the simplest, vital sensations, which are accessible to all men without exception, such as the sensations of joy, meekness of spirit, alacrity, calm, etc. It is only these two kinds of sensations that form the subject of the art of our time which is good according to its contents.

The action produced by these two apparently so different kinds of art is one and the same. The sensations arising from the consciousness of a filial relation to God and of a brotherhood of men, like the sensations of firmness in truth, loyalty to God's will, self-renunciation, respect for men and love of them, which arise from the Christian religious consciousness, and the simplest sensations, – a meek or a happy mood resulting from a song, or from an amusing and all-comprehensible joke, or from a touching story, or from a drawing, or from a doll, produce one and the same effect, – a love-union of men. It happens that men are together who, if not hostile, are strangers to one another as the result of their moods or feelings, and suddenly a story, or a performance, or a picture, even a building, and most frequently music, unites all these men as though by means of an electric spark, and all these men feel union and love of one another, in place of the former disunion, frequently even enmity. Everybody rejoices at the fact that another man experiences the same as he, – rejoices at the communion established, not only between him and all the persons present, but even with all the men who live at the same time with him and who will receive the same impression ; more than this : everybody feels the mysterious joy of an intercourse after the grave with all the men of the past, who have experienced the same feeling, and with the men of the future, who will experience it. This action is produced alike by the art which conveys the sentiment of love of God and one's neighbour, and by the vital art, which conveys the simplest sensations, common to all men.

The difference between the valuation of the art of our time and that of the past consists mainly in this, that the art of our time, that is, Christian art, being based on the religious consciousness which demands the union of men, excludes from the sphere of good art, as far as its contents are concerned, everything which conveys exclusive sentiments, which do not unite, but disunite, men, classifying such art as bad in contents, and, on the contrary, includes in the sphere of good art, as far as its contents are concerned, the division of universal art, which formerly was not considered worthy of segregation and respect, and which conveys the

most insignificant and simple sensations, but such as are accessible to all men without exception, and which, therefore, unite them.

Such art cannot help but be considered good in our time, because it attains the same aim which the religious Christian consciousness of our time sets before humanity.

The Christian art either evokes in men those sensations which through love of God and our neighbour draw them to a greater and ever greater union and make them ready and capable of such a union ; or it evokes in them those sensations which show them that they are already united in the unity of the joys and sorrows of life. And so the Christian art of our time can be, and actually is, of two sorts: (1) the art which conveys sentiments which arise from the religious consciousness of man's position in the world, in relation to God and to our neighbour, – religious art, and (2) the art which conveys the simplest sensations of life, such as are accessible to all men of the whole world, – vital, national, universal art. It is only these two kinds of art that in our time may be regarded as good art.

The first kind of religious art, which conveys both the positive sentiments of love of God and of our neighbour as also the negative indignations, the terrors in violating love, is manifested chiefly in the form of literature and partly in painting and sculpture ; the second that of universal art, which conveys sensations that are accessible to all, is manifested in literature, and in painting, and in sculpture, and in dances, and in architecture, and chiefly in music.

If I were required to point out in modern art the models of each of these kinds of art, I should point, as to models of a higher art, which arises from the love of God and of our neighbour, in the sphere of literature, to Schiller's Robbers; from the moderns, to Hugo's Les Pauvres Gens and to his Les Misérables ; to Dickens's stories and novels, Tale of Two Cities, Chimes, and others, to Uncle Tom's Cabin, to Dostoévski, especially his Dead House, to George Eliot's Adam Bede.

In the painting of modern times there are, however strange this may seem, hardly any productions of the kind which directly convey the Christian sentiments of love of God and of our neighbour ; this is especially true among famous painters. There are gospel pictures, and of these there is a great quantity ; they all illustrate historical events with a great wealth of details, but do not convey, and cannot convey, that religious sentiment, which the authors do not possess. There are many pictures which represent the personal sentiments of various people, but there are very few pictures which reproduce acts of self-renunciation and Christian love, and these are only among little known painters and in unfinished pictures, but mainly in drawings. Such is Kramski's painting, which is worth many of his pictures, and which represents a drawing-room with a balcony, past which solemnly march the regiments returning home. On the balcony is standing a nurse with a babe, and a boy. They are taking in the procession of the soldiers ; but the mother, covering her

face with a handkerchief, falls sobbing with her face against the back of the sofa. Such is also Langley's picture, which I have mentioned ; such is also the picture which represents a rescue boat hurrying in a heavy storm to save a drowning ship, by the French painter Morion. There are also some other pictures which approach this kind, and which express the labourer with love and respect. Such are Millet's pictures, especially his drawing, " The Digger Resting ; " of the same character the pictures by Jules Breton, L'Her-mite, Defregger, and others. As samples of productions evoking indignation and terror at the violation of love of God and of our neighbour, may serve Gay's picture, " The Judgment," and Liezen Mayer's picture, " The Signing of the Sentence of Death." There are few pictures even of this category. The cares about the technique and beauty for the most part overshadow the feeling. Thus, for example, Gérôme's picture, " Pollice Verso," does not so much express horror at what is taking place, as infatuation with the beauty of the spectacle.

It is even more difficult in the new art of the higher classes to point out models of the second kind, of good, universal, vital art, especially in literature and in music. Even if there are productions which by their inner contents, like Don Quixote, Molière's comedies, Dickens's Copperfield and Pickwick Club, Gogol's and Pushkin's stories, and a few things by Maupassant, may be referred to this kind, these things on account of the exclusiveness of the sensations conveyed and on account of the special details of time and place, and, chiefly, on account of their poverty of contents, as compared with the models of ancient universal art, as, for example, the history of Joseph the Fair, are for the most part accessible only to people of their own nation and even of their own circle. The incidents about Joseph's brothers, who, being jealous of him in respect to their father, sold him to merchantmen ; about Potiphar's wife wishing to tempt the young man ; about the youth's attaining a high position and pitying his brothers ; about the favourite Benjamin, and all the rest, - all those are sentiments which are accessible to a Russian peasant, and a Chinaman, and an African, and a child, and an old man, to an educated man, and to an illiterate person ; and all that is written with so much reserve, without superfluous details, that the story may be transferred to any surroundings, and it will be just as comprehensible and just as touching. But not such are the sentiments of Don Quixote or of Molière's heroes (though Molière is almost the most universal and so the most beautiful artist of modern art) and even less so are the sentiments of Pickwick and his friends. These sentiments are very exclusive, not universally human, and so, to make them infectious, the authors surrounded them with copious details of time and place. The copiousness of the details, however, makes these stories more exclusive still and incomprehensible for those men who live outside the surroundings which the author describes.

In the story of Joseph there was no need of giving a detailed description, as they now do, of Joseph's bloody shirt and of Jacob's house and garment, and of the attitude and attire of Potiphar's wife, how she, adjusting the bracelet of her left hand, said, " Come

into my room," and so forth, because the contents of the sentiment in this story are so strong that all the details, – excluding those which are most necessary, such as, for example, that Joseph went into another room, in order to weep, – are superfluous and would only interfere with the transmission of the sensations, – and so this story is accessible to all men, moves the men of all nations, conditions, and ages, has reached us, and will live another thousand years. But take the details away from the best novels of our time, and what will be left ?

Thus it is impossible in modern literary art to point out any productions which completely satisfy the demands of universality. Even those that exist are for the most part spoiled by what is called realism, which may more correctly be called provincialism in art.

In music the same happens as in literary art, and from the same reasons. On account of the poverty of their contents, the tunes of the modern musicians are strikingly barren. And so, to strengthen the impression produced by a barren tune, the modern musicians burden every most insignificant melody with the most complex modulations of their own national tunes, or only of such as are proper to a certain circle, a certain musical school. Melody – every melody – is free, and may be understood by all ; but the moment it is tied to a certain harmony and is obstructed by it, it becomes comprehensible only to men who are familiar with that harmony, and becomes completely foreign, not only to other nationalities, but also to all men who do not belong to the circle in which men have trained themselves in certain forms of harmony. Thus music turns in the same vicious circle as poetry. Insignificant, exclusive tunes, to be made attractive, are obstructed with harmonic, rhythmical, and orchestric complications, and so become more exclusive still and fail to be universal and even national, that is, they are accessible to but a few men, and not to the whole nation.

In music, outside of the marches and dances of composers, which approach the demands of universal art, there may be pointed out the popular songs of the various nations, from the Russian to the Chinese ; but in the learned music there are but a very few productions, the famous violin aria by Bach, Chopin's Es dur nocturne, and, perhaps, a dozen things, not entire pieces, but passages selected from the productions of Haydn, Mozart, Schubert, Beethoven, Chopin.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In presenting models of art which I regard as the best, I do not ascribe any especial weight to my selection, because I, besides being little versed in all the kinds of art, belong to the class of men with a taste which is corrupted by a false education. And so I may, from an old inherent habit, be mistaken when I ascribe an absolute worth to the impression produced on me by a thing in my youth. I call them models of this or that kind only for the purpose of more clearly elucidating my idea and showing how I, with my present view, understand the value of art from its contents. I must

remark with this that I count my artistic productions as belonging to the sphere of bad art, with the exception of the story, *God Sees the Truth*, which belongs to the first kind, and *The Prisoner of the Caucasus*, which belongs to the second.

Though the same is repeated in painting as in poetry and music, that is, that productions weak in conception, to be made more entertaining, are surrounded by minutely studied accessories of time and place, which give to these productions a temporary and local interest, but make them less universal, it is possible in painting, more than in any other kinds of art, to point out productions which satisfy the demands of a universal Christian art, that is, such as express sentiments which are comprehensible to all men.

Such productions of the arts of painting and sculpture, universal as regards their contents, are all the pictures and statues of the so-called genre, the representations of animals, then landscapes, caricatures of comprehensible contents, and all kinds of ornaments. There are very many such productions in painting and in art (porcelain dolls), but the majority of such objects, as, for example, all kinds of ornaments, are not considered art, or if they are, are considered art of a lower order. In reality all such objects, if only they convey the artist's sincere sentiment (no matter how insignificant it may appear to us), and if they are comprehensible to all men, are the productions of true and good Christian art.

I am afraid that here I shall be reproached because, having denied that the concept of beauty forms a subject of art, I here again acknowledge beauty as a subject of art. This reproach is unjust, because the contents of the art of all kinds of ornamentation does not consist in beauty, but in the sensation of delight, enjoyment of the combinations of lines and colours, which the artist experiences and with which he infects the spectator. Art is, as it has been, and can be, nothing but the infection by one man of another or others with the sensation which the infecting person has experienced. Among these sensations is also that of enjoying what pleases the eye. Objects which please the eye can be such as please a small or a greater number of men, and such as please all men. And such are chiefly all ornaments. The landscape of a very exclusive locality, a very special genre may not please all men ; but ornaments, whether Yakut or Greek, are accessible to all and evoke enjoyment in all men, and so this neglected kind of art in Christian society ought to be esteemed much higher than the exclusive, pretentious pictures and sculptures. Thus there are but two kinds of good Christian art; everything else, which does not come under these two kinds, must be considered bad art, which must not only not be encouraged, but ought to be expelled, rejected, and despised, as an art which does not unite, but disunites men. Such in the literary art are all the dramas, novels, and poems which convey exclusive sensations, such as are inherent only in the one class of the idle rich, – the sensations of aristocratic honour, satiety, melancholy, pessimism, and the refined and corrupt sensations which arise from sexual love and which are completely incomprehensible to the vast majority of

men.

In painting, as such productions of bad art must be similarly regarded all pictures, false, religious, patriotic, and exclusive, in short, all pictures which represent amusements and delights of a wealthy and idle life, all so-called symbolical pictures, in which the meaning of the symbol itself is accessible only to people of a certain circle, and, above all else, all pictures with lascivious subjects, all that horrible feminine nakedness, which fills all the exhibitions and galleries. To the same category belongs all chamber and opera music of our time, beginning in particular with Beethoven, – Schumann, Berlioz, Liszt, Wagner, – which by its contents is devoted to the expression of sensations which are accessible only to men who have nurtured in themselves a morbid nervous irritability, excited by this exclusive and complicated music.

" What, the ninth symphony belongs to the bad kind of art ? " do I hear voices of indignation.

" Unquestionably," do I answer. Everything I have written, I have written for the purpose of finding a clear, rational criterion, by which to judge the values of the productions of art. This criterion, coinciding with simple common sense, shows to me indubitably that Beethoven's symphony is not a good production of art. Of course, the recognition of such a famous work as bad must be strange and startling to men who are educated in the adoration of certain productions and their authors, to men with a distorted taste, in consequence of an education which is based on this adoration. But what is to be done with the indications of reason and with common sense ?

Beethoven's ninth symphony is regarded as a great production of art. To verify this assertion, I first of all put the question to myself : If this production does not belong to the highest order of religious art, has it any other property of good art of our time, – the property of uniting all men in one feeling ? Does it not belong to the Christian worldly universal art? I cannot answer affirmatively, because I not only fail to see that the sensations conveyed in this production are able to unite people who are not specially educated to submit to this complex hypnotisation, but I cannot even imagine a crowd of normal men that could make anything out of this long and confused artificial production, but some short passages drowned in a sea of the incomprehensible. And so I am involuntarily obliged to conclude that this production belongs to bad art. What is remarkable is that to the end of the symphony there is attached Schiller's poem which expresses the idea, though not clearly, that sensation (Schiller speaks only of the sensation of joy) unites people and evokes love in them. Although this song is sung at the end of the symphony, the music does not correspond to the thought of the poem, since this music is exclusive and does not unite all men, but only a few, separating them from the rest of men.

In precisely the same manner one would have to judge many, very many productions of art of every description, which among the higher

classes of our society are considered to be great. By the same, the only firm criterion one would have to judge the famous Divine, Comedy and Jerusalem Delivered, and the greater part of the productions of Shakespeare and Goethe, and in painting all the representations of miracles and Raphael's " Transfiguration," and so forth. No matter what the subject may be which is given out as a production of art, and no matter how it may be lauded by men, to find out its value, it is necessary to apply to it the question whether the subject belongs to real art or to its adulterations. Having on the basis of the sign of infectiousness of even a small circle of men recognized a certain object as belonging to the sphere of art, it is necessary on the basis of the sign of universal accessibility to decide the following question : whether this production belongs to the bad exclusive art, which is contrary to the religious consciousness of our time, or to the Christian art, which unites men. Having recognized a subject as belonging to the real Christian art, it is necessary on the basis of this, whether the production conveys sensations which arise from the love of God and of our neighbour, or only simple sensations which unite all men, to refer it to one class or another, to religious art or to profane universal art.

Only on the basis of this verification shall we be able to segregate in the whole mass of what in our society is given out as art those subjects which form real, important, necessary spiritual food from every harmful and useless art and its imitation, by which we are surrounded. Only on the basis of this verification shall we be able to free ourselves from the deleterious consequences of harmful art and to make use of the beneficent influence, so necessary for the spiritual life of man and of humanity, of true and good art, which forms humanity's destination.

## XVII.

Art is one of the two organs of humanity's progress. Through words man shares his thoughts, through the images of art he shares his feelings with all men, not only of the present, but also of the past and the future. It is proper for man to make use of both these organs of communication, and so the distortion of even one of them cannot help but exert bad influences on that society in which this distortion has taken place. The consequences of this influence must be twofold : in the first place, an absence in society of that activity which ought to be performed by that organ, and, in the second place, the harmful activity of the distorted organ ; and it is these consequences which have appeared in our society. The organ of art was distorted, and so the society of the higher classes was in a large measure deprived of that activity which this organ ought to perform. On the one side, the enormously widespread adulterations of art in our society, which serve only for the amusement and corruption of men, and, on the other, the productions of an

insignificant, exclusive art, which is esteemed as the highest, have in the majority of the men of our time distorted the ability of being infected by the true productions of art, and have thus deprived them of the possibility of knowing those higher sentiments which humanity has attained and which can be transmitted to men only through art.

All the best which is done in art by humanity remains foreign for the men who have become devoid of the ability of being infected by art, and gives way to false adulterations of art or to insignificant art, which is taken for the real. The men of our time take delight in a Baudelaire, Verlaine, Moréas, Ibsen, Maeterlinck in poetry ; in a Monet, Manet, Puvis de Chavannes, Burne-Jones, Stuck, Bocklin in painting ; in a Wagner, Liszt, Richard Strauss in music, and so forth, and are unable to understand either the highest or the simplest art.

In the midst of the highest classes, in consequence of the loss of the ability of being infected by the productions of art, men grow, are educated, and live without the mitigating, beneficent influence of art, and so not only do not move toward perfection, do not become better, but, on the contrary, with a high development of external means become more savage, coarser, and more cruel.

Such is the consequence of the absence of the activity of the necessary organ of art in our society. The consequences of the distorted activity of this organ are more harmful still, and there are many of them.

The first startling consequence is an enormous waste of the labours of working men for a work which is not only useless, but for the most part, even harmful, and, besides, an unrewarded waste of human lives for this useless and bad work. It is terrible to think with what tension, with what privations, millions of men, who have no time and no chance to do for themselves and for their families what is necessary, work for ten, twelve, and fourteen hours at night in order to set up so-called artistic books, which carry debauchery among men, or to work for theatres, concerts, expositions, galleries, which serve mainly the same debauchery ; but most terrible of all it is to think that live, good children, who are capable of everything good, devote themselves from their earliest years, some for ten or fifteen years, to playing the gamuts for six, eight, and ten hours each day ; others, to contorting their limbs, walking on tiptoe, and raising their legs above their heads ; others again, to singing solfeggios ; others, to making all kinds of grimaces in declaiming verses ; others, to drawing from busts, from naked nature, to painting studies ; others, to writing compositions according to the rules of certain periods, – and in these occupations, which are unworthy of a man, and which are frequently continued after full maturity, lose every physical and mental force and all comprehension of life. They say that it is terrible and pitiful to look at the young acrobats, who throw their legs over their shoulders ; but it is not less pitiful to look at ten-year-old children who give concerts, and still more so at ten-year-old

gymnasiasts who know by heart the exceptions of Latin grammar.

By this men are not only deformed physically and mentally, – they are also deformed morally and become incapable of doing anything which is really needful to men. Occupying in society the rôle of amusers of the rich, they lose the feeling of their human dignity, and to such an extent develop in themselves the passion for public laudations that they always suffer from unsatisfied ambition, which is in them developed to morbid dimensions, and use all their spiritual forces for nothing but the gratification of this passion. And what is most tragical of all is this, that these men, who for the sake of art are lost to life, not only are of no use to art, but even do it the greatest harm. In the academies, gymnasia, conservatories, they teach how to adulterate art, and, learning this, the men are so corrupted that they completely lose the ability of producing real art and become purveyors of that adulterated, or insignificant, or corrupt art which fills our world. In this does the first startling consequence of the distortion of the organ of art lie.

The second consequence is this, that the productions of art are amusements which are produced by an army of professional artists in stunning quantities, and which give the rich men of our time a chance to live a life which is not only not natural, but is even contrary to the principles of humaneness which these men themselves profess. It would be impossible to live as do the rich, idle people, especially the women, removed from Nature and from animals, in artificial conditions, with atrophied muscles or with muscles deformed by gymnastics and with a weakened energy of life, if there did not exist what is called art, if there were not that distraction, that amusement, which veils these people's eyes from the senselessness of their lives and saves them from tantalizing ennui. Take away from all these people the theatres, concerts, exhibitions, piano playing, novels, romances, with which they busy themselves, with the assurance that occupation with these subjects is a very refined, Esthetic, and therefore good occupation, take away from the Maecenas of art, who buy pictures, patronize musicians, commune with writers, their rôle of protectors of the important business of art, and they will not be able to continue their lives, and all will perish from ennui, tedium, and the consciousness of the meaninglessness and illegality of their lives. Only occupation with what among them is considered art gives them the possibility of continuing to live, though violating all the natural conditions of life, without noticing the meaninglessness and cruelty of their lives. This support of the false life of the rich is the second and by no means unimportant consequence of the distortion of art.

The third consequence of the distortion of art is that confusion which it produces in the conceptions of the children and of the masses. The people who are not distorted by the false theories of our society, the working people, the children, possess a very definite conception as to what people may be respected and praised for. As a basis for extolling and honouring people, according to the

conceptions of the masses and of the children, may serve either physical force, – Hercules, heroes, conquerors, – or moral, spiritual force, – Sakya–Muni, who abandons his beautiful wife and his kingdom, in order to save men, or Christ, who goes to the cross for the human race, and all the martyrs and saints. Either is comprehensible to the masses and to the children. They understand that one cannot avoid respecting physical force, because it compels respect ; nor can an uncorrupted man help respecting the moral force of goodness, because his whole spiritual being draws him toward it. And these people, – the children and the masses, – suddenly see that, besides the men who are praised, respected, and rewarded for their physical and their moral force, there are also people who are praised, respected, and rewarded to an even far greater extent than the heroes of force and of goodness, for no other reason than that they sing well, compose verses, and dance. They see that singers, authors, painters, dancers, make millions, that greater honours are conferred upon them than upon the saints, and the men of the masses and the children are perplexed.

Fifty years after Pushkin's death, when simultaneously cheap editions of his works were disseminated among the masses, and a monument was reared to his memory in Moscow, I received more than ten letters from various peasants, asking me why Pushkin was honoured so much. The other day I had a visit from a literate burgher from the Government of Saratov, who had apparently gone mad on this question, and was on his way to Moscow to arraign the clergy for having cooperated in the erection of the " monument " to Mr. Pushkin.

Indeed, we may imagine the state of such a man from the masses, when he learns from the newspapers and the rumours which reach him that in Russia the clergy, the authorities, all the best men of the country, with solemnity erect a monument to a great man, a benefactor, the glory of Russia, – to Pushkin, of whom he has not heard anything heretofore. On all sides he reads or hears of this, and he supposes that if such honours are bestowed on a man, he must certainly have done something unusual, either something strong or something good. He tries to find out who Pushkin was, and having learned that Pushkin was not a hero or a general, but a private person and an author, he draws the conclusion that Pushkin must have been a holy man and a teacher of goodness, and hastens to read his works and to hear something about his life. But what must his perplexity be, when he learns that Pushkin was a man of more than light manners, that he died in a duel, that is, during an endeavour to take another man's life, and that his whole desert consists in nothing but this, that he wrote verses about love, which frequently were quite indecent.

He understands that Alexander of Macedon, Dzhingis Khan, or Napoleon was great, because any of them could have crushed him and thousands like him. He also understands that Buddha, Socrates, and Christ are great ; that Buddha, Socrates, and Christ are great, he also understands, because he knows and feels that he and all men should be such ; but why a man is great for having written verses about

feminine love, is something which he cannot understand.

The same must take place in the head of a Breton, a Norman peasant, who learns of the erection of a monument to Baudelaire, "une statue," like one to the Virgin Mary, and hears the Fleurs du Mai read, or is told of its contents, or, more markedly still, when he learns of one to Verlaine, and hears of that miserable, dissipated life which this man led, and reads his verses. And what confusion must take place in the heads of the people from the masses, when they learn that a Patti or Taglioni receives one hundred thousand roubles for the season, or an artist receives just as much for a picture, and authors of novels, who describe love-scenes, receive even more.

The same takes place with children. I remember how I experienced that amazement and perplexity, and how I made my peace with these laudations of artists on a par with physical and moral heroes only by lowering in my consciousness the meaning of moral worth and by recognizing a false, unnatural meaning in the productions of art. Precisely the same takes place in the soul of every child and every man from the masses, when he learns of those strange honours and rewards which are bestowed on artists. Such is the third consequence of the false relation of our society to art.

The fourth consequence of such a relation consists in this, that the men of the higher classes, meeting more and more frequently with the contradictions between beauty and goodness, set up as the highest ideal the ideal of beauty, thus freeing themselves from the demands of morality. These men distort the rôles and, instead of recognizing, as they ought to, the art which they serve as obsolete, recognize morality as obsolete and as incapable of having any meaning for men who stand on that high level of development on which they imagine they are standing.

This consequence of the false relation to art has long ago shown itself in our society, but has of late been expressed with extraordinary boldness by its prophet Nietzsche and his followers and the decadents and the English aesthetes who coincide with them. The decadents and the Esthetes, like Oscar Wilde, choose as the theme of their productions the denial of morality and the laudation of debauchery.

This art has partly begot a similar philosophic teaching, and partly coincided with it. Lately I received from America a book under the title of The Survival of the Fittest, Philosophy of Power, by Ragnar Redbeard, Chicago : 1896. The essence of this book, as expressed in the publisher's preface, is this, that it is madness to value goodness according to the false philosophy of the Jewish prophets and weeping Messiahs. All the laws, commandments, teachings about not doing to another what you do not wish to have done you, have in themselves no meaning whatsoever and receive a meaning only from the scourge, the prison, and the sword. A truly free man is not obliged to obey any injunctions, – neither human nor divine. Obedience is a sign of degeneration ; disobedience is a sign of a hero. The whole

world is a slippery field of battle. Ideal justice consists in this, that the conquered should be exploited, tortured, despised. The free and brave man can conquer the whole world. And so there ought to be an eternal war for life, for land, for love, for women, for power, for gold. (Something similar was a few years ago expressed by the famous and refined French academician, Vogué.) The land with its treasures is "the prey of him who is bold."

The author has evidently, independently of Nietzsche, come unconsciously to the same conclusions which the modern artists profess.

These propositions, expounded in the form of a doctrine, startle us. In reality, these propositions are included in the ideal of the art which serves beauty. The art of our higher classes has fostered in men this ideal of the overman, in reality the old ideal of Nero, Sténka Razin, Dzhingis Khan, Robert Macaire, Napoleon, and all their fellows in thought, abettors, and flatterers, and with all its power confirms this ideal in them.

It is in this substitution of the ideal of beauty, that is, of enjoyment, for the ideal of morality, that the fourth, terrible consequence of the distortion of the art of our society is to be found. It is terrible to contemplate what would happen with humanity if such art were disseminated among the masses of the people. It is, indeed, beginning to be disseminated among them.

Finally, the fifth and most important consequence is this, that the art which flourishes in the midst of our higher classes of European society, directly corrupts people by infecting them with the very worst sentiments, most harmful to humanity, of superstition, – patriotism, – and, above all, voluptuousness.

Look attentively at the causes of the ignorance of the popular masses, and you will see that the chief cause is by no means the scarcity of schools and libraries, as we are accustomed to think, but those superstitions, both ecclesiastic and patriotic, with which they are saturated, and which are incessantly produced by all the means of art: the ecclesiastical superstitions by the poetry of the prayers and hymns, by the painting and sculpture of images and statues, by singing, organs, music, and architecture, and even by the dramatic art in the church services ; the patriotic superstitions by the poems and stories which are communicated in schools, by music, singing, festive processions, receptions, military spectacles, monuments.

If it were not for this constant activity of all the branches of art for the support of the ecclesiastic and patriotic obfuscation and deterioration of the people, the masses would have long ago attained true enlightenment. But it is not only the ecclesiastic and patriotic corruption that is achieved by art. Art serves in our time as the chief cause of the corruption of people in the most important question of social life, – in the sexual relations. We all know this in our own case, and parents know from their children what terrible

spiritual and physical sufferings, what useless waste of forces, men experience through the mere dissipation of the sexual lust.

Ever since the world has existed, from the time of the Trojan War, which arose from sexual dissipation, up to the suicides and murders of lovers, accounts of which they print in almost any newspaper, the greatest part of the sufferings of the human race have been due to this dissipation.

Well? All art, both the real and the adulterated, is with the rarest exceptions devoted to nothing but the description, representation, excitation of every kind of sexual love, in all its forms. One needs but to recall all those novels with their lust-exciting descriptions of love, both such as are most refined and such as are most gross, with which the literature of our society is filled, – all those pictures and statues which represent the nude female body, and all those abominations which have been introduced in the illustrations and advertisements, – one needs but recall all those lascivious operas, operettas, songs, romances, with which our world teems, in order to think involuntarily that the existing art has but one definite aim, – the widest possible dissemination of debauchery.

Such are, if not all, at least the most certain consequences of that distortion of art which has taken place in our society. Thus, what in our society is called art not only does not contribute to the forward movement of humanity, but almost more certainly than anything else interferes with the realization of the good in our life.

And so to the question which involuntarily presents itself to every man who is free from the activity of art, and who, therefore, has no interested connection with the existing art, – a question which was put by me in the beginning of this writing as to the justice of making sacrifices in human labours, and human lives, and morality, such as are made to what we call art, which forms the possession of but a small portion of society, – to this question we get the natural answer: No, it is not just, and it ought not to be so. Thus answers common sense and the uncorrupted moral sense. Not only ought it not to be, not only ought we make no sacrifices to what among us is acknowledged to be art, but, on the contrary, all the efforts of the men who wish to live well ought to be directed to the destruction of this art, because it is one of the most cruel evils and weighs heavily upon our humanity. Thus, if the question were put as to whether it is better for our Christian world to be deprived of

everything which is now called art together with the false art, and of everything good, as it now exists, I think that every rational and moral man would again solve the question as Plato solved it for his republic and as all the ecclesiastic Christian and Mohammedan teachers of humanity have solved it ; that is, he would say, “ It would be better if there were no art at all, than that the present corrupt art, or its semblance, should be continued.” Fortunately, this question is not put to any man, and no one has an occasion to solve it in one way or another. Everything which a man may do and we

can and must do, we, the so-called cultured people, who by our position are enabled to understand the significance of the phenomena of our life, – is to understand that error in which we are, and not to persist in it stubbornly, but to search for a way out from it.

#### XVIII.

The cause of the lie into which the art of our society has fallen consisted in this, that the men of the higher classes, having lost faith in the truths of the ecclesiastic, so-called Christian, teaching, did not make up their minds to accept the true, Christian teaching in its true and chief significance, as the filial relation to God and the brotherhood of men, but continued to live without any faith, trying to substitute for the absent faith, either hypocrisy, pretending that they still believed in the absurdities of the ecclesiastic faith, or a bold proclamation of their unbelief, or a refined skepticism, or a return to the Greek worship of beauty, a recognition of the legality of egotism, and its elevation to the dignity of a religious teaching.

The cause of the disease was the non-acceptance of Christ's teaching in its true, that is, in its full, meaning. The cure of this disease consists only in one thing, – in the recognition of this teaching in its full force.– This recognition is in our time not only possible, but also indispensable. It is impossible in our time for a man who stands on the level of the knowledge of our time to say, be he Catholic or Protestant, that he believes in the dogmas of the church, the trinity of God, the divinity of Christ, the redemption; and it is also impossible for him to be satisfied with a proclamation of unbelief, skepticism, or a return to the worship of beauty and to egotism, and, above all else, it is impossible for him to say that we do not know the true significance of Christ's teaching. The significance of this teaching has not only become accessible to all men of our time, but the whole life of

the men of our time is permeated by the spirit of this teaching and is consciously and unconsciously guided by it.

No matter how differently in form the men of our Christian world may determine man's destination, whether they understand by this destination the progress of humanity, no matter in what sense, the union of all men in a socialistic government or commune, or whether they recognize a universal union to be this destination, or whether they recognize this destination to consist in the union with a fantastic Christ or the union of humanity under the one leadership of the church, – no matter how varied in form these definitions of the destination of the human life may be, all the men of our time recognize that man's destination is the good ; now the highest good of life, which is accessible to men, is obtained through the union of men among themselves.

No matter how much the men of the higher classes, feeling that their significance is based on their segregation, – the segregation of the rich and the learned from the labouring men and the poor and the unlearned, – may try to invent new world conceptions, by which they may retain their prerogatives, – now the ideal of a return to antiquity, now mysticism, now Hellenism, now overmanhood, – they are willy-nilly compelled to recognize the truth, which unconsciously and consciously is being established in life, that our good is to be found only in the union and brotherhood of men.

Unconsciously this truth is confirmed by the establishment of roads of communication, telegraphs, telephones, the press, the ever-growing accessibility of all the goods of the world for all men ; and consciously, by the abolition of superstitions which separate men, by the dissemination of the truths of science, by the expression of the ideal of the brotherhood of men in the best productions of the art of our time.

Art is a spiritual organ of human life and cannot be destroyed, and so in spite of all the efforts which are made by the men of the higher classes to conceal that religious ideal by which humanity lives, this ideal is more and more recognized by men and is more and more frequently expressed within our corrupt society partly in art and in science. Beginning with the present century, there have with increasing frequency appeared in literature and in painting such productions of the highest religious art, which are permeated by the true Christian spirit, like the productions of the universal worldly art which is accessible to all men. Thus art itself knows the true ideal of our time, and strives after it. On the one hand, the best productions of the art of our time convey sentiments which draw men toward union and brotherhood (such are the productions of Dickens, Hugo, Dostoevski ; in art – Millet, Bastien Lepage, Jules Breton, L'Hermite, and others); on the other hand, they strive after conveying not only such sentiments as are peculiar to the men of the higher classes, but such as might unite all men without exception. There are at present but few such productions, but the need of them is already recognized. Besides, of late there appear ever more frequently attempts at popular editions, pictures, concerts, theatres. All this is so far, very far from what it ought to be, but we already see the direction along which art itself is moving in order to enter upon its proper path.

The religious consciousness of our time, which consists in recognizing the aim of life, both the common and the individual, in the union of men, has been sufficiently elucidated, and the men of our time need only reject the false theory of beauty, according to which enjoyment is recognized as the aim of art, in order that the religious consciousness may naturally become the guide of the art of our time.

And as soon as the religious consciousness, which is already unconsciously guiding the life of the men of our time, shall be consciously recognized by men, there will immediately of its own

accord be destroyed the division of art into that of the lower and that of the higher classes. There will be, instead, a fraternal art ; in the first place, there will naturally be rejected the art which conveys sentiments which are incongruous with the religious consciousness of our time, – sentiments which do not unite, but disunite men, and, in the second place, there will be destroyed that insignificant, exclusive art, which now holds a place which is unbecoming to it.

And as soon as this shall happen, art will cease to be what it has been of late, – a means for dulling and corrupting people, and will become what it has always been and ought to be, – a means for moving humanity toward union and the good.

It is terrible to say so, but what has happened to the art of our time is what happens to a woman who sells her feminine charms, which are intended for motherhood, for the enjoyment of those who are prone to such enjoyments.

The art of our time and of our circle has become a harlot. And this comparison is correct to the minutest details. It is just as unlimited in time, just as painted up, just as venal, just as enticing, and just as pernicious.

The true production of art will but rarely be manifested in the soul of the artist, as a fruit of his previous life, just like the conception of the child by a mother. But adulterated art is uninterruptedly produced by masters and artisans, so long as there are customers for it.

True art, like the wife of a loving husband, does not need any adornments ; but adulterated art, like a prostitute, must always be painted up.

As a cause for the manifestation of true art appears the inner necessity to express the accumulated sentiment, just as love is the cause for a mother's sexual conception. But greed is the cause of adulterated art, just as it is the cause of prostitution.

The consequence of true art is the introduction of a new sentiment into the routine of life, just as the consequence of a wife's love is the birth of a new man into the world. The consequence of adulterated art is the corruption of man, the insatiability of enjoyments, the weakening of man's spiritual forces.

It is this that the men of our time and circle must understand in order that they may free themselves from the dirty stream of this corrupt harlot art, which is overwhelming us.

People speak of the art of the future, meaning by it a special, refined, new art, which is supposed to be worked out in time from the art of the one class which is now considered to be the highest. But there can be no such new art of the future, and there will be none. Our exclusive art of the higher classes of the Christian world has come to a blind alley. On the path on which it has travelled it can go no farther. Having once departed from the chief demand of art (which is, that it should be guided by the religious consciousness), becoming more and more exclusive and so more and more corrupt, this art has reached the impossible point. The art of the future – the one which will actually exist – will not be a continuation of the present art, but will be reared on entirely different, new foundations, which have nothing in common with those by which our present art of the highest classes is guided.

The art of the future, that is, that part of art which will be segregated from the whole art disseminated among men, will not consist in the transmission of sensations accessible only to a few people of the wealthy classes, as is the case at present, but will be only that art which realizes the highest religious consciousness of the people of our time. Only such productions will be considered art as will convey sentiments which draw men toward brotherly union, or such universal sentiments as will be able to unite all men. Only such art will be segregated, admitted, approved of, disseminated. But the art which conveys sentiments which result from the obsolete religious teaching that men have outlived, – the ecclesiastic, patriotic, amorous arts, which convey sensations of superstitious awe, pride, vanity, worship of heroes, arts which evoke exclusive love for one's nation or sensuality, will be considered bad, harmful arts, and will be condemned and despised by public opinion. All other art, which conveys sensations accessible to but a few men, will not be considered important, and will neither be condemned nor approved of. And not a separate class of wealthy men, as is now the case, but the whole nation, will be the appraisers of art, so that, for a production to be recognized as good, to be approved of, and disseminated, it will have to satisfy the demands, not of a few men, who live under similar and frequently under unnatural conditions, but of all men, of the great masses of men, who live under natural conditions of labour.

And the artists, the producers of art, will not, as at present, be those exceptional few, selected from a small part of the people, the men of the wealthy classes or those who are near to them, but all those talented men of the whole people who will prove capable and inclined toward an artistic activity.

Then the artistic activity will be accessible to all men. And this activity will become accessible to all men, because, in the first place, in the art of the future there will be demanded not only no complicated technique which disfigures the productions of art of our time and demands great tension and great loss of time, but, on the contrary, clearness, simplicity, and brevity, – those conditions which are not acquired by means of mechanical exercises, but by the

education of the taste. In the second place, the artistic activity will become accessible to all men of the masses, because instead of the present professional schools, which are accessible to but a few men, all will in primary popular schools study music and painting (singing and drawing) on a par with reading and writing, so that every man, having received his first foundations of painting and of musical science, and feeling in himself the ability and the calling for any one art, would be able to perfect himself in it ; and, in the third place, all the forces which now are wasted on false art will be used for the dissemination of true art among the masses.

People think that if there shall be no special schools of art, the technique of art will be weakened. It certainly will, if by technique is meant those complications of art which now are considered to be its distinguishing features ; but if by technique is meant lucidity, beauty, and simplicity, – a conciseness of the productions of art, – the technique will not only not be weakened, as is proved by all popular art, but will be improved a hundred times, even if there shall be no professional schools, and even if they did not teach drawing and music in the public schools. It will be made perfect, because all the talented artists, who now are concealed among the masses, will become participants in art and will give, having no need, as at present, of the complex technical instruction, and having models of true art before them, new models of true art, which, as always, will be the best school of technique for the artists. Every true artist even now does not study at school, but in life, from the models of the great masters ; but when the most gifted of the whole people shall be participants in art, and there shall be more such models, and the models shall be more accessible, the instruction in school, of which the future artist will be deprived, will be made up for a hundred times over by that instruction which the artist will receive from the numerous models of the good art which will be disseminated in society.

Such will be one of the distinctions between the future and the present art. Another distinction will be this, that the art of the future will not be produced by professional artists, who receive rewards for their art and do not busy themselves with anything else but their own art. The art of the future will be produced by all the people from the masses, who will busy themselves with it when they feel a need for this activity.

In our society people think that an artist will work better if his material existence is made secure. This opinion would again prove with complete obviousness, if there were still any need of such a proof, that what among us is regarded as art is not art, but only its semblance. It is quite true that for the production of boots or rolls the division of labour is very advantageous, – that the bootmaker or baker who is not compelled to prepare his own dinner and firewood will be able to produce more boots or rolls than if he himself had to care for his dinners and his wood. But art is not an artisanship ; it is the conveyance of a sensation experienced by the artist. Now a sensation can be born in a man only when he lives with all sides of his natural life as is proper to all men. And so the

provision for all the material needs of the artists is a most pernicious condition for their productiveness, since it frees them from the conditions of struggling with Nature, for the purpose of providing for their own fives and for those of others, conditions common to all men, and so deprives them of the possibility and of the opportunity of experiencing the most important sensations which are proper to all men. There is no more pernicious position for the productiveness of an artist than the position of complete security and luxury in which the artist generally lives in our society.

The artist of the future will live the usual life of men, earning his living by some labour. The fruits of that highest spiritual force which passes through him he will strive to give to the greatest number of men, because in this transmission of the sensations arising in him to the greatest number of men is his joy and his reward. The artist of the future will not even understand how an artist, whose chief joy consists in the greatest dissemination of his work, can give his productions only at a certain price.

So long as the merchants are not sent out of the temple, the temple of art will not be a temple. The art of the future will drive them out.

And so the contents of the art of the future, as I imagine it, will be absolutely different from what it is now. The contents of the art of the future will not form the expression of exclusive sensations, such as ambition, dejection, satiety, and amorousness in all its possible forms, which are accessible and interesting to only such people as have freed themselves by force from the labour which is proper to men ; it will form the expression of sensations experienced by a man who lives the habitual life of all men, and resulting from the religious consciousness of our time, or of sensations which are common to all men without exception.

To the men of our circle, who do not know and who cannot or will not know those sensations which must form the contents of the art of the future, it seems that such are very poor contents in comparison with those finesses of the exclusive art with which they are busying themselves. " What new thing can we express in the sphere of the Christian sentiments of love of our neighbour ? The sentiments which are common to all men are so insignificant and monotonous," they think. But in reality it is only the religious, Christian sentiments and those which are accessible to all that in our time can be truly new sentiments. Sentiments which arise from the religious consciousness of our time, the Christian sentiments, are infinitely new and varied; only not in the sense in which many imagine it, which is, to represent Christ and Gospel episodes, or in a new form to repeat the Christian truths of union, brotherhood, equality, love, but in the sense that the very oldest habitual, thoroughly known phenomena of life evoke the newest, most unexpected, and most touching sentiments, the moment a man looks upon these phenomena from the Christian point of view.

What can be older than the relations of husband and wife, of parents

to their children, of children to their parents, of men to their countrymen, to foreigners, to attack, to defence, to property, to the land, to the animals ? But the moment one looks upon these phenomena from the Christian point of view, there immediately arise infinitely varied, extremely new, most complicated, and most touching sentiments.

Even so there is no narrowing, but a widening of the sphere of the contents of that art of the future which conveys the simplest, most accessible worldly sensations. In our former art only the expression of such sensations as are proper to men of a certain exclusive condition was considered worthy of transmission, and that only under the condition of transmitting them in the most refined manner, which is not accessible to the majority of men ; but that whole immense sphere of the national child's art, jokes, proverbs, riddles, songs, dances, children's games, imitations, was not considered to be worthy of being a subject of art.

The artist of the future will understand that it is infinitely more important and more fruitful to compose a little fairy tale, a song, which touches people, a saw, a riddle, which amuses them, a joke, which makes them laugh, and to draw a picture which will give pleasure to dozens of generations or to millions of children and adults, than to compose a novel, a symphony, or to draw a picture, which for a short time will divert a few of wealthy classes and will be for ever forgotten. Now the sphere of this art of simple sensations, accessible to all men, is immense and almost untouched.

Thus the art of the future will not only not be poorer, but, on the contrary, will be infinitely richer in contents. Just so the form of the art of the future will not be lower than the present form of art, but will be incomparably higher, – not higher in the sense of a refined and complicated technique, but in the sense of being able briefly, simply, and clearly to convey, without superfluity, the sensation which the artist has experienced and wishes to communicate to others.

I remember that once when speaking with a famous astronomer who was giving public lectures on the spectrum analysis of the stars of the Milky Way, I said to him how nice it would be if he with his knowledge and his ability to lecture would deliver a public lecture on cosmography about the most important motions of the earth, since amidst the hearers of his lectures on the spectrum analysis of the stars of the Milky Way there were very many people, especially women, who did not exactly know what produces day and night, winter and summer. The clever astronomer smiled, and said to me, "Yes, it would be nice, but that is very hard. It is much easier to lecture on the spectrum analysis of the Milky Way."

The same is true of art : it is much easier to write a poem in verse about the times of Cleopatra, or to paint a picture of Nero burning Rome, or to compose a symphony in the sense of Brahms and Richard Strauss, or an opera in the spirit of Wagner, than to tell a simple story without anything superfluous and yet in such a way that it may

convey the sentiment of the narrator, or to draw with pencil a picture which would touch and amuse the spectator, or to write four measures of a simple and clear tune, without any accompaniment, which may convey a mood and may be remembered by the hearers.

" It is impossible for us now, with our development, to return to primitive conditions," say the artists of our time. " It is impossible for us now to write such stories as the story of Joseph the Fair, as the Odyssey ; to sculpture such statues as the Venus of Melos; to compose such music as the national songs."

And, indeed, this is impossible for the artists of our time, but not for the artist of the future, who will not know all the debauch of technical perfections that conceal the absence of contents, and who, not being a professional artist, and receiving no reward for his activity, will reproduce art only when he feels an irrepressible inner necessity for it.

So entirely different from what now is considered art will be the art of the future, both in contents and in form. As contents for the art of the future will serve only such sentiments as draw men toward union or already unite them in the present ; and the form of the art will be such as will be accessible to all men. And so the ideal of the future perfection will not be in the exclusiveness of the sentiment which is accessible to but a few, but, on the contrary, in its universality : and not in the bulk, obscurity, and complexity of form, as it is considered at present, but, on the contrary, in the brevity, lucidity, and simplicity of expression. And only when art shall be such, will it not amuse and corrupt people, as is the case at present, demanding for this a waste of their best forces, but be what it ought to be, – a tool for the transference of the religious Christian consciousness from the sphere of reason and intellect into that of feeling, thus bringing people actually in life itself, nearer to that perfection and union which the religious consciousness indicates to them.

XX.

## CONCLUSION

I have performed my task in regard to a subject which is near to me, – art, – and which has interested me for fifteen years, as well as I could. When I say that this subject has interested me for fifteen years, I do not mean to say that I have been fifteen years writing this work, but only that about fifteen years ago I began to write about art, thinking, when I took hold of this work, that I should end it at once without interruption ; but it turned out that my ideas respecting this subject at that time were yet so little clear that I was unable satisfactorily to myself to expound them. Since then I have uninterruptedly thought about this subject and have six

or seven times started to write on it, but every time, after I had written quite a little, I felt unable to finish the work and so abandoned it. Now I have finished it, and, no matter how badly I may have done it, I hope that my fundamental idea about the false path on which the art of our time is standing and proceeding, and about its cause, and about what the true mission of art consists in, is correct, and that, therefore, my labour, though far from being complete, and demanding, many, many elucidations and additions, will not be spent in vain, and that art sooner or later will abandon that false path on which it now stands. But that this may happen and that art may take the new direction, it is necessary that another, a just as important spiritual activity, – science, – on which art has always been closely dependent, should, like art, leave the false path on which it now is.

Science and art are as closely related as the lungs and the heart, so that if one organ is distorted, the other cannot perform its regular functions.

True science studies and introduces into the conscience of men that knowledge which by the men of a certain time and society is considered most important. But art transfers these truths from the sphere of knowledge into the sphere of feeling. And so, if the path on which science is proceeding is false, the path of art will be equally false. Science and art are like those barges with two anchors, so-called machines, which used to navigate the rivers. Science, like those boats which carry the anchors forward and moor them, prepares the motion whose direction is given by religion; and art, like the capstan which works on the barge, drawing it nearer to the anchor, performs the motion itself. And so the false activity of science draws after it a similarly false activity of art.

Just as art in general is the conveyance of all kinds of sensations, while by art in the narrower sense of the word we mean that which conveys sensations which we consider important, so science in general is a conveyance of every kind of knowledge, while by science in the narrower sense of the word we mean only that which conveys knowledge that is recognized by us to be important.

What determines for people the degree of the importance, both of the sensations conveyed by art and of the knowledge conveyed by science, is the religious consciousness of a certain time and society, that is, the common comprehension by the men of that time and society as to what the destination of their lives is.

What more than anything else cooperates with the accomplishment of this destination is considered the chief science ; what cooperates less, is less important ; what does not at all cooperate with the accomplishment of the destination of man's life is not studied at all, or if it is studied at all, it is not considered to be a science. Thus it has always been, thus it ought to be now, because such is the property of human knowledge and of human life. But the science of the higher classes of our time, by failing to recognize any religion and even considering every religion nothing but a

superstition, has not been able to accomplish this.

And so the men of science of our time assert that they indifferently study everything, but as there is too much of everything (everything is the infinite number of objects) and it is impossible to study everything indifferently, this assertion is made only in theory ; in reality they do not study everything and by no means all indifferently, but only what, on the one hand, is most important and, on the other, most agreeable to those men who busy themselves with science. What is most important of all to the men of science, who belong to the higher classes, is to retain the order under which these classes enjoy their prerogatives; and most agreeable is that which gratifies idle curiosity, does not demand great mental efforts, and cannot be practically applied.

And so one division of the sciences, which includes philosophy that is adapted to the existing order, and a similar history and political economy, busies itself chiefly with proving that the existing order of life is such as it ought to be, such as has originated and continues to exist according to unchangeable laws, which are not subject to the human will, and that, therefore, every attempt at violating it is illegal and useless. Another division, that of experimental science, which includes mathematics, astronomy, chemistry, physics, botany, and all the natural sciences, busies itself only with what has no direct relation to human life, what is curious, and what admits of applications convenient to the life of the higher classes. For the justification of that choice of subjects of study which the men of science of our time have made in conformity with their position, they have invented, precisely like the theory of art for art's sake, a theory of science for science's sake.

As it follows from the theory of art for art's sake that occupation with all those subjects which please us is art, so it follows from the theory of science for science's sake that the study of subjects which interest us is science.

Thus one part of science, instead of studying how men should live in order to fulfil their destination, proves the legality and the unchangeability of the bad and false existing order of life; and another part, experimental science, busies itself with questions of simple curiosity or with technical improvements.

The first division of the sciences is harmful, not only in that it confuses the concepts of men and gives them false solutions, but also in that it exists and occupies a place which ought to be occupied by true science. It is harmful, because every man, to take up the study of the most important questions of life, must, before solving them, overthrow those structures of falsehood in every most essential question of life, accumulated through ages and supported with every inventiveness of the mind.

The second division, the one on which modern science prides itself so much and which by many is considered to be the one true science, is

harmful in that it distracts the attention of men from actually important subjects and leads them to such as are insignificant; besides, it is harmful in that, with the false order of things which is justified and supported by the first division of the sciences, a great part of the technical acquisitions of this division of science is not directed toward the use, but toward the harm of humanity.

It is only to the men who have devoted their lives to this study that it seems that all the discoveries which are made in the sphere of the natural sciences are very important and useful matters. This seems so to them, only because they do not look about themselves and do not see what is really important. They need only tear themselves away from that psychological microscope under which they observe the subjects of their study, and look about in order to see how insignificant all the science is which affords them such naïve pride, – I do not speak of imaginary geometry, the spectrum analysis of the Milky Way, the form of the atoms, the dimension of the crania of the men of the stone period, and similar trifles, – but even the science of the micro-organisms, X-rays, and so forth, in comparison with that knowledge which we have rejected and have turned over to be corrupted by professors of theology, jurisprudence, political economy, the science of finances, and others. We need only look about in order to see that the activity which is proper to true science is not the study of what has accidentally interested us, but of how the human life is to be arranged, – those questions of religion, morality, social life, without solving which all our knowledge of Nature is harmful and insignificant.

We rejoice very much and pride ourselves on this, that our science gives us the possibility of utilizing the energy of the waterfall and of compelling this force to do work in factories, or that we have cut tunnels through mountains, and so forth. But the trouble is that we do not cause this force of the waterfall to work for the good of humanity, but for the enrichment of capitalists, who produce articles of luxury or instruments for the destruction of men. The same dynamite with which we tear down mountains in order to dig tunnels through them is used by us in war, which we not only do not wish to renounce, but even consider indispensable, and for which we prepare ourselves uninterruptedly.

Even though we are now able to inoculate preventive diphtheria, with the aid of X-rays to find a needle in the body, to straighten out a curved spine, to cure syphilis, to perform marvellous operations, and so forth, we should not pride ourselves on these acquisitions, supposing them to be incontestable, if we fully understood the actual significance of true science. If only one-tenth of those forces which are now wasted on articles of mere curiosity and practical application were spent on true science, which establishes men's lives, the greater half of the people who now are sick would have none of the diseases a tiny part of which is being cured in clinics and hospitals ; there would not be brought up in factories anæmic, hunchbacked children ; there would not be, as there is now, a mortality of fifty per cent, of the children ; there would not be any degeneration of whole generations ; there would be no

prostitution; there would be no syphilis; there would be no slaughter of hundreds of thousands at war ; there would not be those terrors of madness and suffering which modern science now considers to be an indispensable condition of human life.

We have so distorted the concept of science that it seems strange to the men of our time to hear mentioned sciences which would abolish the mortality of children, prostitution, syphilis, the degeneration of whole generations, and the mass murder of men. It seems to us that science is science only when a man in the laboratory pours liquids from one glass into another, decomposes a spectrum, cuts up frogs and guinea-pigs, in a peculiar scientific jargon spins out dim, barely comprehensible even to him, theological, philosophical, historical, juridical, economical laces of conventional phrases, the purpose of which it is to prove that what is ought to be.

But science, true science, – a science which would really command the respect which the men of the one, least important part of science now demand, – does not at all consist in this ; true science consists in finding out what we should believe, and what not, – in finding out how the aggregate life of men ought to be arranged, and how not: how to regulate the sexual relations, how to educate the children, how to make use of the land, how to work it without oppressing other men, how to act toward foreigners, how to treat animals, and many other things which are of importance in the life of men.

Such has true science always been, and such it ought to be. And such science is germinating in our time ; but, on the one hand, such true science is denied and rejected by all those learned men who defend the existing order of things ; on the other hand, it is considered to be an empty, unnecessary, unscientific science by those who busy themselves with the experimental sciences.

There have appeared, for example, works and sermons which prove the obsolescence and insipidity of the religious fanaticism, the necessity for establishing a rational religious world conception in conformity with the times, and many theologians are busy overthrowing these works and ever anew sharpening their wits for the support and justification of long outlived superstitions. Or there appears a sermon which preaches that one of the chief causes of the calamities of the masses is the landlessness of the proletariat, as it is found in the West. One would think that science, true science, would acclaim such a sermon and would work out the farther deductions from this proposition. But the science of our time does not do anything of the kind ; on the contrary, political economy proves the reverse, namely, that the ownership of land, like any other ownership, ought more and more to be concentrated in the hands of a small number of landowners, as is, for example, asserted by the modern Marxists. Even so, it would seem, it is the business of true science to prove the irrationality and profitlessness of war, of capital punishment, or the inhumanity and perniciousness of prostitution, or the senselessness, harm, and immorality of the use of narcotics and of animal food, or the irrationality, harmfulness,

and obsolescence of the patriotic fanaticism. There are such works, but they are all considered unscientific. Scientific are considered those which prove that all these phenomena ought to be, or those which busy themselves with questions of idle curiosity, which have no relation to human life.

Most striking is the deviation of the science of our time from its true mission, when we view the ideals which some men of science set up for themselves and which are not denied and are acknowledged by the majority of the learned.

These ideals are not only expressed in foolish fashionable books, which describe the world one thousand or three thousand years hence, but also by sociologists who consider themselves to be serious scholars. These ideals consist in this, that the food, instead of being obtained by agriculture and cattle-raising from the land, will be prepared chemically in laboratories, and that human labour will nearly all give way to the utilized forces of Nature.

A man will not, as now, eat an egg laid by a hen which he has raised, or bread which has grown in his field, or an apple from a tree which he has for years cared for and which has blossomed and matured in his sight; he will eat savoury, nourishing food which will be prepared in laboratories by the combined labours of many men, in which he will take a small part.

There will hardly be any need of work, so that all men will be able to devote themselves to that very idleness to which the highest, ruling classes abandon themselves now.

Nothing shows more obviously than these ideals to what extent the science of our time has departed from its true path.

The men of our time, an enormous majority of men, have no good or sufficient nourishment (precisely the same refers to the habitation, the attire, and all the prime necessities). Besides, this same enormous majority of men is compelled without cessation to work above its strength at the cost of its well-being. And either calamity is very easily set aside by the abolition of the mutual struggle with luxury, with the irregular distribution of wealth, in general, by the abolition of the false, harmful order of things and the establishment of the rational life of men. But science takes the existing order of things to be as variable as the motion of the luminaries, and considers that, therefore, the problem of science is not the elucidation of the falseness of this order and the establishment of a new rational order of life, but how under the existing order to feed all men and give them a chance to be as idle as are now the ruling classes of those who live a debauched life.

With this they forget that feeding on bread, vegetables, fruit, raised by one's own labour on the land, is an exceedingly agreeable and wholesome, easy and natural manner of alimentation, and that the work of exercising one's muscles is just as indispensable a condition of life as the oxidation of the blood by means of

breathing.

To invent means for people, with that false distribution of property and labour, to be able to feed well on chemically prepared foods and at the same time to compel the forces of Nature to work for them, is the same as inventing means for pumping oxygen into the lungs of a man who is in a closed apartment with foul air, when all that is necessary is not to keep this man in the closed apartment.

The laboratory for the production of food is established in the world of plants and animals, and is such that no professors will ever build any better ones, and in order to enjoy the fruits of this laboratory and to take part in it, a man has only to abandon himself to the ever joyous necessity of labour, without which life is agonizing. And now the men of science of our century, instead of using all their forces for the removal of everything which keeps man from utilizing these benefactions which are established for him, recognize the condition in which man is deprived of these benefactions as invariable, and, instead of arranging the lives of men in such a way that they may work with joy and live on the products of the earth, they invent means for making artificial monstrosities of them. It is the same as though, instead of bringing a man out from confinement into the fresh air, they were to invent means for pumping into him as much oxygen as possible, and make it possible for him to live in a close basement, instead of living in a house.

There could not exist such false ideals, if science were not following a false path.

And yet the sensations which are conveyed by art are conceived on the basis of the data of science.

What sensations can such a science, which is following a false path, evoke? One division of this science evokes obsolete sensations, which humanity has outlived, and which are bad and exclusive for our time. The other division, which busies itself with subjects that have no relation to human life, can by its very essence not serve as a foundation for art.

Thus the art of our time, to be art, must itself, in spite of science, lay out a path for itself, or make use of indications by the unsanctioned science which is denied by the orthodox part of science. It is precisely this that art does, when it even partially performs its mission.

It is to be hoped that the work which I have attempted concerning art, will also be done in respect to science; that the incorrectness of the theory of science for science's sake will be indicated to men; that the necessity of recognizing the Christian teaching in its true significance will be clearly indicated; and that on the basis of this teaching a new valuation will be made of the science which we possess and on which we pride ourselves; that the secondary importance and insignificance of the experimental

sciences, and the prime importance and significance of the religious, moral, and social sciences will be shown, and that these sciences will not, as at present, be left to the guidance of the higher classes alone, but will form the chief object of all those free and truth-loving men who, not always at one with the higher classes, but diametrically opposed to them, have promoted the true science of life.

But the mathematical, astronomic, physical, chemical, and biological sciences, just like the technical and medical sciences, will be studied only in that proportion in which they contribute to the liberation of men from religious, juridical, and social deceptions, or will serve for the good of all men, and not of one class.

Only then will science cease to be what it is now, – on the one hand, a system of sophisms, necessary for the support of the obsolete order of life, on the other, a formless heap of all kinds of sciences, for the most part little or not at all necessary, – and be a harmonious organic whole, which has a definite, comprehensible and rational destination, which is, to introduce into the consciousness of men those truths which result from the religious consciousness of our time.

Only then will art, which is always dependent on science, be what it can and should be, – just as important an organ of life and of the progress of humanity as is science.

Art is not an enjoyment, a diversion ; art is a great thing. Art is an organ of the life of humanity, which transfers the rational consciousness of men into feeling. In our time the common religious consciousness of men is the recognition of the brotherhood of men and of their good in their mutual union. True art must indicate the different manners of applying this consciousness to life. Art must transfer this consciousness into feeling.

The problem of art is enormous ; true art, which by means of science is guided by religion, ought to have this effect, that the peaceable cohabitation of men, which now is sustained by external means, by courts, the police, charitable institutions, inspection of labour, and so forth, might be attained through the free and joyous activity of men. Art should remove violence.

And it is only art which can do it.

Everything which now, independently of the terror of violence and punishment, makes possible the common life of men (and in our time a very large portion of the order of life is already based upon it), has been accomplished by art. If art has transmitted the custom of treating religious subjects in this way, and parents, children, wives, relatives, strangers, foreigners, elders, superiors, sufferers, enemies, animals, – and this custom has been observed by generations of millions of men, not only without the least sign of violence, but also in such a way that it cannot in any way be shaken, except by art, – then the same art may be able to evoke

other customs, which are more in keeping with the religious consciousness of our time. If art could transmit to us the sentiment of awe before an image before communion, before the person of the king, shame before treason to friendship, loyalty to the flag, the necessity of vengeance for an offence, the demand for the sacrifice of one's labours for the erection and adornment of temples, the obligation of defending one's honour or the glory of one's country, – the same art is able to evoke a feeling of awe before the dignity of every man, before the life of every animal, shame in the presence of luxury, of violence, of vengeance, of the use for one's pleasure of such articles as are indispensable to other men ; it is able to make people freely and joyously, without noticing it, sacrifice themselves for the service of men.

Art must effect this, that the sentiments of the brotherhood and the love of one's neighbour, which now are accessible only to the best men of society, should become habitual sentiments, instincts of all men. Evoking in men, under imaginary conditions, sentiments of brotherhood and love, religious art will teach people in reality, under the same conditions, to experience the same sentiments, to lay in the souls of men those rails on which naturally will proceed the acts of the lives of men who are educated by that art. By uniting all the most varied men in one feeling and destroying the disunion, the universal art will educate men for union, and will show them, not through reflection, but through life itself, the joy of the universal union outside the obstacles placed by life.

The mission of art in our time consists in transferring from the sphere of reason into the sphere of feeling the truth that the good of men is in their union among themselves, and in establishing in place of the now existing violence that kingdom of God, that is, of love, which to all of us appears as the highest aim of the life of humanity.

Maybe, in the future, science will open up to art other new, higher ideals, and art will realize them ; but in our time the mission of art is clear and definite. The problem of Christian art is the realization of the brotherly union of men.

## APPENDIX I.

### L ACCUEIL

Si tu veux que ce soir, à Pâtre je t'accueille  
Jette d'abord la fleur, qui de ta main s'effeuille;  
Son cher parfum ferait ma tristesse trop sombre ;

Et ne regarde pas derrière toi vers l'ombre,  
Car je te veux, ayant oublié la forêt  
Et le vent, et l'écho et ce qui parlerait  
Voix à ta

solitude ou pleurs à ton silence ! Et debout, avec ton ombre qui te devance, Et hautaine sur mon seuil, et pâle, et vénue Comme si j'étais mort ou que tu fusses nue !

– Henri de Régnier : Les jeux rustiques et divins

, V.

“ Oiseau bleu couleur du temps.”

Sais-tu l'oubli Sais-tu le chant

D'un vain doux rêve De sa parole Oiseau moqueur Et de sa voix,

De la forêt ? Toi qui redis

Le jour pâlit, Dans le couchant

La nuit se lève, Ton air frivole

Et dans mon cœur Comme autrefois L'ombre a pleuré ; Sous les midis ?  
O, chante moi O, chante alors

Ta folle gamine, La mélodie

Car j'ai dormi De son amour,

Ce jour durant; Mon fol espoir,

Le lâche émoi Parmi les ors

Où fut mon âme Et l'incendie Sanglote emmê Du vain doux jour.

Le jour mourant. Qui meurt ce soir.

– Francis Vielé –Griffin : Poèmes et Poe'sies.

#### BERCEUSE D'OMBRE

Des formes, des formes, des formes Blanche, bleue, et rose, et d'or  
Descendront du haut des ormes Sur l'enfant qui se rendort. Des  
formes !

Des plumes, des plumes, des plumes Pour composer un doux nid. Midi  
sonne : les enclumes Cessent; la rumeur finit. . . .

Des plumes!

Des roses, des roses, des roses Pour embaumer son sommeil Vos  
pétales sont moroses Près du sourire vermeil.

O roses!

Des ailes, des ailes, des ailes

Pour bourdonner à son front. Abeilles et demoiselles, Des rythmes  
qui berceront.

Des ailes 1

Des branches, des branches, des branches Pour tresser un pavillon  
Par où des clartés moins franches Descendront sur l'oisillon.

Des branches!

Des songes, des songes, des songes.

Dans ses pensera entr'ouverts Glissez un peu de mensonges A voir la  
vie au travers.

Des songes !

Des fées, des fées, des fées

Pour filer leurs écheveaux De mirages, de bouffées Dans tous ces  
petits cerveaux.

Des fées !

Des anges, des anges, des anges Pour emporter dans l'éther Les  
petits enfants étranges Qui ne veulent pas rester

Non anges. . . .

## APPENDIX II.

Here are the contents of the Ring of the Nibelung.

In the first part we are told that the nymphs, the daughters of the Rhine, are for some reason guarding some kind of gold in the Rhine, and singing, "Weia Waga, Woge du Welle, Welle zur Wiege, Wage zur Wiege, Wage la Weia, Wala la Weele, Weia," and so forth. The nymphs who are singing in this manner are persecuted by the dwarf Nibelung, who wants to get possession of them. The dwarf is unable to catch even one of them. Then the nymphs who are guarding the gold tell the dwarf what they ought to conceal, namely, that he who declines the love can steal the gold which they are guarding. And the dwarf declines their love and seizes the gold. This is the first scene.

In the second scene, in a field, in the sight of a city, lie a god

and a goddess ; then they awake and admire the city which giants have built for them, and they discuss about giving Goddess Freia to the giants for their work. The giants come to get their pay; but God Wotan does not want to give up Goddess Freia. The giants are angry. The gods learn that the dwarf has stolen the gold, and they promise to take this gold back and to give it to the giants for their work. But the giants do not believe them and seize Goddess Freia, whom they hold as a pledge.

The third scene takes place underground. Dwarf Alberich, who has stolen the gold, for some reason beats the dwarf Mime and takes away his helmet, which has the property of making man invisible and changing him into other beings. There arrive the gods, Wotan and others, and they scold one another and the dwarfs ; they want to take away the gold, but Alberich does not give it to them, and, as all of them are doing all the time, acts in such a way as to bring ruin on himself : he puts on the helmet, and is changed into a dragon, and later into a frog. The gods catch the frog, take the helmet down from it, and carry Alberich off with them.

The fourth scene consists in this, that the gods have Alberich brought in, ordering him to command his dwarfs to bring all the gold to them. The dwarfs bring it. Alberich gives up all the gold, but keeps for himself a magic ring. The gods take the ring away, too. For this Alberich curses the ring and says that it will bring misfortune to all who shall own it. There arrive the giants, bringing with them Goddess Freia and demanding a ransom. Stakes, of the size of Freia's stature, are put up and covered with gold, – that is the ransom. There is not enough gold ; the helmet is thrown on the heap ; the ring is demanded. Wotan does not give it, but there appears Goddess Erda, who commands that the ring be given up, because misfortune comes from it. Wotan gives it. Freia is liberated, but the giants, having received the ring, quarrel, and one of them kills another. This is the end of the Vorspiel, – there begins the first day.

A tree is placed in the middle of the stage. Siegmund comes running in ; he is tired, and he lies down. Enter Sieglinde, the hostess, Hunding's wife ; she gives him a love-potion, and they fall in love with one another. Enter Sieglinde's husband ; he learns that Siegmund belongs to an unfriendly race, and intends to fight him the next day ; but Sieglinde gives her husband an intoxicating potion and goes to Siegmund. Siegmund learns that Sieglinde is his sister and that his father struck a sword into a tree, so that no one is able to take it out. Siegmund pulls out the sword and commits incest with his sister.

In the second action Siegmund is to fight with Hunding. The gods discuss to whom to give the victory. Wotan wants to take care of Siegmund, approving of the act of incest with his sister, but, under the influence of his wife Fricka, he orders the Valkyrie Briinnhilde to kill Siegmund. Siegmund proceeds to fight. Sieglinde faints. Briinnhilde arrives ; she wants to starve him ; Siegmund wants to kill Sieglinde, but Briinnhilde commands him not to do so, and he

fights with Hunding. Briinnhilde defends Siegmund, but Wotan defends Hunding, and Siegmund's sword is broken and Siegmund is killed. Sieglinde runs away.

Third act. The Valkyries on the Stage. They are heroines. Valkyrie Briinnhilde on horseback arrives with Siegmund. She runs away from Wotan, who is angry with her on account of her disobedience. Wotan catches up with her and to punish her for her disobedience discharges her from her Valkyrie-ship. He puts a charm on her, so that she has to fall asleep and remain asleep until a man wakes her. When she is on the point of waking, she will fall in love with a man. Wotan kisses her, and she falls asleep. He discharges fire, and the fire surrounds her.

The contents of the second day consist in this, that the dwarf Mime is forging a sword in the forest. Enter Siegfried. He is the son who was born from the incest of the brother Siegmund and the sister Sieglinde, and who was brought up in the forest by a dwarf. Siegfried learns of his origin and that the broken sword is his father's sword, and orders Mime to forge it, and himself goes away. Enter Wotan in the form of a pilgrim; he says that he who has not learned to be afraid will forge a sword and will conquer all. The dwarf guesses that this is Siegfried, and wants to poison him. Siegfried returns, forges his father's sword, and runs away.

The second action of the second act consists in this, that Alberich sits and watches the giant, who, in the form of a dragon, watches the gold which he has received. Enter Wotan, who for some unknown reason tells that Siegfried will come and will kill the dragon. Alberich wakes the dragon and asks the ring of him, promising for this to defend him against Siegfried. The dragon does not give up the ring. Exit Alberich. Enter Mime and Siegfried. Mime hopes that the dragon will teach Siegfried fear ; but Siegfried is not afraid, drives away Mime, and kills the dragon ; after that he puts to his lips his finger, on which is the blood of the dragon, and from this he learns the secret thoughts of men and the language of the birds. The birds tell him where the treasure and the ring are, and that Mime wants to kill him. Enter Mime, who says aloud that he wants to poison Siegfried. These words are to mean that Siegfried, having tasted the dragon's blood, understands the secret thoughts of men. Siegfried finds out his thoughts, and kills him. The birds tell him where Briinnhilde is, and Siegfried goes to her.

In the third act Wotan sends for Erda. Erda prophesies to Wotan, and gives him advice. Enter Siegfried, who exchanges words with Wotan and fights. Suddenly it appears that Siegfried's sword breaks that spear of Wotan, which was more powerful than anything. Siegfried goes into the fire where Briinnhilde is ; he kisses Briinnhilde ; she awakens, bids farewell to her divinity, and throws herself into Siegfried's embrace.

Third day.

Three Norns are weaving a golden rope and talking of the future. The

Nomas go away, – and there appears Siegfried with Briinnhilde. Siegfried bids her good-bye, gives her the ring, and goes away.

First act. On the Rhine a king wants to get married and to get his sister married. Hagen, the king's bad brother, advises him to take Briinnhilde, and to marry his sister off to Siegfried. Siegfried makes his appearance. He is given a love-potion, as a result of which he forgets the whole past, and falls in love with Guthrun and travels with Gunther to get Briinnhilde for him as a wife. Change of scenery. Briinnhilde is sitting with the ring ; a Valkyrie comes to her; she tells how Wotan's spear was broken, and advises her to give the ring to the nymphs of the Rhine. Enter Siegfried, who by means of the magic helmet is changed into Gunther ; he demands the ring from Briinnhilde, tears it away from her, and drags her along to sleep with him.

Second act. On the Rhine Alberich and Hagen discuss how to obtain the ring. Enter Siegfried ; he tells of how he obtained a wife for Gunther and of how he had slept with her, but had placed his sword between them. Briinnhilde arrives ; she recognizes the ring on Siegfried's hand, and accuses him of having been with her, instead of Gunther. Hagen provokes everybody against Siegfried, and decides that he will kill him the next day at the hunt.

Third act. Again the nymphs in the Rhine tell everything that has been ; enter Siegfried, who has lost his way. The nymphs ask the ring of him, but he does not give it. Enter hunters. Siegfried tells his story. Hagen gives him a drink, as a result of which his memory returns to him ; he tells how he awoke and obtained Briinnhilde, and all are surprised. Hagen strikes Siegfried in the back and kills him, and the scenery is changed. Guthrun meets Siegfried's body ; Gunther and Hagen quarrel about the ring, and Hagen kills Gunther. Briinnhilde weeps. Hagen wants to take the ring off Siegfried's finger, but the hand raises itself ; Briinnhilde takes the ring off Siegfried's hand and, as Siegfried's body is being carried to the funeral pyre, she mounts her horse and rushes into the pyre. The Rhine rises and comes to the pyre. In the river are three nymphs. Hagen rushes into the fire, in order to fetch the ring, but the nymphs seize him and draw him along. One of them holds the ring.

The production is finished.

The impression which one gets from my story is naturally not complete. But, no matter how incomplete it is, it is certainly incomparably more advantageous than the one which is received from the reading of the four books in which it is printed.