JACOB WASSERMANN

MY LIFE AS GERMAN AND JEW

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JACOB WASSERMANN

MY LIFE
AS GERMAN AND JEW

A

Other Books by Jacob Wassermann

THE JEWS OF ZIRNDORF

FABER: OR THE LOST YEARS
(*2nd Impression*)

THE TRIUMPH OF YOUTH
(*3rd Impression*)

THE WORLD'S ILLUSION
(*2nd Impression*)

THE MAURIZIUS CASE

ETZEL ANDERGAST

WORLDS' ENDS

WEDLOCK
(*2nd Impression*)

DEDICATED TO

FERRUCCIO BUSONI

THE FRIEND AND THE ARTIST

REGARDLESS of my intellectual habit of working in images and figures, I should like—impelled by an inner need and also by the need of the times—to render an account of the most problematical part of my life, that which concerns my Jewishness and my existence as a Jew. And not as a Jew merely, but also as a German Jew—two concepts which even to the disinterested observer reveal a prospect of copious misunderstandings, tragedies, and contradictions, of dissension and suffering.

The subject was always a delicate one, whether it was treated with embarrassment, or freely, or defiantly, one side seeking to gloss it over, while the other was openly malicious. To-day it is an incendiary focus.

I am anxious to present my point of view. Nor shall I take for granted anything that I previously regarded as demonstrated. I will have nothing to do with argument, with vindication or indictment, nor with any sort of constructive eloquence. I take my stand upon personal experience.

I find myself impelled to seek a clear understanding of the nature of that discord which runs through my life and all its activities, and of which the years have made me ever more painfully sensible and conscious.

The young man is far less susceptible to certain perplexities than the man of riper years. The latter, in so far as he is devoted to a cause or an idea—fundamentally the same thing—gradually emerges from the frenzy in which the ego has the glamour of the unconditioned, and in which the world and humanity, by virtue of a pleasant and half-voluntary delusion, seem to serve the subject will in the transformations of the passions. In so far as one's own person ceases to be a miracle and a purpose, until at last it becomes a scarcely perceived intermediate element—the shadow, so to speak, of a body unknown and unknowable—so far does the difficulty and peril of life with and among men increase, as does the mysterious nature of all that we call reality and experience.

Ultimately, even in the most gifted and receptive minds, few distinctive signs remain to mark the road that has been covered. How many unforgettable and ineradicable traces persist in the soul depends upon the scope of one's destiny.

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I

I WAS born and spent my childhood in Fürth, a predominantly Protestant manufacturing city of Middle Franconia, with a large Jewish community, consisting principally of artisans and tradesmen. The Jews formed about one-twelfth of the total population.

Tradition has it that this is one of the oldest Jewish communities of Germany. Jewish settlements are said to have existed there as far back as the ninth century. Probably, however, they began to increase and flourish only at the end of the fifteenth, when the Jews were expelled from the neighbouring city of Nuremberg. Later another stream of refugees—Jews who had been driven out of Spain—crossed the Rhine into Franconia. Among these, I believe, were my maternal ancestors, who for centuries dwelt in the villages of the valley of the Main, near Würzburg; my ancestors on my father's side lived in Fürth, Roth am Sand, Schwabach, Bamberg and Zirndorf.

Thirty or forty decades of living in this country must have given these Jews a close inner relationship to its soil, climate and people—a relationship which must have been bred in their very bones, even though they resisted this influence, and were rejected by the national organism

as a foreign body. Until the middle of the nineteenth century oppressive restrictions were in force: the regulations as to registration, restrictions as to choice of residence and profession. My mother's father, a cultivated man and a noble character, was pestered to death by these restrictions. And, of course, they provided constant nourishment for sinister religious fanaticism, for ghetto obstinacy and ghetto fear.

When I was born, two years after the Franco-Prussian War, the day of civil rights had already dawned for the German Jews. The liberal party in Parliament was already fighting for the admission of Jews to governmental employment, a presumptuous demand which aroused the indignation of even the most enlightened Germans. Thus Theodor Fontane wrote to a friend: "I like the Jews, but I refuse to be governed by them!"

No yoke of serfdom, therefore, weighed upon my youth. One side had adapted itself, the other had become accustomed to the foreign element. Economic progress was favourable to tolerance. I remember my father's words, uttered in a tone of joyful satisfaction on some occasion which I have forgotten: "We live in an age of tolerance!" I often thought about that word *tolerance*. It filled me with awe; I was suspicious of it, although I did not grasp its meaning.

As far as clothes, language and mode of life were

concerned, the adaptation was complete. I attended a public State-supported school. We lived among Christians, associated with Christians. The progressive Jews, of whom my father was one, felt that the Jewish community existed only in the sense of religious worship and tradition. Religion, fleeing the powerful seductions of modern life, took refuge in secret and unworldly groups of zealots. Tradition became a legend, a matter of phrases, an empty shell.

My father was a small merchant, who, try as he would, could never succeed in amassing wealth, as most of his co-religionists were seeking to do. He was unfortunate in business. Something of a dreamer, he had always an *idée fixe* that robbed him of the suppleness of the money-makers. He dreamed of great speculations and large enterprises; but whatever he attempted was a failure. In spirit he was a sentimental liberal, a lukewarm camp-follower of the March revolution, whose diluted tendencies had persisted in the new empire. I remember hearing, as a child, an excited dispute between him and one of his cousins about Ferdinand Lassalle, of whom he spoke as of the very devil. But I remember too that he would sometimes play moving songs on the guitar of an evening. That was in the good days, before cares had broken his spirit. He loved Schiller, and greatly esteemed Gutzkow. On one of his trips, in a

Thuringian bathing resort, he had dined at the same table as Gutzkow; an incident he often related with pride. In later years, embittered by my literary struggles, he once asked me, in order to discourage the overweening ambition to which he felt I had fallen a prey: "What do you think you are? You'll never become a Gutzkow!"

In the 'eighties, with great hopes, he founded a small factory, having with difficulty raised a little capital. A few years later he went bankrupt. He then became an insurance agent; but despite his indefatigable efforts he barely succeeded in keeping himself and his family afloat; and he always felt that his life had been a failure. He had always worked hard. When I, in my thirtieth year, was able to invite him to be my guest for a few weeks (he was then fifty-six), he seemed to be in a state of constant and silent amazement. And when he left he told me: "This is the first holiday I ever had!" A week after his return home he died.

My mother died when I was nine years old. She was beautiful, fair-haired, very gentle, very silent. I was often told that strangers passing through the city, their curiosity aroused by reports of her beauty, would ask to see her. I was told also that her first love had been a Christian, a master-mechanic of Ulm. I still have some letters of hers, full of a child-like, simple melancholy,

the poetry of sadness. I remember well the general dismay at her unexpected death, and how half the city followed her coffin to the cemetery.

Although my parents differed greatly in character and temperament, they had one trait in common : they were not suited to their time. They were both children of romanticism. My father was its late spiritual descendant ; my mother's soul was subdued and saddened by it. In her it found natural expression ; hers was the tragic attitude to life ; in my father's case it invaded the life of action, and was accompanied by an unfounded optimism that veiled the actual state of affairs in disastrous fashion, brought him disappointment after disappointment, and undermined his courage and his strength.

II

THE hostility I encountered in my childhood and early youth because of my Jewishness did not, as far as I can remember, affect me very deeply. For I felt that it was directed against the community rather than against my person. A mocking salutation from a street-urchin, a venomous glance, a contemptuous expression, a certain recurrent disdain—these were commonplaces. But I noticed that outside the community—that is, wherever my Jewish connections were unknown—I encountered almost none of these stings and malicious thrusts. As the years passed this became more and more evident. My facial type was not Jewish, nor my manner, nor my speech. My nose was straight, my demeanour quiet and unassuming. This argument sounds primitive ; but people who have not had this experience cannot imagine how primitive non-Jews are in their estimation of what is Jewish and their conception of Jewish characteristics. Their instinct is silent when it is not confronted with a caricature. I have always found that the race prejudice into which they talk themselves, or with which they allow themselves to be inspired, is nourished by the merest externalities, and that as a result they have quite a false notion as to where the real danger lies. In this

those who cherished the greatest hatred were also the most stupid.

Of these things I had at first only an intimation. As for the community, I was not conscious of any profound relationship to it. Religion was a branch of learning, and not a pleasant one. A lesson taught soullessly by a soulless old man. Even to-day I sometimes see his evil, conceited old face in my dreams. Curiously enough, I have seldom heard of a kindly or lovable Jewish religious teacher; most of them are cold-blooded zealots and almost figures of fun. Mine, like the rest, thrashed formulas into us; antiquated Hebrew prayers that we translated mechanically, without any real knowledge of the language; what he taught was paltry, dead, mummified. Only from the reading of the Old Testament did we derive any positive benefit, but there, too, both the subject and its interpretation were lacking in true illumination. Events and characters were effective enough singly and episodically, but the whole seemed lifeless, often absurd, even inhuman, and was not ennobled by any loftier outlook. At times a ray of light broke through from the New Testament, like a glimmer through the chink of a locked door, and my curiosity was mingled with a vague dread. Those eternal myths and images enriched my imagination only after I was able to enter into a private and, so to speak, psychological

relation to them. This gave them individuality, rendering them spiritual in the intellectual, or material in the romantic sense; in either case withdrawing them from their religious connotations.

Religious services were even worse. A purely business-like affair, an unsanctified assembly, the noisy performance of habitual ceremonies, devoid of symbolism, a mere drill. The progressive section of the community had built a modern synagogue, one of those quasi-Byzantine edifices to be found in most German cities, but whose upstart magnificence cannot disguise the fact that the faith is losing its power over the hearts of men. To me it was all just empty noise, killing all real devoutness; the abuse of sounding phrases; lamentations that were groundless, since they were contradicted by obvious well-being and cheerful worldliness; all was presumption, clericalism, zealotry. My only source of refreshment was the German sermons of a majestic fair-haired rabbi whom I revered.

The conservative and orthodox Jews conducted their services in the so-called *shuls*, tiny places of worship, often only little rooms in obscure, out-of-the-way alleys. There one could still see heads and figures such as Rembrandt drew, fanatical faces and ascetic eyes burning with the memory of unforgotten persecutions. On their lips the austere prayers, appeals and maledictions acquired

reality. Their bowed shoulders spoke of generations of humility and privation; they observed the venerable customs with the utmost faithfulness, with resolute devotion, and they retained their belief, though it was dulled, in the coming of the Messiah. Their souls too were incapable of flight; they too lacked sympathy and cordiality and radiance and humanity and joy; but for them conviction and passion were at once an inexorable rule and a kind of communion.

To such a *shul* I, a boy of nine, had to go for a year after my mother's death—every morning at dawn, every evening at sundown, and on Sabbaths and holy days every afternoon also—there, as a first-born son, to recite before the congregation the *Kaddish* prayer. For this purpose ten males over thirteen years of age had to be assembled; as a rule they were old men, ancients, the relics of a bygone day. In the frosty, snowy winter dawn, or on summer mornings when the sun rose at five, or even earlier, it was hard to fulfil a duty that had been forced upon me, whose significance I neither understood nor wanted to understand. No one took the trouble to explain the spirit of this prayer, and thus to obviate the danger that the image of my mother might be clouded, even if only for a time, by the observance of a custom which I felt to be inhuman. Moreover, there was no religious compulsion or education in my father's

house, especially after his second marriage. Certain superficial precepts were observed, but more out of regard for our relatives and our reputations, out of fear, and as a matter of habit, than because of any inward urge or sense of solidarity. Feast and fast days were still holy; the Sabbath retained something of its ancient quality; the culinary regulations were still observed. But as the struggle for bread grew keener, as the spirit of the new age became more importunate, these commandments too were neglected, and our domestic life approximated to that of our non-Jewish neighbours. Not that the chains were cast off entirely; that would have been too daring. We still acknowledged membership in the religious community, though hardly any traces remained of either community or religion. Precisely speaking, we were Jews only in name, and through the hostility, aversion or aloofness of the Christians about us, who, for their part, based their attitude only on a word, a phrase, an illusive state of affairs. Why, then, were we still Jews, and what did our Jewishness mean? For me this question became ever more and more importunate; and no one could answer it.

There was an obscuring medium between me and all matters spiritual and commonplace. At every step forward I came upon inhibitions and concealments; in

no direction was the road clear. When I said that no yoke or helotry weighed upon me I was referring, of course, only to the legal framework of life, and the individual feeling of security within which the individual person moves and has his being. Once these two factors are stated and accepted an incomparably greater importance attaches to the problem of the individual's attitude toward society, and society's attitude toward him. From this derives his consciousness of his task in life, and, varying with the solution of the problem, the strength for its accomplishment. It was at this point that my sufferings began.

III

THE Jewish God was for me a mere shadow, whether conceived as the Old Testament figure, implacable in wrath and inexorable in chastisement, or as the opportunistically subtilized deity of the modern synagogue. In the minds of the strictly orthodox the divine image was terrifying, but as outlined by the semi-renegades, the perplexed believers, it was meaningless.

When I sought to grasp the God-concept in my childishly philosophical speculations, in solitary thinking, and later still in discussions with a friend, there emerged a pantheistic being, without countenance or character or depth, the product of current phrases, evoked only by the desire for a sustaining idea. As this idea proved more and more unsatisfactory—whether because of its mediocrity, or because I had an inkling of its triteness—I fell into an equally cheap and fluid atheism, which conformed more exactly with the age—with that phase of intellectual flimsiness and superficiality, which made an idol of science, whether understood or not, and debased its whole intellectual plane by its educational methods.

There was no hand to guide me, no leader, no teacher. I lost myself, in many senses of the word ; I sought for

support, and a foothold, where the genuine man can dispense with them. I had to adjust myself to an order that was both soulless and imperceptive. A world so constituted demands either a purposefulness amounting to a cold cerebral intoxication, or an imagination whose immoderate oscillations end in the soul losing its equilibrium. Had I not been permanently discouraged in youth from asking questions, I should have been able to find connecting paths and bridges. Conventions would have seemed important; formal rules would have commanded my respect, and would not have been felt as a burden. But my mother had disappeared too soon from our family circle; daily cares and the anxious struggle for life had increasingly narrowed my father's outlook. He could hardly bear to meet the eyes of his children, for he was deeply ashamed of the fact that constant toil had brought him no success; he thought himself the only one so unrewarded, and always looked as though tormented by a bad conscience. We were absolutely forbidden to ask questions, and disobedience was sometimes severely punished, so that the weeds grew in me unchecked.

I remember that I suffered a morbid fear of ghosts, of people, of things, of dreams. In everything about me there inhered a mysterious magic, always baneful, always boding disaster, and the forebodings were constantly

confirmed. I was often invited to an old house where lived an old married couple. The husband was a scholar; in his room stood a bookcase behind whose glass doors were numerous editions of the works of Spinoza; and these had a curious fascination for me. When, one day, I asked the mistress of the house to give me a volume she told me, in a tone of sibylline melancholy, that people who read these books went mad. For years the name of Spinoza was associated in my mind with the sound and sense of her words. More or less the same thing happened with everything joyful and gay and playful that tried to reach me or that I tried to reach. All these things were thrust aside, suspected, painted in the blackest colours. Pleasure was forbidden.

After my mother's death we had a faithful maid who was fond of me. In the evenings she used to sit before the fire and tell us stories. I remember that one night, when I had listened with particular raptness, she took me in her arms and said: "There's the makings of a good Christian in you, you have a Christian heart." I remember, too, that these words frightened me. Firstly, because they contained a tacit condemnation of my Jewishness, and thus provided further material for the brooding to which I already was addicted; and secondly, because at that time the idea of a Christian still alarmed me, representing—partly for atavistic reasons, partly

because of my dread of life—a focus of hostile elements.

The same feeling seized me when I passed a church or a churchyard, a crucifix, or a Christian priest. An unconfessed attraction strove against the unconscious experience that lay in my blood. To this were added the things I had heard grown-up people say—words of complaint and criticism, hints of outlawry, the expression of typical and recurrent experiences, terms of speech and even everyday events that were warnings and danger-signals. From the other side, again, a searching glance, a shrug of the shoulders, a disdainful smile, a temporizing gesture or attitude, was enough to impose caution and remind me of the unbridgeable gulf.

But just what constituted the unbridgeable gulf I could not discover. And later, when I grasped its essential nature, my first reaction was to reject it for my own person. In childhood my brothers and sisters and I were so closely involved in the daily life of our Christian neighbours of the working and middle classes that it was their world that provided us with playmates and protectors, and a refuge in hours of desolation. We ran in and out of the houses of the gold-beaters, the carpenters, the cobblers, the bakers; we were invited to their gatherings on Christmas Eve, and were given presents with the rest. But a certain watchfulness and a feeling of strangeness persisted. I was only a guest, and

they were celebrating festivals in which I had no part.

My nature, however, was such that I longed to be something more than a guest, and I did not want to be regarded as a guest; neither as an invited guest, nor as one tolerated out of pity and kindliness, nor, worst of all, as one admitted because his hosts have consented to ignore his race and descent. I had an innate longing to become merged in a certain exuberance which marked the humanity about me.

Not only was this longing not appeased, but with the years the gap between my impetuous demand and its realization yawned ever wider. I should have been lost, I should ultimately have had to give up all hope, had not two saving phenomena entered into my life: the landscape and the written word.

IV

STIFLING in its narrow dreariness was our ungardened city, a city of soot, of a thousand chimneys, of clanging machinery and thudding hammers, of beer-shops, of sullen, sordid greed in trade or craft, of mean and little-minded people crowded closely together; stifling too was the atmosphere of poverty and lovelessness in my father's house.

Around the city lay a barren, sandy plain, crossed by streams of dirty water from the factories, a slow, turgid river, a straight canal, desolate woods, melancholy villages, hideous quarries, dust, clay, and broom-thickets.

An hour by road to the east lay Nuremberg, a monument of great historical events. Here were ancient houses, court-yards, streets, churches, bridges, fountains and city walls. But for me the city was never a mere stage setting, an empty, romantic show-place; for my manifold relations to the place were interwoven with my personal fate. Even in my childhood this was so; in later years the connection was even closer.

A few hours by train to the southward lay hilly Franconia, and the valley of the Altmühl, where—at Gunzenhausen, near Ansbach—I was allowed to spend my holidays with an aunt, my mother's sister: the whole

of the summer, and often some weeks of the autumn and winter. A landscape delicately outlined, with forests that did not traduce the cherished inner image as did those others. Here were flower-gardens, orchards, fish-ponds, deserted castles, legendary ruins, village fairs, and simple people. A free mutual relationship with plants and animals resulted; here I became intimate with water, grass and trees, and with peasants, traders, inn-keepers, tramps, gamekeepers, foresters, bailiffs, watchmen and soldiers. Here I saw them in an uncomplicated relationship to their world, which was mine too, or at all events did not cast me out. I could venture to approach them, for organic function and rank make for guilelessness. In a way I lived in two distinct continents, and I was able to forget, while in the brighter one, what the darker had taught me. There I was socially in fetters, of which I was constantly reminded; I was thrust back into my caste, conscious of division and familiar with insult, enmeshed in ugly, ancient, ancestral things; timid, constricted, isolated, avoiding others and often avoided. Here I lay in the arms of Nature, lovingly close to her, liberated by her influence, though only for a time, from the burden of guilt and accusation that could not be shaken off, and that otherwise must have paralysed or even crushed me.

Beyond these two regions of experience lay a third, the inner landscape, which the soul has brought into the

world from its pre-natal condition; it determines the nature and colour of dreams, of dreams in the broadest sense, and the secret and unconscious highways of the mind which constitute its climate and its real home. Moreover, this inner landscape is not merely an imaginary construction of sea and mountains, caves and parks and forests, the paradisiacal ideal of immature yearning, an escape and refuge from insufficiency in the present; it is rather the crystalline abode of life itself, the place where its laws are dictated, and the source of its actual destiny, of which the destiny that unfolds itself in what we call reality may be a mere reflection.

To cite experience in this connection, without falsification or invention, is almost impossible. Nuances of emotional intensity, images of inconceivable transitoriness are here involved. Almost everything that can be said must be prefaced with "I believe." One gropes, one thinks back; every recollection, after all, is a reconstruction. To me it seems indubitable that every inner landscape includes atavistic components; I am equally certain that in most people, at a definite period between puberty and the entry into so-called practical life, it fades and withers, and finally dies and disappears.

I was extremely naïve in my dependence on dreams and visions. I may well call them visions, for conditions I had never experienced, things and figures I could never

have seen were palpably revealed to me. Between the ages of ten and twenty I lived in a state of constant intoxication; often I was so remote that only an insensitive husk was left for my companions and contemporaries. Later I was told that people had to shout at me before I seemed really to wake. I had fits of ecstasy, of a fierce, mute forlornness; and as a rule the severance was so sudden and so forceful that the connecting links were shattered, and I was stranded, like one cut off from my kind, without really understanding what had happened to me. In both spheres of life I was acutely attentive—attentiveness, indeed, is a fundamental trait of my character—but there were no bridges between the two. Here I could be perfectly sober, there utterly beside myself, or vice versa; and between the two there was no intercourse, no means of communication. This kept me in an extraordinary state of tension, which tormented and excited me, and was for the most part quite incomprehensible to the people about me. Amazement and despair were my predominant emotions; amazement at what I had seen and perceived and felt, despair because it was incommunicable. What I really felt, I suppose, was this: I knew that remarkable or unheard-of things were happening about me, to me, within me, but I was totally incapable of explaining them to myself or others. In a sense I was a Moses descending from Mount Sinai, but

with no recollection of what he had seen there, and of what God had said to him. Even to-day I have not the slightest idea of the true nature of that mystery, that hidden flame, that enigmatical other world. Tempted though I feel to explore it, I have recognized that it is forever unfathomable. Yet it ought to be possible to determine what derived from my ancestry and what from the earth, what resided in my blood and what entered through my eyes, and from what depths the individual grows up in his allotted sphere.

The representation of these conflicts and exaltations hints at a close relationship to speech and explains its emergence out of need and necessity. How important a substitute and a resource words may be is in my own case no less apparent because the things and the life to which they referred had sunk into unconsciousness, and lay behind a door that could not be unlocked. I believe that all creation of forms and images may be traced back to such a process. I believe that at bottom all production is an attempt at reproduction, at an approach to things seen, heard and felt that have passed through to a region beyond the consciousness and must now be dug out piecemeal, in shards and fragments. I, at least, have never regarded my work, or the so-called process of creation, as aught but the persistent and painful efforts of an obsessed treasure-seeker.

For me, then, even in my earliest youth, the all-important thing was to give an account of these matters. Though the vanishing of my visions cast me—dumb, dazzled, stricken with obliviousness—into base reality, I yet wanted to make them known; for despite their intangibility they filled me to the brim. Even as a boy of seven or eight, overcoming my habitual timidity and silence, I would sometimes begin to tell disconnected stories which were regarded by my relatives, neighbours, and schoolmates as half-dangerous, half-ludicrous fabrications, and were received with reprimands ridicule and punishment. On winter evenings we children would often help our mother to pick over the lentils, and as we worked I would sometimes suddenly begin to romance, telling the heaps of lentils of all manner of horrors, iniquities and adventures, of ghostly terrors and miracles; I would cite innocent neighbours as witnesses of strange encounters, and for myself I would prophesy the greatest glory, the loftiest fame. My mother, dropping her work, would look at me with anxious astonishment—a look that drove me even more stubbornly into meaningless and tangled obscurities. Not seldom she would take me aside and tearfully adjure me not to fall into wicked ways.

But I must insist that it was of my own accord, and through my own need, that I became a teller of stories

with *dramatis personæ* and rounded plots; for this, transcending the realm of childhood world, showed me my way in life and the basis of my art.

My father's second wife had no liking for us children of his first marriage, and she let us feel her dislike in every way. To say nothing of unjust and excessively severe punishments, and constant complaints to our father, she gave us as little food as possible, marked the loaf so that she could tell when one of us had wrongfully cut off a slice of bread, and took care to see that the crime was heavily punished. True, it was hard for her to keep house with the money she received, just as it was hard for my father to get it; still, I believe that in this respect the children of beggars were better off. When my uncle, my mother's brother, a well-to-do manufacturer living in Vienna, heard how badly off we were, he deposited a certain sum with an acquaintance in our city, to cover urgent expenditure; and I, as the oldest, was given one mark a week for the purpose of buying food for my brothers and sisters and myself. In my eyes this was a considerable sum, and as I felt that it would be too dangerous to carry it on my person I took pains to find a proper hiding-place. My six-year-old brother, who was five years younger than I, gave his whole mind to spying out this hiding-place; for he mistrusted me, seized every opportunity to ask for more than I appor-

tioned to him, and insisted that I should show him just what I had. Once the quarrel was in full swing he usually went so far as to threaten me, so that I daily expected the greedy rebel to denounce me to our stepmother—a piece of treachery whose consequences I feared above all things. For my brother was justified to this extent: I had not spent all the money given me on bread, fruit, sausage and cheese, but had also bought some cheap books, which I devoured in haste and secrecy.

My brother and I occupied the same bed in a sort of closet. And in my extremity I hit on this expedient: to tell him stories before we went to sleep. Unexpectedly I found him a most attentive listener, and I seized my opportunity by interrupting the story at the most thrilling point every night. If, then, he proved unruly during the following day I had an effective weapon and threat at my disposal: I simply declared that I would not continue the story. The more complicated, gripping and exciting the episodes I invented, the more eager he naturally was to hear the following instalment; and naturally too, in order to keep him in check and make him respect my wishes, I had to use all my wits and inventive talents. It was by no means easy. He was inexorable in his demands; I must not be tedious or careless. So I would spend weeks, even months, in the telling of a single story, whispering in the dark until we both grew tired,

and until the complicated gyrations of the characters had brought about a situation the solution of which was still a mystery to me, but which left my breathless auditor in my power for another twenty-four hours.

I have said that this showed me the basis of my art and the path I had to follow. The path: because I learned the important fact that a man may be spellbound, "enthralled," to use the hackneyed term, by one who seizes hold of his imagination; that he may even be diverted from evil by one who directs his mind to events and entanglements which, though unreal, simulate reality; that joy, fear, surprise, emotion, smiles, and laughter may be aroused in him, and this the more effectively in proportion as the action is more unrestricted, the illusion less impeded by intent and purpose. The constant evidence of effectiveness kept me too breathless, aroused my ambition, and spurred me on to ever new imaginings and to the perfection of my means.

And the basis of my art—for surely this was an Oriental instinct in my blood. It was Scheherezade's method transposed into everyday life; a latent seed made to grow by chance and peril. Scheherezade tells stories to save her life, and as she spins her tales she becomes the very genius of story-telling. As for me—well, my life was not at stake, but the fever of romancing took complete possession of me and determined my thoughts and my way of life.

It was not long before I felt the need of writing down one or another of these nocturnal narratives. This had to be done with the utmost secrecy; and this was the beginning of a conflict. Inevitably, after a time, my doings became known. To my stepmother they were evidence of unmitigated slothfulness, and she threw into the fire every written page that fell into her hands. Relatives, teachers and comrades viewed my activity with hostile eyes, almost as if my enterprise constituted an offence against them; and my first announcement of my intention to devote myself to a literary career aroused the laughter of our friends and the violent wrath of my father.

The fact was that I had been promised, so to speak, to my uncle, that brother of my mother's whose own marriage was childless. My father had set all his hopes on this arrangement. Where he had failed I should succeed: in growing rich. His favourite dream visualized me as a great business man, the successor of the brother-in-law whom he admired. Hence he did everything he could to suppress my aberrant inclinations.

At that time literary culture and a literary tone were neither as common as they are to-day in middle-class society, nor as greatly sought after; and this was in some ways a good thing. Now that Art no longer is the rare and precious delight of the chosen few it has become

a platitude, an extravagance and a subterfuge for the many, and, finally, a trade like any other. Now none are willing to listen and receive; each wants to have his own say, to play the giver himself.

In my fifteenth year I wrote a novel, an unspeakably jejune and insipid affair; and one day I took the manuscript to the editorial office of a daily paper. A stout editor sat sleepily at his desk and surveyed me with amazement as I stated my plea. Shortly thereafter the beginning of this composition appeared under my name, sprinkled with misprints, in the fiction supplement of the paper. I still remember the winter evening when, after supper, my father picked up the paper, which I had laid beside his plate folded in such a way that his gaze had to fall on my work. With beating heart I waited. I can still see the sudden change in his careworn, tired face, the quick flash of pride in his eyes, soon replaced by anger and anxious bewilderment.

Unpleasant scenes followed. Reproaches, threats, abuse, derision. At school too I was called to account, summoned before the Rector, and sentenced to twelve hours' detention to atone for the prohibited misdemeanour of publication. My father now became a ruthless oppressor, with his wife as his loyal spy, so that I could no longer find a quiet hour for work. On moonlit nights I would sometimes leave my bed, and, in a passion of creation,

write page after page at the window. On one such night a fire broke out in my father's factory, which lay across the court. I was the first to see the flames, and gave the alarm; and when I saw my father—terrified and half-dressed—rushing down the stairs, I imagined that this calamity constituted his punishment for his harshness to me.

V

DARK and difficult were those years of development. To avoid being crushed by my grievance and the feeling that I was unjustly treated I gladly took refuge in the fancy that the world-spirit was silently working for me. It was really something of a miracle that the prison-house of reality did not destroy me.

To the demands with which people tried to do violence to my nature I could oppose only obstinacy—a dumb defiance and non-conformity. Two friends helped me, each in his own way. Both were Jews, and both played a typical rôle in my development.

One was tall, slender, with fair, curly hair, and the head of an Antinous. The son of a wealthy widow, he possessed an imposing library. I had to steal the hours that we spent together in reading the works of the poets ; hours of the keenest ecstasy. With insatiable hunger I absorbed verse and prose, scenes and images. All things that had their being in this realm I regarded with reverent awe. Only a narrow bridge, to be crossed in secrecy, led from the commonplace to this region of emotional abandon. There all was bleakness, fear, oppression, desolation, torpor ; here were fire and tenderness and passion ; and words, images and dreams were the altars of a secret

cult. It may be that my friend was inspired by me and shared my transports; he was a gentle soul, given to sentimentality, vain of his good looks; for a time I idolized him. While I was destined for a commercial career, his ambition was to become an actor; and since I saw in him the future Garrick of the German stage our chosen field was that of tragedy. I conceived the ambition of becoming a Shakespeare for my adored Garrick, and I set about writing tragedies of my own. I knew nothing of schools and tendencies. The storm and stress within me found a vent; pathos and extravagance gushed from the wellsprings of my own mind; I invented a world full of murder, blood-lust and madness; and my friend believed in me. In his eyes I had already achieved immortality. When fate parted us and I had to go into my uncle's factory in Vienna we kept the flame alive with an ardent correspondence; in many long letters I reported in detail on all I was writing and thinking. However, he soon cooled down. I saw that my intransigent attitude troubled him, for he had come to terms with life. Instead of at least echoing my spiritual distress he indulged in sentimental and mendacious descriptions of his amorous adventures. And one day, when he had once more written a long letter about his passion for some actress, I decided not to reply; nor did I ever hear from him again.

My other friend was the son of a Gunzenhausen merchant. Three years older than I, he was studying law in Munich, but during the vacations he was my constant companion. He was the very antithesis of my first friend; undergrown, dwarfish, indeed, but endowed with such keen Jewish penetration, so great a gift for perceiving and scourging the foibles and infirmities of other people, that I was really afraid of him. My literary inclinations were treated with biting sarcasm, especially if girls were present, before whom he loved to shine, and who were greatly impressed by his Heinesque witticisms, his knowledge of books, and his quickness of repartee.

In this little world he was the shining light, the final critical authority; I, on the other hand, a poetaster, an unstable visionary who was not even treading the path of humanistic culture, cut a pitiful figure. I could not by any means assert myself before him; no effort, no promise, no evidence could convince him. My words and my work he tore to pieces; he made even my effort seem suspect. Yet I struggled most painfully to please him and win his approval. Not only did he sow disbelief in those about me, but he filled my own mind with misgivings. Intimidated by his eloquence and argumentative skill, by the apparently inexorable severity of his judgment, by his superior knowledge and his malicious tongue, I accepted him as my guide and arbiter.

When at last he deigned to recognize my struggles and aspirations I gave him, in a momentous hour, the power of deciding my fate. It happened thus :

My situation in my uncle's house had grown untenable. I did not come up to expectations. In the work assigned to me I was listless and unreliable ; at every opportunity I played truant from that rigid circle, to indulge secretly in tastes that were considered queer and harmful and even criminal. I spent my days in a confused, somnambulistic frame of mind ; my nights, often until dawn, I devoted to my manuscripts, working feverishly, in a sort of frenzy, almost beside myself. That the results of this labour were worthless goes without saying ; but at such a stage of one's development it is intensity rather than quality that counts. The consequences were domestic disputes, reproaches of ingratitude, attempts to reform, punishments, lectures, derision. It never occurred to anyone that my erratic activities might contain some element of rationality, that they might lead to a future, or even —inconceivable thought—to a means of earning my livelihood. My uncle, who was kindly and simple, if weak, a slave to his work and its proceeds, was subject to influences that distorted his view of me. He threatened to turn me out in disgrace ; and I could not but feel that the worst fate of all would be to return to my father, an unwanted burden, or, as did happen later, to have to

earn my living as an office clerk in provincial isolation.

There was a physician who had attended the family for years, and who was also their friend, who bore a curious intellectual resemblance to the friend of whom I have spoken. Keenly intelligent and observant, sceptical, well read, and likewise a Jew, he was the other's counterpart in the older generation, except that he had more knowledge of the world, and was more genial. To-day this type has lost all its good breeding and good nature. Superficially considered, it might seem as though it had gained in sureness of intellect what it has lost in kindliness and polish. But the gain is only apparent. If we pull off the mask a denier stands revealed, now as then, one who has lost his God, an opportunist by reason of a dumb, gnawing despair whose nature he himself does not really understand. Strangely enough, I became attached to the older man, as unreservedly as to the younger; and both disappointed me in the same way. In the course of my life the specifically Jewish form of worldly wisdom has often been disastrous to me; for I, with my wholly different mental outlook, have been blind to practical utilitarian purposes and immediate aims; yet upon me the burden of outward responsibility has often been imposed, and the inner burden always.

The physician rejected and ridiculed the proofs I had shown him of my talent, and in company he made them

the butt of his witty banter. However, he condescended to discuss them with me, and advised me to study. Now arose the question whether my uncle would grant me the necessary means ; the doctor promised that he would persuade him to do so. In the meanwhile I, entranced by the new prospect, turned to my friend in Munich, and described the situation to him ; anticipating matters, I wrote that I should probably be able to count on my uncle's assistance, and asked him whether he would take me in and help me prepare for my examinations. His reply was cordial and encouraging far beyond my expectations. He, who was usually so coolly deliberate, drew so tempting a picture of common work and endeavour that I suddenly grew too impatient to continue negotiations with my uncle and his advisers. One afternoon in May, 1890, I secretly packed my trunk, went to the railway station, and fled to Munich with the fifty or sixty gulden I had saved in my pocket.

That nocturnal train-journey I still remember very clearly, for throughout the whole of it I was in—and suited my actions to—a mood that in all my life has come upon me but rarely. I sat in a dimly-lit third-class carriage, together with about thirty other people—peasants, townsmen, labourers, including some women and girls. And from the very beginning of the journey, all through the night, I kept them in a state of constant

noisy laughter, in which the conductors also joined, with boisterous jokes, hilarious stories, and irresponsible buffoonery. All their moist, laughing eyes were fixed on me, expectantly, gratefully, delightedly; I can still remember a gaunt old peasant who literally wept with laughter, and a woman who from time to time gave me an apple from her hamper and fondled my hand. It gave me pleasure to watch how my melancholy, bitterness and soreness grew more intense as the joyful transports of my simple audience increased. Only an impulse of youthfully self-complacent, self-intoxicated desire to approach and to flee humanity can enable one to act with such impudent and profound self-contradiction; but a sense of extraordinary loneliness may have been at work as well.

My student friend had hoped that my rich uncle, whom he respected, had sent me forth with his blessing and ample financial means; he was naturally anything but pleased when it appeared that I had run away and should now have to plead for generosity. He was almost compelled once more to become the advocate of my rash enterprise, with the result that I was granted a very small monthly allowance—so small, indeed, that it barely saved me from starvation; methodical work and care-free study were unthinkable. At this my mentor's mood grew increasingly sullen. I had become a burden to him; he

did not know what to do with me, and tried to shake off the responsibility. He upbraided me for my recklessness, my stupidity and lack of will power, and prophesied that I should come to no good end. Among his fellow-students, into whose circle he sometimes introduced me, I was regarded as a tragi-comic figure, a poor devil of a barbarian; according to the standards of student life I was their inferior, and an object of additional contempt because I was not in a position to drink. Soon I realized that my situation had become far worse than it had been before my flight from my uncle's house.

Before going away for the vacation my friend, feigning a prudent solicitude, committed the treachery of writing to my uncle that I was not taking my new tasks seriously, and that consequently he could no longer foster my activities; it was his conviction that an academic career was closed to me. This brought to an end the financial support which I had been receiving. The state of forlorn helplessness into which I now fell was aggravated by doubts of my future when, on one of these days of increasing distress, I made a pilgrimage to one of the most famous literary ornaments of Munich. Laden with a voluminous epic in blank verse, I went to him for criticism and guidance and a word of encouragement. What I received was the opposite of what I had hoped. The great man, whose greeting was cold and majestic,

earnestly advised me to resume my commercial career; probably the quality of my *opus* amply justified his view. I was not angry with him, for even then I felt instinctively that in the years of development work and achievement signify far less than the man himself, than the destiny and the path which he proposes to follow. But to see these signs calls for the contemplation of something more than a thick manuscript, and a relationship other than that of the distinguished authority and the bashful apprentice.

VI

As a matter of fact, I was not at this time nearly so much concerned about my work and my achievements as I may have imagined in my passing impatience. What I craved was the world of men, a pivotal point in life, a foundation whereon to base my work and achievements. Such a foundation I lacked; I had lacked it from the beginning. Strangely enough, I was conscious of no definite sense of deprivation, nor was I aware of any circumscribed and limited resistance; in my mind was only a blind, groping surmise, hardly capable of formulation in my consciousness and my soul; only much later did it condense to the point of tangibility. As I look back upon that time it seems like a period of feeling my way through a dark, empty room, the exit from which I should have to find before any significant activity could be considered, before I could set my affairs in any sort of order.

No individual claimed me as a being akin to him, nor did any group; neither the people of my blood, nor those whom I yearned to join; neither those of my own species nor those of my choice. For I had at last decided to make a choice; and I had made it. It was my inner destiny rather than a free decision that had brought about

my secession from the old circle. The new, however, neither received nor accepted me; and to offer myself to them would have been incompatible with pride and honour. Herewith the disquieting difficulty of my problem began to make itself felt.

What I have said of longing and choice must not be misunderstood. I was ruled by no dominant impulse; I was not forgetful; still less was I swayed by utilitarian considerations. I lived in an atmosphere of flattering idealization that obstinately cloaked the truth about mankind in general, though that truth was so near and so apparent. Perfectly ingenuous, not yet taught or humbled by experience, and on the whole not very susceptible to it, my mind had created an ideally transfigured image of the world about me. A naïve self-confidence or self-deception prevented me from applying to myself the established differences of class, caste and race, of descent and civil rank.

I had rid myself of all restrictions, and in my pernicious delusion I regarded my case as typical, so that in my eyes humanity consisted only of individuals, all equally free of restrictions. And so my imagination was carried away into the boundless, the bottomless, the endless. Weak and poverty-stricken I confronted the absolute, which in one sense reduced me, while in another it became my fate and a burden upon my conscience.

VII

To keep from starving I had to take refuge with my father, who, himself very badly off, was then living in Würzburg. I returned truly as a prodigal son; my home-coming passed off without melodrama, but grief and humiliation could not be dispensed with. My father made it clear that I had destroyed his highest hopes; his attitude toward me grew even colder and more gloomy than it had been. Most bitter of all was my stepmother's reception of the unwelcome boarder, on whom, for that matter, she had never wasted any kindliness. It was harrowing to have to beg, so to speak, for the meals I ate and the bed in which I slept; but then, everything was hard from that time onwards.

For weeks I wandered aimlessly about the old streets and the vineyard paths on the river bank, the rampart of the palace gardens, and the park of the Veitshöchheimer Schloss. Since I had no companion, since I knew not a soul whose eyes would meet mine in friendly greeting, I made myself an armour of delight and pride in my loneliness. I was conscious, of course, that in the outer world there were minds in ferment; I could even hear the call and the challenge of the youth of that period, the rallying-cry of a new age, a new truth, a new

mankind. But I did not dare to consider myself included, nor did I see any path that could lead me to them. I did not dare—but a queer pride too was involved, that dream of royalty in disguise, so often the cherished dream of the outcast in love with himself.

In the meanwhile my father, more and more worried by the indolent life I was leading, insisted that I must write my uncle a letter of apology, and, by promising to reform, induce him to take me back. In vain did I resist; the persecution grew too galling. So I yielded to the inevitable, and composed one of those skilfully-written letters which my uncle contemptuously described as verbal pyrotechnics. None the less, however, he consented to put me on probation. His house and his factory were to remain closed to me until my behaviour should prove that I had been cured of my " crazy ideas." He procured board and lodging for me with the family of one of his employees. They were simple people, noisy and commonplace, who regarded me with respect because I was the nephew of their employer; yet as an aspiring and unsuccessful author I seemed ridiculous even to them. I was taken into an export house as an apprentice, and from the very beginning my work was almost unbearable drudgery. The head of the concern was a choleric fool, a speculator and a slave-driver, a libertine notorious throughout the city. The whole business was

permeated by a singular spirit of malice and insubordination. The lowest tasks were demanded of me; without knowing why I quickly found myself the object of a vile intrigue, the butt of slander and spite. For ten months I made every effort to keep my promise. Then a brazen practical joke put an end to the matter. In my absence one day the head clerk found some pornographic photographs in my desk. I was summoned before a tribunal. I knew nothing of the matter; I had, indeed, never seen such pictures; but, scorning to defend myself, I resigned my post and flatly declared to my uncle that I would have nothing more to do with such people. A girl who worked in the office, and who had a liking for me, did not rest until she had exposed the conspiracy and forced the culprit to confess; but for me it was too late.

The family council was at a loss. I had become a sore trial, and had to be got rid of by fair means or foul. It was decided that I should now serve my year in the army; and should I fail to come to my senses in the course of that year I was to be left to my fate. So I was sent back to Würzburg; there I presented myself at the barracks, and was accepted. To cover my expenses the half of a small maternal legacy, amounting to about a thousand marks, was realized; on that I should have to live for a whole year after paying the unavoidable expenses and the cost of my uniform, etc. Thus I entered the army as

a privileged but penniless recruit—an unfortunate combination, as I soon came to realize. A Jew, and poor besides, I was held in twofold contempt by both officers and men. At the very beginning, moreover, I did something so stupid and crazy that the odium of it clung to me throughout the year: During my first few days in the regiment I was required to submit a written *curriculum vitae*, to which, ludicrously enough, I appended a melancholy poem, which, to the best of my memory, had as its theme the vanity of all mortal endeavour and of mine in particular. These rhymed verses the sergeant-major read on parade; they were received with unanimous guffaws; he then harangued me as crushingly as though I had ridiculed the whole German Army.

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VIII

EXPERIENCE must be dealt with freely or it serves only fortuitous or futile ends. As my intention here is not to write an actual autobiography, but merely to describe a fateful conflict, the account I have just given, whose purpose is merely to show how I developed and in what soil I grew, will suffice as a coherent narrative. The path now grows narrower and more definite, the route is more vigorously followed. The demands of logical arrangement must yield to the sequence and gradation of decisive events.

Although I made it a point of honour to do my best to fulfil my duties as a soldier, to accomplish everything that was required of me—which at times necessitated no little self-command—I did not succeed in gaining the approbation of my superiors. Before long I knew that even the most exemplary conduct would not and could not have helped me, for such approbation would have been contrary to their intention. I read this in the scornful attitude of the officers, in their undisguised tendency to take the satisfactory performance of duty as a matter of course, while unsatisfactory work became an occasion for public humiliation. Social companionship was out of the question; personal merit was not even considered;

intelligence, or any original form of expression immediately aroused suspicion; promotion beyond a certain point was inconceivable; all this because my identification papers carried the designation *Jew* in the column marked *Creed.* But these are well-known facts, no longer surprising to any one. Moreover, I had known beforehand what the situation would be—which was bad enough in itself, and likely to lead to a permanent darkening of one's general outlook on life.

In this connection I found the attitude of the men more surprising and far more distressing. For the first time I encountered that dull, rigid, almost inarticulate hatred that has permeated the national organism. The word "ANTISEMITISM" does not suffice to describe it, for the term reveals neither the nature nor the source, neither the depth nor the aim of that hatred. It contains elements of superstition and voluntary delusion, of fanatical terror, of priestly callousness, of the rancour of the wronged and betrayed, of ignorance, of falsehood, of lack of conscience, of justifiable self-defence, of apish malice and of religious bigotry. Greed and curiosity play their part here, blood-lust, and the fear of being lured or seduced, the love of mystery, and deficient self-esteem. In its constituents and background it is a peculiarly German phenomenon. It is a German hatred.

Every honest and self-respecting Jew must feel a lasting

dismay at his first breath of this poisonous miasma, at his first attempt to understand its nature. Such was my own experience. Furthermore, the Catholic population of Lower Franconia—plentifully interspersed with an unpleasant sort of trade-loving, usurious Jews who still bore the mark of the ghetto: shopkeepers, second-hand traders, peddlers, cattle-dealers—was exposed to constant incitation, and stood far below the neighbouring populations in urbanity and natural kindliness; and in the popular mind there still persisted vivid memories of the stories of well-poisonings and ritual murder, of episcopal blood-pardons, of sanguinary and profitable persecutions of the Jews.

It sometimes happened that I would strike up a mutually advantageous acquaintanceship with a man of my own age; but when a certain revelation could no longer be avoided he would either cautiously withdraw, or else, after assuming for the time being an air of unconcern, he would eventually show signs of an almost irrepressible distrust; or else he would make it clear to me that he recognized my own person as an exception, and for my benefit was willing to disregard his well-founded prejudice. And that was the worst insult of all. To be proclaimed inferior as an individual is far more easily borne than disparagement of one's race; suspicion of one's character is more endurable than suspicion of one's

birth. One can defend oneself against aspersions on one's own character, by refuting the error, or, at least, by imagining that one is refuting it. Against libels of the race, however, all arguments and proofs are ineffectual, and the inmost and most carefully guarded mirror of the consciousness grows dim and tarnished.

When after my discharge from the army I came to Nuremberg, where I had been offered a subordinate, poorly-paid position in a government office, I was already crippled in an essential aspect of my relationship to the world. Nothing is more deleterious to probity and freedom of action than the combination of innate pride with the dread of humiliation. If one has gained a secure sense of one's own worth the only antidote to bitterness is isolation, the determination to let oneself be sought and found, and longing for him who will seek and find. It is the miracle of youth that it can never entirely despair of mankind; it will debase itself rather than cease to believe in its dream-vision of mankind. And the time came when I too debased myself. I fell into bad company. In my unquenchable thirst for intellectual intercourse I fell into the cloaca of intellect. I thirsted for reassurance, and was flung out of the positions I had so painfully won. I longed for a speech that does not derive its whole meaning from money, sweat and toil, and was stricken by polluting phrases that aped the nature and the bearing

of intellectuality. Nothing more need be said in order to describe the sort of life that I led for years. What would it avail to exhume hideous incidents from the grave of Time? Nights spent in filthy beer-shops; ecstasies of a rebellion almost barren of ideas; a pitiful squandering of self; a flaunting of poverty; duty left undone; suffocating want; a cheap defiance of the bourgeoisie. Such things are not new to-day, nor were they new even then. To speak of that circle of dismal figures would simply not be worth while. However strange or tragic their individual fates, the chief characteristic of these people as a whole was their mediocrity. In all the obscure cafés of this world the dissatisfied and impotent artists, writers, and penniless students, the Falstaffs and Pistols, Collines and Hjalmar Ekdals, torture the same phrases to death in the same way, from the first flush of intoxication to the despondency of the morning after.

What my existence during those years contributed to the deeper orientation of my life derived, on the one hand, from the city, that monument of the Middle Ages, reposing as though enchanted in the midst of a frenzied activity and a feverish, constantly intensified industry; almost the source, and the future centre, of the struggle between the middle class and the proletariat. To me the fact that the first European railway ran between Nuremberg and Fürth has always seemed of symbolical

significance in this respect. On the other hand, naturally bound up with this, was the sight and knowledge of an abrupt division in the world of men—the world of the contemplative and silent men of the past, and the world of the purposeful and overloud men of the future.

All this in a limited space, like a specimen and experiment, in the heart of Germany. The scales swayed up and down before me. I was not inclined to link my fate with either. From the one side I received the delicacy of old forms, reverence for tradition, the breath of history, introspection, the power to feel and understand the peaceful and self-contained and secure. From the other came the vision of new things, the concepts and vistas of a transformed age; for the rest, however, there was bleakness; a spiritual bleakness and sluggishness and induration.

If I did not sink in company with those others who became submerged I owe it, perhaps, to a man who stepped into my life at a most critical moment. I had aroused his sympathetic interest; he observed me, approached me, pointed out my danger. His gentle, patient, loving persuasion taught me to abhor and avoid that sterile, rotten life. What serious exhortation could not accomplish he achieved by means of caustic humour and apt anecdotes; for he was full of stories, and never wearied of telling them. He himself was involved in

many difficulties; he was moodily reflective as a Hamlet; and lonely too, for his character, sharply gruff and sensitive as a woman's, made all intimate association hard for him. Yet he attached himself to me, entreating and guiding, jealously watchful. He was one of the most enigmatical persons I have ever met, and his influence extended over the most important years of my life.

Six or seven years older than I, he was the son of an ancient though totally impoverished patrician family of Nuremberg. His father was dead, and he lived with his mother—a curiously austere woman, who hated and avoided the world—in a relation that hovered between wrangling and love. By calling he was a lithographer, but in his tenacious way he had turned to literary interests—not as a producer but as one passionately dissenting with his age and his contemporaries. Lean and lank, muscular, quick, nervous as a thoroughbred, moody, with a knack of winning and impressing others, he was impulsive and violent, astute and witty, with leanings toward asceticism and bookishness, toward homeopathy, toward eccentricity.

When, feeling that his abilities would be wasted at home, he had gone to Zürich, where the prospect of a wider range of activities awaited him, I was overcome by a sense of having been deserted by my guardian

spirit; to join him again became my chiefest aim. An unusually intensive correspondence proved but an unsatisfactory substitute for living intercourse, yet for the time being no hope of reunion presented itself. In the meanwhile I had reached my majority, and received the tiny remainder of my mother's legacy—five or six hundred marks, whose possession gave me the illusion of wealth. I resigned my post, paid my debts, and left for Munich. There, for a few weeks, I lived a care-free life, a state entirely new to me; but retribution soon came, for one day my imagined wealth was exhausted. I looked for work again, inserted an advertisement in the paper. A general insurance-agent replied from Freiburg in Baden, asking for my photograph and personal particulars, and after receiving these he engaged me.

The only clerk in the office, I had to work at my desk for ten hours a day. My employer was stern, parsimonious, crafty, and very hard to please; his manners were impeccable, his bearing that of a lieutenant in the reserve. One Sunday morning, when I had gone to the office to finish an urgent piece of work, he too put in an appearance, praised my zeal, and then suggested that I should let the work wait and go to church instead. Somewhat astonished at his ignorance on this point, I told him what there was to tell. His face underwent a terrifying change. After a few moments of angry silence

he accused me of deliberate failure to inform him on this point, and declared that it had been incumbent on me to give the facts regarding my religion in my letter of application; he had thought of no such eventuality, for my photograph and my appearance had deceived him; and he felt himself to be the victim of a fraud. Beyond this he said nothing. But as he did not dare turn me out into the street at once he began to vent all his spite on me, found fault with every stroke of the pen, with every address I wrote. He laid a trap for me by giving all the cash of the agency into my charge, basely anticipating that since he had not yet made the promised payment of my travelling expenses I should embezzle some of the money; for he knew that I was very poor. And it did happen that while he was away for a few days I took two thalers from the cash-box; I could not do otherwise in my need. I informed him of the fact at once, and asked him to count the money as an advance on my salary. But he smiled derisively. For now he had a pretext for getting rid of me; and he discharged me on the spot.

The weeks that followed were an evil time. Lacking all means of support, I wandered about in the Black Forest of the Breisgau, sleeping on rainy nights in the woodcutters' huts. I should have starved had not some peasants supplied me with bread and milk, at the request

of their children. These were children from a lakeside village who attended school in Freiburg. I would often walk through the woods with them in the evening, and tell them all sorts of stories as we walked. This gained me their affection. But then I could endure this life no longer. I sold what I could spare of my possessions—a coat, a few books, my watch—and set out for Zürich, where I arrived safely after many tribulations, and where my friend received me with a delight that moved me deeply and made up for all my sufferings.

IX

It appeared that my friend too was in straitened circumstances; having quarrelled with his employer he had been forced to resign his post, and had as yet found no other. Our mode of life was as follows: we slept all day in his room, and in the evenings went to a café where a friendly waiter granted us credit. There we drank *café au lait* and ate a stupendous number of rolls—our only meal in the twenty-four hours. At this café we stayed and talked until late at night; then we went home, my friend got into bed, I lay down on a borrowed mattress, and we continued to talk until dawn.

The Freiburg incident was a constant torment to me. My friend noticed that I was keeping something from him, for I had not been able to bring myself to tell him about it, but had explained my flight as due to some unimportant dispute. With delicate tact he finally managed to make me divulge my secret, and thereafter many of our nocturnal conversations centred about this theme.

That intrinsically trivial incident brought us to generalizations and discussions of life as a whole, and then back again to the strictly personal subject of my own existence. And after we had travelled many such roads together a gulf suddenly appeared between us.

I confessed to him something to which I could not reconcile myself, something which I had always refused to admit to myself: I felt, as a member of a nation, equal to others in human status and civic rights; but if anyone could, without adequate reason, and without laying himself open to condemnation, treat me as a creature of a lower order—then either my sentiment was based on error, or the understanding which had seemed to support that sentiment was fallacious and illusory.

He replied that the hostility was directed not against me but against my race, against my identification with a foreign body within the nation. I was prepared to hear this argument, but could not answer it without a sense of shame and indignation.

Granted, I said, that these strangers are your guests—why do you trample upon all the laws of hospitality, which are also the laws of humanity? And if we assume that you regard them as annoying intruders—why do you tolerate them and commit the hypocrisy of making humane pacts? Better open warfare than this living under the same roof in sham peace and hidden hate.

Well, was his mystifying comment, the Jews are a part of us; however things are, they are a part of us.

I protested. They are a part of you, and yet you treat them like rats, like parasites?

He replied: Who would think of such a thing? Only political and social mischief-makers do that. Enlightened Germans know what they owe the Jews, and that the future will only increase their debt to the Jews.

Jews and Germans—I could not grasp this division, nor could I forget it; I thought about it long and strenuously in order to make it clear to myself. I asked: What is the dividing factor? The difference in faith? But I am not a believer in the Jewish faith, just as you are no believing Christian. The difference in blood? But who is competent to judge blood? German blood has been mixed with that of French immigrants, with that of Slavs and Norsemen and Spaniards and Italians, probably also with the blood of the Huns and Mongols when their hordes invaded German territory. Excellent, exemplary Germans of definitely non-German descent might be named—artists and generals, poets and scholars, princes and even kings. Can the two thousand years of the Jews' life in the West have failed to modify their blood? Though it be alien blood, have not the air and the soil and the water, a common history and a common destiny, action and work in common, had their effect, even if we exclude actual physical interbreeding? Despite their own laws and the resistance of the nations, could they escape the natural law? Or are they of a different moral constitution, human beings of another cast?

That might be so, he answered. To him they did seem to be of a different moral constitution; human beings of another cast. Perhaps this was the critical point.

Thereupon I: Surely he did not mean that the Freiburg insurance-agent had not been actuated by a petty, malicious and mischievous prejudice?

No, he did not mean that. But what happens on a lower plane is no criterion whereby to judge the views held on a higher. Just as a legislature cannot be held responsible for trespasses on the part of the executive power.

He felt, therefore, that my moral constitution differed from his, that I was a human being of another cast?

Instead of replying he asked me, very seriously and solemnly, whether—on my word of honour—I really felt as a Jew. I hesitated. I wanted to know the purpose of the question.

He laughed, saying he could clearly see my difficulty in giving a definite answer. The concept *Jew* was not easy to define.

Of course, I rejoined. No easier than the concept *German.*

He wanted to know whether there was any doubt as to my mother's having been Jewish, and whether any case of racial mixture, or even the suspicion of it, had

ever occurred in my family. When, smiling, I answered both questions in the negative he shook his head and observed that my case was extraordinarily interesting—a most unusual case.

I insisted upon his explaining what he meant by " my case." I tried to help him by saying: The fact that among Germans I feel as a German is of no final significance. The German is at liberty to regard this as effrontery or otherwise, to accept me or not. When he accepts me it is condescendingly, by way of exemption, often only temporarily, because something I have achieved has forced him to respect or like me; or carelessly, negligently, or because it suits his purposes. Admission into a social group merely because the usual bars are let down is offensive and undignified for both sides.

This he conceded. I continued: In my innocence I had always been convinced that I was a part of German life, of the German people, by birth. The language is the breath of life to me. For me it is far more than a means of communication, something casually learned and used; its words and rhythm constitute my innermost life. It is the building-material of a spiritual world for the fashioning of which I feel a vital urge, though the power is not yet mine. It is as deeply a part of me as if it had been mine through all eternity. It has shaped

my character and lighted my way, directed my hand, guided my foot, made my nerves vibrate, taught my heart to feel and my mind to think; it has condensed into a unique and irrevocable structure all that I have seen, all I have imagined and thought, all that has reached me through history and the flow of daily life, through the pageant of human destinies and familiarity with great works. Was not this more important than an entry in a register, than a formal confession of faith, than an ingrown prejudice, than the rôle of an alien, maintained out of fear and pride on the one side, and superstition, malice and inertia on the other?

Yes and no, answered my friend. These arguments threw light on my particular situation; but in general matters were quite otherwise.

I objected that I did not wish to refer only to my particular situation, and also that this situation did not content me.

Said he: Let us first examine the general aspect of the question. As a body, the Jews have never been able to identify themselves disinterestedly with the causes of their host-nations. Within the State they have withdrawn into social and religious isolation, a rigid, frozen block in the flowing stream. As long as their isolation was enforced they could claim martyrdom; but now that the restrictions against them have been lifted their

lack of will and capacity for this identification is evident. A morbid pride in their tradition still persists in them. Even to-day, consciously or unconsciously, they lay stress upon the doctrine revealed to them and to them alone, and regard all other doctrines as false and misleading. In particular their undying hatred had to turn against Christianity, for toward Christianity their feeling was that of a mother whose womb has given birth to a traitor—the betrayer of their people, of mankind, of God. What could ever equal such hatred? What could ever mitigate it? Only this hatred, perhaps, can explain the power of resistance, the patience of the tribe, their endurance of suffering and their unexampled vitality. The determination to wreak vengeance for what they have suffered has probably germinated in their souls for generations, has penetrated every cell of their bodies, so to speak. The individual who has developed differently can do nothing to alter this fact, cannot be accepted as a refutation of it. Instincts of this sort continue to function below the surface; they cannot be abolished by agreements between well-intentioned reformers, or the sufferings of the excommunicate, or the example of those who have undergone metamorphosis.

It was painful for me to hear this. I pointed out that herein lay the whole tragedy of inveterate misunderstanding and malicious persecution; but he did not

agree, replying that, like so many others, I was the victim of a cultural delusion. How long is it, he asked, since the Jews have progressed beyond a barbarism of a lower mode of life? Even in the eighteenth century they obdurately persisted in their alienation, their gloomy seclusion. The aged Goethe regarded the Jew approximately as the American to-day regards the nigger; this despite Nathan the Wise, despite Spinoza and Moses Mendelssohn, despite the Jewish influences which permeated the rising Romantic movement, despite his undoubted appreciation of the veneration due to the historic Jewish institutions, the religious and social communities. The childish impressions which he had received in the Frankfort ghetto were stronger.

The Jews always recall the oppression and persecution to which they have been subjected when attention is called to objectionable traits in their racial demeanour. No Jew will tolerate an objective judgment of the Jews—to say nothing of an unfavourable judgment—even of an individual, and even of a degenerate Jew, if the slightest reflection is cast upon Jewry as a whole. The regrettable result of this fault is the tendency to speak of Jews either in the glozing tones of the apologist or in the hideous accents of slander. Their eulogists all emphasize the absolute moral purity of the Jews, and their invariably law-abiding nature, as though no Jew had ever

stepped over the line. Yet the robber bands that rendered central Germany and the lower Rhenish country unsafe between 1750 and 1820 included a considerable number of Jews; prowling spies, thieves, and receivers of stolen goods. I will not speak of the Shylocks of every degree, the ruthless usurers and unscrupulous speculators. It would be absurd to think that these millions of people—advancing through the centuries in an insecure social position, almost entirely unprotected, their lives and property always in danger—are under a greater obligation than their jailers and tormentors to conduct themselves irreproachably, or that their criminals are more abominable than others. To be entirely just one would have to take the opposite point of view. The charge against them, however, is of a more fundamental nature. It concerns their incapacity for spiritual adaptation. Their intellectual adaptability is extraordinary, even too great for their own good. But spiritually they have, as a body, as a racial entity, remained to this day what they were in Biblical antiquity.

My friend defended his views with almost dictatorial authority. I remember that I could not escape the logic and the force of his arguments. It must not be supposed that this is a verbatim report of our conversation; as a matter of fact, we had many conversations on the subject, and what I have given here is an abstract, the essence of

what was said. He was inexorable; and I, who wanted to get at the bottom of things, loved him for this inexorability, though vaguely I felt that in our united striving for the truth he had set himself above me, that he forcibly assumed the mastery, and that the substantial understanding which we finally reached did not give him the liberation and relief which it afforded me, to whom it opened a door and pointed out a goal. I was dimly conscious of a hidden conflict, a secret tension, which were steadily transforming him into an adversary.

The so-called emancipation undoubtedly marked an epoch in the life of the Jews, he continued; and the humanistic tendencies of the nineteenth century ended their pariahdom. Every decade brought them closer to us, binding them to us with the ties—but you must admit that they were only external ties—of common political, economic, and even patriotic interests; at all events, ties sanctioned by the law and frequently born of free judgment, a noble forgetfulness and moral insight. But save in the case of exceptional individuals the relationship never became unconditional; never an unconditional human relationship. Why? Was it because they sought none the less to preserve their identity as Jews? Again, why? As long as they were despised it was their privilege and their duty, their weapon and their armour, their consolation, and their means of self-respect and

self-preservation to isolate themselves, to develop their narrow community, to nurse a nationhood half illusory and imaginary, and hence all the sweeter, more seductive, more tragically ennobling. After the way to a common life with us had been cleared their intellectual character, their spiritual nature, changed with amazing rapidity; with astonishing resilience they made our needs theirs and theirs ours; they adapted themselves to the dictates of the common weal, and devoted their admirable talents to the arts and sciences and social progress. But fundamentally they remained Jews. I do not say they should have become Christians, though many did so for reasons of expediency, or because they no longer felt bound to their people, or even out of conviction. The question is whether they can become Christians in any but the superficial sense, as the majority of Christians themselves are; the question is whether, after conversion, they cease to be Jews in the deeper sense. We do not know, and have no way of finding out. I believe that the ancient influences continue to operate. Jewishness is like a concentrated dye: a minute quantity suffices to give a specific character—or, at least, some traces of it—to an incomparably greater mass. True, they have—again, in a certain sense—become Germans. Yet there is something that opposes the transformation. What can it be? Is it their peculiar spiritual inflexibility, in

contrast to their intellectual mobility and fluidity and versatility? That proves and explains too little. Nor is it the power of tradition. Not exclusively, at any rate, nor any longer. The demands of life modify and overcome tradition; the discipline of tradition erects a useful barrier against extremism and excessive individualism; as a political maxim it makes for conservatism and safeguards the nation against revolutionary change. But it is precisely extremism and excessive individualism and a passion for radical change with which we must charge the Jews. What, therefore, is that opposing force?

I told him that his love of generalization was both dangerous and unjust. There are Jews of all sorts. All general judgments are distorted and oppressive and lead to perversion, to exploitation for partisan purposes. Why not look humanly at the individual, and only the individual? Fault-finding often provokes the fault that is complained of, and repetition gives rise to exaggeration. The Jews must be given time. Many of them, hounded, intimidated and shackled, are hardly conscious of their right to breathe; a constant influx from turbid sources will defile the vessels that have been cleansed. Many, tormented by latent hatred, and determined to sacrifice themselves, carry sacrifice to the point of self-renunciation; yet others are intoxicated by the unaccustomed scope of the wealth of opportunities opened

to them. And no Jewish tribunal that one can imagine would acquit a prisoner whom a Christian or German court would declare guilty. Yet all the time I felt that my defence could not parry my friend's blows, for I was speaking from a lower standpoint. Only much later, after decades of inner struggle, was I able to answer his question, his " What is that opposing force ? " —that question whose justification I had denied, but which none the less drove me to sincere self-analysis.

From the earliest times the Jews have called themselves the Chosen People. The proclamation of their faith in their election and their mission occurs in all their myths. Without examining the sufficiency or insufficiency of their reasons for this belief in their mission—whether it is based on revelation, on their relation to the things nearest to their hearts, or on their historic or legendary destiny—one can yet see clearly, on the one hand, that a conviction cherished so obstinately for thousands of years entails quite extraordinary obligations, which the group can never wholly fulfil, and engenders a quite abnormal state of moral and mental tension, whose inevitable discharge results in a catastrophic existence; and, on the other hand, such an axiom, when made the basis of a national existence, paralyses moral development and replaces it by moral quietism, which leads to arrogance and self-righteousness.

The tragedy of the Jew's life is the union in his soul of a sense of superiority and the feeling that he carries a stigma of inferiority. He must live and find his bearings in the constant conflict and friction between these two emotional currents. I have found this in almost every Jew I have met; it constitutes the most fundamental, most difficult and most important part of the Jewish problem.

From the simple, human point of view, however, the fact that one is a Jew makes for neither superiority nor inferiority.

I have come to realize that a race cannot be permanently the Chosen People, and that it cannot permanently designate itself as such, without conflicting with the proper order of things as seen by other nations. The chosen individual always is in a position to assume responsibility for his acts; but in the case of a chosen people the individual gradually assumes a rôle to which he is not entitled and for which he is not fitted, but which leads him to claim for himself the advantages of the group-position while he shifts his responsibilities upon the group. Even if we should admit that a single magnificent achievement might entitle a people to call itself the Chosen People for all time, how can such a claim be confirmed and defended against criticism, against the new demands of a new age? How is the complex

"people" to be defined? Can the mere profession of a faith suffice for election? That would be irrational and immoral.

For a people the idea of election is justified only within a temporal limit. To sever it from its historic context, and, so to speak, project it into eternity, is iniquitous; while the election of the individual is eternal, and has taken place in eternity.

X

THESE talks with my friend, a constant duel of opinions, held in check by affectionate mutual interest, were for me of far-reaching significance, and provided a much broader basis for the sphere of my thought and emotions. At times it seemed to me as though making my peace with him would be equivalent to making peace with all mankind. But it was difficult to lay down the conditions of such a peace, or even to outline them without misunderstanding.

The question which my friend asked me to decide, less by what he said than by his attitude, was this: Are you a Jew, or are you a German? Do you want to be a Jew, or a German? And it was just at this time that I felt that this decision had to be made. I felt compelled to decide in one sense or the other, although I could not see the path which ought to be followed in either direction. In what respects would matters grow better or worse for me after the decision had been taken? And could the mere word alone, the resolve alone, the change of orientation alone, be decisive? I sought a precedent and an example, I sought encouragement and corroboration from those who had gone before me in one direction or the other. But my search was futile.

In my youth Heinrich Heine was still a name to conjure with in the intellectual circles of Germany. Heine was referred to whenever the talk turned upon Jewish attainments, Jewish achievements, Jewish reputations. Nor were they by any means Jews alone who spoke enthusiastically of Heine; the influence of this poet was observable in almost all classes in Germany, extending beyond the artistic and poetic domain into the political and social. Furthermore, Heine is admittedly one of the few Germans who have won the esteem and admiration of France. Cultured and enlightened people read Heine, cited him and quoted him; the circle of his admirers extended from, say, my young student friend in Munich, who knew dozens of Heine's poems by heart, and revelled in Heinesque turns of speech, to the Empress of Austria, who idolized him and erected a temple to him. I could not understand this. To-day I recognize it as the typical expression of a definite state of civilization—one in which talent prevails over humanity. In the latter half of the nineteenth century an altar was dedicated, so to speak, to the talents, just as in the latter half of the eighteenth century an altar had been dedicated to genius. But in those days the concept of genius embraced that of humanity also, in all its manifestations, even when they were disagreeable; whereas the worship of talent—under whose singular influence, so difficult to analyse,

the world still stands to-day—has as its objects isolated intellectual achievements. And of this Heine is virtually the classical example.

From the very beginning I disliked Heine ; I might say that I abhorred him. His poetry, compared to that of Goethe, Hölderlin or Mörike, seemed to me insipid, frivolous, and crudely sentimental. His prose aroused my antipathy by its straining after witty and piquant phrases, its mixture of levity and the crudest melancholy. His critical, polemical and political writings impressed me as either shallow and superficially brilliant or unreliable and futile. I had little understanding for the satiric power which constitutes their greatest quality ; and to me his so-called last poems, which contain so many sincere and moving passages, were suspect on account of a certain complacency in suffering.

Doubtless both my judgment and my feelings were unjust. Probably that injustice, which I made no effort to restrain, had as its basis the circumstance that something which I considered harmful and destructive was upheld as inviolable and exemplary, and worthy of emulation. I have decided to mention this subject only with reluctance, and because this fragment of truth is a component part of the whole truth ; for in recent years there have come to the fore so many who assail and despise Heine—with arguments good and bad, but

usually bad, with weapons clean or foul, but mostly foul. The fact that those who hate blindly and those who accuse maliciously are in the wrong does not prove that wrong is really being done. Suppressing or colouring the truth does not improve a weak cause. Possibly the underlying cause of my aversion from Heine was his race. A time-conditioned figure, he was Jewish in a time-conditioned sense; the most striking thing about him is the harsh juxtaposition of the ghetto spirit and the cosmopolitan spirit, of Jewish bourgeoisie and Europeanism, of poetic imagination and a Talmudic fondness for play upon words, for ornamental and fanciful phrases. The latter combination, erroneously called romantic irony, is actually a result of the miraculous Jewish adaptability and a profound inner uncertainty a lack of confidence in life and the world. From this source, too, springs his journalistic ability. Heine may, indeed, be called the creator not of journalism, but of its offshoot, feuilletonism, that sorry makeshift for criticism, observation, judgment and stylistic form, a narcotic for a decadent society, a means of cloaking responsibilities.

Undoubtedly Heine was quite ingenuously a Jew; quite ingenuously, too, he was a German. He bewailed his Jewish fate and his Jewish sorrow, and betrayed the Jew in him. He proclaimed himself a German patriot, a German *émigré*, a German by birth and choice, and

betrayed the German in him. This, too, I am sure, quite ingenuously. First and foremost he was the man of talent, a man without divine ties or true affinities, disastrously isolated, thrown entirely upon his own resources, his own solitary ego, mythless and motherless, with no foothold in either heaven or earth. When I heard him praised I always felt betrayed. Why I can hardly explain; but it seemed to me that I stood at the opposite pole, that I would have to vanquish his work, his image, his influence, before my work, my image, my influence could begin to exist. All Jews were flattered to hear the name of Heinrich Heine. To me, however, it seemed that they ought to fear him, since he had enticed them to leave the straight and fruitful path, and had set up for decades to come a distorted image of the Jew and of the Jewish German. People asked me: Why do you dwell so persistently on Heine? Why not concern yourself with those who repel you less, or not at all? There is Felix Mendelssohn, there is Börne, there is the marvellous Rachel, there is Disraeli, there are Lassalle and Marx; there is, finally, Spinoza; all these are of noble cast, the last-named a man of the loftiest sublimity; a man no longer a Jew, a man who has emerged from the narrow frame of creed and sect, a true human being, a beacon for the ages. And I did learn to have regard for them. They too represented a temptation and a danger,

but they fitted more readily into the series of things envisaged and experienced. Heine at once included and excluded too much of the present; he was the wound which I had recently suffered.

It was by spirits of an antithetical character that I healed this wound. It would take me too far afield were I to enumerate them here; or describe their influence, from Cervantes to Turgeniev and Dostoievski, from Dickens, Thackeray, Richardson and Balzac to Keller, Gotthelf, Arnim and Kleist; or tell of the passionate sympathy they aroused in me, the hunger for life and vitality, for art and the forms of art; or relate how I clung to these mighty spirits, how ardently and devotedly I worshipped them. In them I sought the world, time, humanity, form, that molten fire of the ineffable which like a spiritual Gulf-stream washes the shores of the soul. I studied much history too at that time, always proceeding more and more from the general to the particular; this partly because of a liking for matters pertaining to personal destinies, and partly because of a craving for the material and the substance of life. I also dabbled in astronomy, in a wholly amateurish and imaginative fashion, because I had a longing for exalted emotions, and because I was disgusted with the desperate narrowness and hopelessness of my circumstances.

XI

EVENTUALLY my friend wearied of me. I did not know what to do with myself, and had no prospect of earning my livelihood, for I had learned nothing useful and was not qualified for any sort of practical work. My friend's limited resources were completely exhausted; forced by necessity, he appealed to some of his old acquaintances. By this means we kept our heads above water for a while; unhappily the acceptance of such help involved a loss of freedom, and compelled us to sink again into the dull and poisonous atmosphere of the tavern. For some reason these people did not like me, and when, in the course of a sail on the Lake of Zürich, a gust of wind robbed me of my old straw hat, I became the butt of their ridicule. My friend, grown timorous and cowardly, forsook me; surrounded by enemies, I felt ill at ease. It was decided that I should seek employment in a newspaper office. I was given a list of addresses, and with a borrowed felt hat on my head I spent days in making the round of them. My aversion was written on my face; the idea of becoming a journalist filled me with repugnance. Probably, moreover, my appearance did not create a favourable impression; at all events, my applications were all unsuccessful. Thereupon the others held a council of

war which resulted in two decisions: firstly, to buy me a new hat; and secondly, to raise, by means of a collection, the money needful for the fare to Munich, where my father was then living. These things were done. The collection was made: I think it yielded, besides the hat, about twenty francs; with this, my companions bought a ticket to Lindau, and gave me the change.

As far as I remember, my friend and I bade one another a cool and embittered farewell. I also recall that on the train, between Zürich and Lake Constance, I was seized with the pangs of hunger, and, unable to withstand the temptation to eat my fill after so long a time, I used for this purpose some of the money intended for the rest of my fare home. Later, as I stood in the Lindau station a few minutes before the departure of the Munich train, I must have looked conspicuously woebegone, for an old porter came up to me and began to talk to me; and when I confessed that I had not enough money for my journey he none the less put me aboard the train and presently handed me a ticket, saying that he was sure I would repay him, because of my honest face. On the ticket he had written his Munich address, of which I made a note. The porter's kindness, however, led to a terrible scene with my stepmother. I went at once to my father's house, and found that he was away from home. I could see clearly that he was very poor, but I asked his

wife to give me the money for the porter—ten or twelve marks. She refused angrily; I persisted, pleading more urgently; beside herself with fury, she hurled reproaches and insults at me and ordered me to leave the house. At this I lost my senses; I picked up a kitchen knife and approached her in a threatening manner. Thereupon she suddenly yielded, perhaps because the look of me had frightened her, or because she instinctively realized my desperation. After a time she brought me a silver bracelet that had belonged to my mother, and told me that I might pawn it.

This, of course, caused a complete rupture with my father. On his return he wrote me only a few lines, which moved me because of a brief and—in him—quite unusual expression of grief. In his eyes I was now utterly vile and worthless. All this must be recorded because otherwise I could not properly explain the period of my life immediately following upon that quarrel. For I lived through months of such utter isolation and abandonment, such strangling poverty as one rarely finds even in a modern metropolis; survival demanded an extraordinary power of resistance. I lived on apples, cheese and lettuce. The lettuce would appear every morning in a bowl beside the door of my tiny attic; a woman who lived opposite me, and who had learned of my helpless plight, practised charity in this delicate manner. When

I thanked her one day she silently shook her head. But I could not have continued living even in this way had not my father occasionally sent me a letter into which he had slipped a few postage stamps, which I then sold ; he had to put them in secretly, unknown to his wife. I also made the acquaintance of an archivist, a climber and tuft-hunter, a historian *ad usum delphini*—who employed me as a copyist for a time. He was one of those conscienceless slave-drivers not uncommonly found in subordinate positions. To abuse his power and to turn my need to his advantage gave him a cynical delight. Himself in a subordinate position, he took pleasure in his absolute mastery over one even more downtrodden. After I had spent a week copying his extracts and had delivered ten or fifteen pages he would pay me a thaler or a thaler and a half, as the fancy might take him. Sometimes I would earn twenty or thirty pfennigs by playing chess in an obscure café, but I had to be careful to avoid contests with players stronger than I.

That my physical condition grew worse and worse goes without saying. I fell ill with gastric hæmorrhage, but cured myself by a stringent self-prescribed diet of rice. My outer man was entirely neglected, although I took the greatest pains to keep my clothes free of spots, holes and patches. Inwardly I fell into a curious state, a half-tormented, half-blissful tension, out of which figures,

images and events slowly emerged. My daily life was an agitated dream ; the nights I spent at my work, sleeping only a few hours. My isolation, the total absence of any companionship or opportunity for discussion, produced a recurrent and finally latent state of confused, intoxicated rapture, ultimating at times with an equally confused and protracted anxiety. I suffered from hallucinations, and talked to myself; and I remember that one night I ran through the streets in an autumnal rain from midnight until three o'clock, filled with terror because I believed myself pursued by an irreconcilable foe with whose face and figure I was somehow perfectly familiar.

Such things were of frequent occurrence. And yet I was by no means desperate—at all events, not in my inmost soul—or embittered, or accusatory or misanthropic. I do not think I am guilty of retrospective idealization when I say that I shed external troubles as an oiled surface sheds water. I felt an inexhaustible store of strength within me. The external ills I had to suffer seemed entirely unrelated to my inner being. What had to be endured I met with endurance and no more. It was not exactly assurance that made me strong. Assurance involves conscious self-confidence, and that I did not possess ; not even where my work was concerned. For although my work set me aflame I felt its immaturity and inadequacy as soon as the flame had burned itself

out, so that I went back to the beginning, again and again, with an almost objective perseverance. As one looks back decades later it is, of course, difficult to subject all the stages of one's development to a rigorous examination that will draw no flattering veil over any particular scene. But however closely I scrutinize myself and that period two facts remain unassailable: Firstly, that in the midst of a German city my relationship to the world was that of Robinson Crusoe on his island; and secondly, that I could endure this long and gloomy isolation only because I lived like a silk-worm in its protective cocoon, in an animal state of somnolent expectancy. True, I was acutely sensitive to everything that went on about me, to men and things and voices, to every colour and tone, every word and breath; but only as a man in a dream is sensitive, like one in whom something is being created in which he has only the share deriving from his mere existence, while in other respects he serves only as an instrument.

XII

FROM the social point of view I necessarily felt an outcast; and I was one, for I lived like one. Those who have risen from the depths are prone, once they have reached a certain height, to brighten their dismal experiences with a golden lining. They forget their abasement all the more readily because it forced them to be base, to think basely, to deal basely. That is unavoidable, and whoever denies it lies. In the most favourable case much time and much moral effort are required before the soul can be cleansed of the filth and rubbish which were flung upon it and with which it covered itself. A veritable renewal is necessary; and only after such a renewal has taken place do the fruit and meaning of past suffering become manifest. While he is in torment a man is quite incapable of assimilating experiences and drawing conclusions; a mind crippled with anxiety can neither teach nor give shape to its thoughts. The mistake of the onlooker, who ascribes creative power to misery, persists only because the countless thousands who are sunk in wretchedness are unable to refute that impudent assertion of the comfortable. Those who have escaped the peril may sing its praises; but let those who are secure bridle their tongues, even when they eulogize those who risk their lives for them.

It was for society that I longed as I stood on its brink, a hair's breadth from the abyss. To be accepted and recognized as an equal among equals was my paramount desire. The question whether I was a Jew or a German had, for the time being, become subordinated to the problem of how I could get at my fellow creatures. Sometimes I felt as though I were paying off my share of the guilt and odium attached to Jewry, and as though that atonement would somehow become obvious and demonstrable. A number of chance happenings that occurred from time to time put an end to my black hopelessness, though not to my material difficulties; most important of all, they cleared spiritual paths and broke open the locked door before which I had watched and waited.

I became the secretary of a highly esteemed author, who, though himself no longer young, had espoused the cause of youth; a course quite at variance with his natural talent, which tended to tread more smooth and respectable paths. He dictated his novels and stories to me; and when, after a time, I ventured to submit to him some of my own work he expressed a surprise from which I could see that I had not laboured in vain. He was the first to encourage me, the first, indeed, to regard my literary efforts with unreserved seriousness; for me that meant salvation and deliverance. But he did more.

He used his influence for me and those very crude and questionable products of mine. Derision and obstruction could not deter him; indeed they inflamed him to unrestrained enthusiasm, and he hurled himself into feuds with characteristic impetuosity. Quite unexpectedly I found myself the centre of a clash of opinions—a development that filled me with dejection rather than pride.

But I set my foot on the bridges that now lay before me, and presently found myself swept away into the distractions and perplexities of the world. That is, I mistook a distorted illusion for the world; it simulated freedom, breadth and dignity, but actually was restricted, narrow and commonplace. Even long after I had rid myself of any delusions concerning it that which I here call *the world* remained undiscoverable for me; the more I strained to find it, the more I longed for it, the more shadowy its existence appeared to me. Yet I needed it, if my own existence was not to be a shadow.

Then as now, among us as in every other nation, the circle of literary life embraced representatives of all castes and classes. It is natural to believe that here a selection has been made of the finest and most capable; but that is not so. It is natural to believe in a community which has come together on a plane higher than the broad level of everyday life, a community which, because of the selection that has been effected, is ideal in its nature and

its activities. But that is not so. No selection has been made, nor has a community come into being. There is only a fortuitous assemblage and co-operation and opposition of individuals who are more or less gifted, more or less virtuous, more or less purposeful, ambitious, embittered, or inflammable. The majority are fugitives, men derailed, social casualties and invalids; and all are insecure. All, whether proletarian, middle-class or aristocratic, have fled their own circle, their own world, to become not free but free-lances. Hence they do not build on a given foundation. They must first construct their foundation, each for himself and in his own way; so that from the very beginning they fritter away their strength and energy and intellect on something whose possession should be a preliminary and a natural endowment. They divide their forces and wall themselves in; there is no bond between them and the people, and they get no backing from it; indeed, the people suspects and denies them. They have no common ground, no points of agreement, no mutual confidence, and often enough no respect for one another's work. And even when really qualified workers come together they form parties, factions and supercilious cliques.

One can soon find comrades whose opinions coincide with one's own, and can express them in the same words. But conversational agreement and the preservation of

spiritual continuity are two different things. Jealousy and pettiness, envy and derision are always lurking behind the door. The unsuccessful and the candidates for success form a closed phalanx against those who have won the slightest advantage; it takes a positively overpowering personality to quash the doubts of those who pretend to objectivity without achieving it. These doubts are the outcome of despair, or lead to it; and this despair, again, indicates insufficient discipline, poverty of thought, lack of agreement and irresponsibility. I have seen the most frenzied enthusiasm for a name transformed into cold reserve the moment the name became a living man. Remoteness held its own; distance alone could confer and maintain renown; otherwise all things were misused for the purposes of the moment's policy.

It may be that I myself was no better. The air one breathes gives colour to one's complexion. But I brooded over my lost illusions. I was troubled by the petty standards which reality compelled me to apply. It troubled me that I was not better and was not able to become any better than I was; and I was irked by the mask which I had to wear when nobler desires and nobler considerations called for dissimulation. Dissimulation is hard to learn, and yet in its most refined form it constitutes a human commandment. Nothing is more crude

and useless than to insist on the claims of truth and to blaze the truth abroad in such a way as to bewilder and disturb those minds whose precarious happiness depends on dreams and delusions. To avoid this course and yet to be sincere in another sense is a task in itself, which, for that matter, lies beyond the literary domain in the realm of self-discipline and love. For even love is not innate ; love too must be learned.

The discouragement that often overcame me in this witches' cauldron of intellectuality and callousness, arrogance and senseless opposition, the shame that I felt at the spectacle of all those blustering, stumbling selves among whom I too now was numbered, but who from a distance had seemed to me the withdrawn inhabitants of an enchanted garden, made me ask at times whether the narrow hostility, the mercenary squabbling in the pursuit of common aims, the provincial obtuseness, the brutal ambition, the suspicion and deliberate misunderstanding where achievement, perfection, ideals, mutual influence, thoughts and created images were in question —whether all this was a peculiarly German disease, or a specific by-product of the literary calling: its sombre lining, the same in other countries as with us. I had the following experience with a young French author whose acquaintance I had made : I had got to know him well, we had many fruitful conversations, and on a suitable

occasion he gave me a copy of a book which he had written, with a cordial inscription on the fly-leaf. A little while later I found myself in such pressing need that this book constituted my last resource, and I sold it for a trivial sum to a second-hand bookseller. Trivial, but enough to cover my expenses for two or three days. As we were living in the same house I could not avoid encountering the Frenchman, notwithstanding my uneasy conscience. And one day I noticed that his attitude toward me had changed; when he met me he seemed embarrassed and depressed, and mutely reproachful. Unable to understand his behaviour, I withdrew into myself, although I regretted the loss of his friendship. Only after he had left the city did I learn the explanation, which amazed as much as it distressed me. For in the second-hand book-shop he had, by chance, found his own book, with his inscription still in it; grown callous and uncouth in my need, I had lacked the good sense and the tact to erase that indication of a personal relationship. He had waited until his departure; now he returned the book to me, and with it he sent a letter. That letter was a document of the utmost delicacy and distinction of mind; I have hardly ever seen the like, and I do not think anyone has ever so thoroughly taught me a lesson or so subtly shamed me. He had guessed what had driven me to that ugly action; he did not tell me that he had

felt hurt; he reproached me only with my lack of confidence in him. He wrote, more or less: "Come to Paris. There may be many things there with which you will find fault, many things less attractive and sound and solid than in your own country. But among the intellectuals and the men of our vocation you will find something of whose lack I was painfully sensible in Germany: true comradeship, courtesy, and unconditional mutual respect."

Later I discovered this to be true, and one understands why if one knows anything of the intellectual and social life of the Latin countries. The German temperament is disunited, disunited to the core; in our country evolution proceeds by jerks; periods of flourishing prosperity and development end in sudden desolation; great figures are incredibly aloof. Connections and transitions are lacking between the moving parts, so that a living element is welded to one devoid of life, and insurmountable walls stands between caste and caste. There is no centre, and never has been; the four decades of the united empire could not even create an administration. The artist, the man of letters, unless he could be turned into a subordinate official, was a stray individual whose position depended on the accident of economic success. One social stratum condemns what another praises; traditions collapse overnight; education destroys imagi-

nation, scholasticism undermines learning, opinions abolish meaning, success annuls logic, liking takes the place of love, and industry is a substitute for germinating force.

All this I learned and had to learn, for it was required of my temperament that it should dominate, so to speak, my whole body. I had now outgrown the period of vague dreaming, and had to seek my own form and content; whatever of these was innate had to be correlated with and completed by reality. Tasks began to present themselves. I felt a vocation for epic writing; that would enable me to survive with my age and in my age. The symbol and the idea were the products of inspiration, of imagination; colour, fire and passion had their source in the blood, in intuition, in the internal temperature; but what of the outward factors, what of all that was to serve me as aliment, motive, framework, foundation, "material"? Here, I found, neither unity nor form existed, neither harmony nor organic development. German life had no centre of gravity; it was loosely compounded, fragment by fragment, person by person, city by city, State by State. The Frenchman needs only to write the word *Paris*, and that word is a nucleus in which is comprised an immense complex of existing and developing things, the seal, as it were, of the reality *society*, the reality *nation*, the reality *France*. He has in this word a perfectly definite complex of assumptions,

and indeed of selected assumptions, which have already received their distinctiveness, form, authenticity, and the final stamp at the hands of his predecessors. The Englishman has before him a highway of public and private life that was laid down centuries ago, and impregnable conventions. The Italian is protected by the ties that bind him to the great past, which still sustains him, with help from the landscape and the language; and as a creative artist he is almost always certain of respect from even the humblest of his countrymen. In Russia tradition and a finished form of life are replaced by a curious freedom and urbanity of conduct; there man comes into direct contact with man, often in a bizarrely natural and confusing fashion, for segregation into castes and class differences in our sense do not exist there and never did.

The German alone must "create" when he wants to portray social ties and the social structure, or society in general, or personal destinies in their relation to society. If he fails to do so all becomes uncertain, fortuitous, fantastic. His reality is either incredible, because it is exaggerated, spasmodically simplified, and deliberately distorted, or it is petty, unauthoritative, and devoid of typical style. Thus the society shown in *Wilhelm Meister* is invention pure and simple: a synthesis, a translation, a scheme. No other literature is weighed

down like the German with so heavy a ballast of biographical romances, tales of eccentrics, tales without action, poetical curiosities. In its highest forms the German novel must borrow grandeur, character and significance primarily from its creator, who must invent, condense and fabricate to a far greater extent than is generally supposed. The German novel is primarily individual (and usually provincial also), while the English or Russian novel is primarily national, and hence representative of its nation.

No German poet, and certainly no novelist (it is only during the last twenty years that our professors have permitted a novelist to be called a poet), can ever be representative of his nation in the sense that Balzac, for example, was representative of France, Dickens of England, and Tolstoi of Russia. The German epic writer hangs in mid-air; he plays no part in the life of the people. And if despite this he compels attention and affection, he feels, at the same time, a curious public resistance, and an equally curious secret defensiveness, as though his achievement were incompatible with seriousness and dignity.

The difficulty I saw confronting me was tremendous. How was I to penetrate this fortress of concentric circles? How pass beyond the shallow truth of mere seeing to the deeper truth of perception? I stood on the periphery.

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Hundreds of others, banished thither like myself, prided themselves on their position. But there was nothing for me to do there. I must be in the centre, or at least in a segment, in a central position, on an intersecting line; I wanted man as he really was, and his as yet unmirrored activities; I needed fellowship, human influence, social experience, a foothold, an encircling bond. Instead I found myself rejected and isolated in a trebly difficult position: as a man of letters, as a German without social standing, as a Jew detached from my community.

XIII

WHEN, at the age of twenty-three, I wrote *The Jews of Zirndorf* I drew upon the ancient life of my race, the life of my ancestors, the myth and legend of the people as whose offspring I still had to regard myself; and yet, on the other hand, I wanted also to portray the actual and developing life of this people in a mythical, highly simplified and extremely comprehensive manner. The actual foundation for both procedures I found in the country in which I was born, my Franconian home.

I wrote the book without consciously meditating upon it beforehand, as one relates a dream, or as though in obedience to a command. If anyone had told me that what I was writing was sheer nonsense I might perhaps have been shocked, but I should not have felt any real surprise. The book was conceived while I sought escape in the Tyrol, on Lake Constance, in Eichstätt, and in a melancholy, out-of-the-way Munich studio where a cat was my sole companion. The manuscript, consisting of little slips of paper covered with finely written lines, was always carried in my breast-pocket. The external conditions of my life at that time were most deplorable. In addition to my accustomed material wretchedness there was a lamentable love affair; I was involved in

adventures and exposed to persecutions not commonly found outside a sensational novel. My book, after growing almost to completion, lay untouched for months. Not until I was prostrate with illness and desperately anxious to reach the end of everything did I scribble down the last chapter.

The book was self-expression and confession ; it liberated me from a nightmare which had crushed my youth. It served also to liberate many others who were in a transitional stage, and to give them a feeling of self-justification. From the very beginning I appeared with open vizor, thus gaining those who lacked courage or decision. Many of these, revolutionists at heart, turned to me with eager demands and announced themselves as disciples ; but I was unable to fulfil their expectations, for I did not remain on the track they had prescribed. Others denounced me ; they regarded me as a renegade, disliking, as they did, any public discussion of the subject I had treated, since to them every policy but that of silence appeared both foolish and harmful. The German world, except for a few unorthodox groups, which were receptive to fiction, as such, and to its creations, preserved an attitude of indifference, or even hostility ; the general reaction was to classify the book and let it survive for a time in the museum of literature. In the eyes of the official guardians of art and good taste I was an abomination.

I realized myself that the path I had taken could lead only to the wilderness. The question of how to touch the insensitive, how to win those who resisted, how to make their world mine and my world theirs was in the first place a question of self-discipline and form. An artist is as naught if his work is not born anew in the souls of men; for this it must have not only a soul, but a body as well. Sentiment and words, passion and ideas alone cannot beget a body. I felt the supreme importance of combining surrender to art with mastery; and there began a long, difficult struggle, attempt upon attempt, plan upon plan, study upon study. I underwent a revulsion from a dreamy vagueness to rigidity, from untrammelled composition to prescribed construction, from enthusiasm to dryness, from unfathomable depths to shallowness.

My closest friends failed to understand me; nor could I explain myself to them, for my actual goal was obscure even in my own mind. But I always knew when an individual, finished piece of work did not ring true. I believed in no applause, adhered to no school or movement, refused to be bound by any achievement, and between the stages of progress I despaired of success. It is extraordinarily difficult to give a lucid description of this struggle. On the one hand I was fighting for self-liberation and self-realization, for purification and

ennoblement—that is, for objectives of a moral nature; on the other hand, I sought measure, structure and perspective—which were intellectual and artistic objectives.

I fought for my own soul and for the soul of the German world. Within myself I was always able to find new springs and reserves; but the German world refused to yield. I could only lie in wait for it, watch it, adjure it; I had to insist that it should pay attention to me; with every achievement I had to convince it afresh of my own worth and the worth of my cause; I had to employ the most fiery persuasion, the extremest effort, where others needed only to beckon. It did not believe me: I had revealed myself too soon. Sometimes, in individual cases, it condescended to approve of me, as though doing me a favour, or indulging me, or because it could no longer parry my strokes. But this attitude was never maintained consistently, so that I was forced, with every fresh piece of work, to begin all over again a Sisyphean labour which always exhausted my strength. Others enjoyed a credit account; they were permitted to draw upon it from time to time. I, however, had to present my credentials every time, to stake my whole fortune, like a man who is not allowed to settle on the land he has acquired, and there to sow and reap the harvest.

Strangers knew nothing of all this; my friends wondered, and failed to understand my torment. There were times when I seemed to them a man consumed by unsatisfied ambition, striving for something beyond his powers. They told me I should be content with what I had achieved, and spoke in laudatory terms of inferior work, popular successes that counted as literature. To them the fact that I was mentioned, read and discussed meant something. They could neither see nor hear nor feel; I could not make them understand what I was suffering. It was a thing so subtle, so fragile, so vague, so feverishly changeable, and yet of such incalculable significance! While I lived and worked as an individual I was, in the depths of my soul, closely bound up with a community which had disintegrated, and with another which I wanted to win, which I must win. I stood at the parting of the ways. At times I felt like a pretender without followers or credentials, a John Lackland; the earth seemed to give way under my every step, the air to be drawn out of my lungs. Moreover, my mind was filled with a seething throng of unreleased forms and images, and with never-ending material worries.

XIV

ELEVEN years after *The Jews of Zirndorf* I wrote *Caspar Hauser*. I shall dwell largely on these two examples of my work because—and it must be understood that I have no desire to express or challenge an opinion as to their value—they represent the two poles between which I moved, seeking and marking my boundaries: two poles, of which one marked the Jewish problem, the other the German.

The figure of Caspar Hauser had been familiar since my childhood. My paternal grandfather, who had been a rope-maker and then a merchant in Zirndorf, had seen him in the Vestnerturm at Nuremberg, and spoke of him as of a very mysterious person. Others too, the simplest and most sober people, always spoke of his case as of a mystery that was best not discussed aloud. I knew the places where Hauser had spent his queer, troubled life, and where he had died: the castle-tower and the Tucher house in Nuremberg, the little street where the teacher Mayer had lived in Ansbach, the Court garden with the octagon which bears that beautiful inscription; all the things that had remained as they were, and even what was left of the landscape, were magically appropriate to his destiny.

The theme recurred to me again and again. It first occurred to me when I was learning how to create human beings and let them grow organically according to their inherent fate; and then at every stage at which I seemed to have attained sufficient skill and confidence. Yet again and again I resisted the temptation, as if that figure had been something sacred and fragile, not to be rashly profaned. Certain books that appeared independently at this time I wrote only as a sort of exercise and preparation; my first serious attempt was preceded by years of study, of delving into every nook and cranny of the documentary evidence and the literature pertaining to the case. Again and again I tried to begin, drew a wide or a narrow circle round the theme, but I failed to find the groundwork; the true foundation, the quiet energy, the necessary illumination escaped me; I grew discouraged and dropped the work. But during all these attempts and relinquishments, all this searching and despairing, the figure of the Nuremberg foundling grew to an unexpected stature before my eyes, and for me his destiny became typical of the destiny of the human heart. The human heart against the world: when I had found this formula the mist lifted; and though many difficulties remained to be overcome, a clear light shone upon my path.

A curious thing happened to me while I was working

on this novel. When I had reached the point where Clara von Kannawurf—the woman who gave him his first dim notion of sexual love—enters Caspar's life, I lost the reality upon which I had been standing. I laboured, I thought, I invented, I made a hundred new beginnings, but still that figure refused to rise before me in real and credible form; I saw myself condemned to a long period of inactive waiting. Then one day I received a letter from an unknown woman; she had turned to me in her spiritual need. In the tone of her letter there was something so compelling that refusal on my part would have been cruel. She was about to make a journey; and as she wanted to meet me we arranged a rendezvous at a point where she could break her journey. We were friends from the first moment; as a wife and as a mother she had a tragic fate to endure. In the course of our conversation it emerged that her grandfather had occupied a high position in the court of Baden; that he had been involved in the squabbles and intrigues of the Caspar Hauser affair, which had even led to popular uprisings, and that, maligned and compromised, he had finally shot himself. I was amazed, and deeply moved, especially by the profound and anguished concern which this young woman still felt for the foundling's fate; such concern as she might have felt for a long-lost brother, the clearing of whose

name, the defence of whose sullied honour she had accepted as her most sacred task. She knew nothing of my work; I gave her the manuscript, or as much of it as was ready, and her emotion on reading it could not leave me unmoved. Her passionate interest in it was almost morbid; it was like a fever, the fever of justice affronted, of compassion and love. And then suddenly I had found my Clara von Kannawurf—and the queerest part of it was that her name too was Clara. There, in the flesh, she stood before me as I had envisaged her, in her virginal womanhood, her childlike maturity, her experienced melancholy, the antithesis of a dull and lethargic world.

I cannot deny that I looked forward to the publication of the book with unusual hopes, the hopes cherished by one who feels that at last he has testified to the truth within him. I imagined that I had given the Germans an essentially German book, a book that had grown, so to speak, out of the soul of the people. I imagined that because a Jew had written it I had proved that a Jew could establish his unity with the nation, could overcome the preconceived conviction that he was an alien, not merely by dint of resolution and opportunity, but also by the intimate essence of his being. But these expectations were disappointed. To begin with, a disgusting squabble arose in the newspapers about the

historic person of Caspar Hauser. A shower of malicious abuse and arrogant rebuke fell upon me, together with the accusation that I had rehashed and dished up the old fiction of the foundling's princely descent only for the amusement of a sensation-loving public. I was informed that Professor Mittelstädt, in his famous essay, and the school-teacher Mayer, in his documentary presentation of the case, and anyone else you please in this pamphlet, had long ago convinced everybody that Caspar Hauser was a half-witted impostor who had duped German and European public opinion; that to revive his old wives' tale, now happily buried for half a century, and to make it an object of further discussion and dispute, spoke of naïve presumption and ignorance; and that in my hunger for literary material I had better turn to less controversial fields, to themes of a less disturbing and vexatious nature.

As it happens I am as convinced to-day as I was then that Caspar Hauser really was the young prince whom Daumer and Feuerbach believed him to be—and others after them, whose protests were killed by a conspiracy of silence or calumny. I have seen and heard more than enough documentary evidence and trustworthy testimony of this; some day more will come to light out of archives which are dishonestly suppressed. The meaning of the intrigues was unmistakable; there are

still, in high positions, people who know, and some of them confided in me; nor did they cherish any doubt on the point which the armchair-psychologists so lightly denied. To-day as then I am convinced that the name, the life and the death of Caspar Hauser constitute an unpunished crime, the evil of which continues to spread as such evil always does.

All this does not directly affect the novel itself; only indirectly; and to that extent the attacks missed their mark. I knew the motives behind them, where they originated, and who directed them. But, petty considerations aside, I felt none the less as though my voice and its echo were dying in an atmosphere that could transmit no sound. The thing that concerned me was not a minor matter, and I had therefore thought that minor matters would be eliminated. What I cared about was not personal in nature, and I had thought the personal element would be ignored. Nor was I concerned with winning this or that man's applause, or recognition of my achievement, approval or praise of my labours. In the final analysis, indeed, I had not even considered the possibility of winning or moving individuals, of uplifting and converting a few rare souls. One always tells oneself—partly for consolation, partly in recognition of the mediocrity of average human nature—that it is enough if a few individuals are moved to think, if a

book helps to awaken a feeling for better things in ten readers out of a thousand; and that a seed sown in a single receptive breast must bear fruit a thousandfold. And this is true; but in the meantime much time is lost, and misunderstanding kills inspiration. When a man has given all his heart and soul to a cause he cannot and must not be content with the more or less lukewarm support of a few tractable groups; nor with the trumpeting of those who share his literary interests; he is not and must not be content; it is not enough that friends of whose welcome he is assured should enlist new friends for him; nor even that those yearning natures who are scattered and lost in the mass of humanity should turn their eyes to meet his, whether by chance, or seeking and choosing. He has staked his all; what he is striving to win is the full, broad, profound resonance of a world.

This lies in the very nature of epic art. Its wealth depends on a profusion of listeners; a full orchestra cannot play in a small chamber. Its effect is a mosaic of partial effects, often of the most heterogeneous character, ranging from the melodic to the crude necessities of the plot, from the delicate to the brutal. In Germany effects on so broad a scale are impossible, for no spiritual harmony exists between the various receptive groups, and no forum of æsthetic stands above them.

The self-appointed judges flatter the semi-cultured, or those who follow the fashion of the day; they exceed their authority, and descend into party politics. Little attention is paid to those who are really qualified; they must content themselves with an esoteric activity. But the more feeble, the more spiritless, the more faint-hearted a people's participation in the productions of its creative artists, the more dross adheres to the works themselves; their manner is less confident, their existence less secure, their production more sporadic. These things are mutually related according to immutable laws. No sensationalism, no spurt of ecstasy, no occasional ardour can be a substitute for unity and sequence, for love of the thing treated and its images, for spiritual harmony and intellectual impartiality. Those who wax enthusiastic without adequate reason must inevitably repent and relapse into dejection; on the morrow they will infallibly revile what they acclaimed yesterday. This seems to them the only escape from the maze; but nothing can lead them back to the right path; even their idols are presently covered with dust.

I learned, therefore, that I had not gained, and never could gain, an inch of ground in the region to which I had so devoutly and painfully aspired. Again and again I was fated to read or to divine that what others were thinking and feeling was: *the Jew.*

XV

I RECAPITULATE, for it is important to reach a lucid conclusion by means of precise demonstration. The example is presented in its relation not to my person but to my cause.

The idea of *Caspar Hauser* was to show that people of every degree of spiritual and intellectual development, of every type, from the grossest to the most refined—the ambitious climber and the philosophic thinker, the servile toady and the apostle of humanity, the paid police spy and the teacher with his heart in his work, the woman aflame with sensual passion and the noble representative of earthly justice—are one and all absolutely callous and absolutely helpless when confronted with the phenomenon of innocence; that they simply cannot conceive that anything of the sort should exist on this earth; that they foist upon such a phenomenon their own intentions, unclean or purposely obscured, making it the instrument of their intrigues and their principles, and appealing to it for the confirmation of this or that law, as the explanation of this or that event; that they never see the phenomenon itself, that unique, ephemeral, glorious image of divinity, but rather soil his pure, delicate, dreamy nature, lay officious and sacrilegious

hands upon him, and in the end murder him. The giver of the final thrust is only the executive instrument; the others, too, are his accomplices, each in his own way: those who love innocence as well as those who hate it, those who seek to instruct as well as those who glorify it. As the tortured heart of Clara von Kannawurf cried in the end, all the world becomes the murderer of innocence.

The action passed in the terrestial scene already provided by history. An intimately German world, with, I think I may say, genuinely German people. A German city, German roads, the German night, German trees, the German air and speech. It may be that a very exalted judge would tell me, with a wise smile: You yourself cannot judge what you have inherited from your ancestors, what you are by virtue of your blood, and what you proclaim in your work. Yet I would answer, and in his wisdom he would approve my answer: They who realize this are already delivered from base delusions; they rejoice in him who arouses them and confirms them in their thinking. Whether he comes from the East or from the West is immaterial; only his human voice and his sacrifice matter to them. So much I know of those who are spiritually awake.

The others, those for whom I was and remained a Jew, wanted to make it clear to me that I could not please or

satisfy them; that is, as a Jew. That as a Jew I was incapable of sharing their secret, higher life, incapable of stirring their souls, of adapting myself to their mode of thought. They would not concede that I too bore the colour and stamp of German life; they would not allow the kindred element to approach them. Its unconscious and inherent characteristics seemed to them a product of deliberation, of Jewish ingenuity, of Jewish cleverness in adaptation and disguise, of the dangerous Jewish power of deluding and ensnaring. Of no avail the tacit or even uttered conviction that a book like this, sprung from the heart of the people, and entitled to call itself popular for as long as it should survive, might have become a beacon-light even for German patriots had its author remained anonymous or unknown; that at least they would have allowed themselves to be persuaded that it was such, as was the case with many a shallower, less significant work, and of many a greater one too, which was eagerly pressed into the service of their machinations. Here was a traditional symbol: the persecuted young prince, melting with romantic longing. Here all things came to pass in the time-honoured fashion, except that the end brought no reconciliation, no apotheosis, and that fate, true to internal logic and external precedent, completed its dreadful course. What else might be found there by profounder and more receptive minds is written

on another page, in its proper place. But one thing is certain : the German public must not be allowed to realize that a Jew had written so peculiarly German a book.

Some who were kindly disposed to me intimated : Yes, this is all very well ; but this brooding nature is of alien origin ; this psychological probing is not characteristic of our race. Such, indeed, was the mildest judgment, to be read in most of the popular and widely-read histories of literature. (In parenthesis : The mass-survey and mass-slaughter in which the majority of these pseudo-scientific works indulge, their stereotyped opinions, and the pedantic tone with which they seek to impress the ignorant and the immature, are a veritable disgrace to Germany, and make her ridiculous in the eyes of cultured nations.) And what is published in such books becomes the current opinion. However strenuous my efforts, whatever visions and images I offered, however high I built, however deep I delved—the same poison was always distilled in the same retorts, a poison intended to cripple free flight and stifle glad devotion.

It may be objected that all creative work meets with opposition and resistance ; that the obstruction in my path is only a contorted, distorted form of the obstacle that bars the way to others ; that I, easily vulnerable because of wounds suffered throughout the generations,

feel a pinprick as a dagger-thrust, a cuff as a blow from a cudgel; that in my suspicious temper I see the merely irresolute as my enemies and the critics as assassins. That I should be mindful of the thorny paths that greater men than I have trodden, and remember what I have accomplished and won in my own sphere.

But this is beside the point. The point is not what I have won and accomplished. The thing that matters is the lie that creeps wormlike towards me and from time to time raises its speckled head to spit at me. The horrible, indomitable lie with which the soul of an entire nation has girded itself: that lie which no scrutiny, no sacrifice, no love, no evidence can touch.

Imagine a labourer who, when he asks for his wages, never receives them in full, although his work in no way falls below that of his fellows, and whose question as to the reason for such injustice receives this answer: You cannot demand full pay, for you are pockmarked. He looks into the mirror, and sees that his face is entirely free of pockmarks. He retorts: What do you mean? I have no pockmarks whatsoever. The others shrug their shoulders, and reply: Your record declares you to be pockmarked, so you are pockmarked. A curious confusion arises in this man's mind: His rights are restricted under the pretext of an external blemish, and in his agitation at being unable to find and recognize

that blemish he neglects to enforce his rights with all the energy at his command. A most refined and ingenious torture.

And the German, the "pure-blooded" German, the spokesman for many, tells me when I force my way into his lair: Any reward is enough for what you do or make; you should be thankful that I give you elbow-room at all, for I am unshakably convinced that nothing that you contain or create can be either useful or pleasing to me.

If these are pinpricks they are none the less murderous; if these are cuffs I do not wish to learn what a cudgelling is like. The bravos and hosannas of the people about one cannot drown the *pereat* that comes from outside. One must pay attention to those voices from outside. Toward every author the nation adopts a general attitude which determines his spiritual freedom, the confidence of his bearing, and an element, very difficult to define, of spiritual rhythm and controlled power. To be accepted without prejudgment is for him indispensable; for his work and his profession alone fill his hours and years to overflowing with inhibitions and anxieties, to say nothing of the unlovely difficulties of every-day life. If he cannot feel that the warmth which he radiates generates an answering warmth, his natural energies must fail him. How can he defend himself against a charge which must

seem the more senseless the more faithfully he remains in his own sphere, his own order? What has happened to him because of his Jewishness he may regard as a distinction, or as an oppressive fate, or even as a wrong to be expiated; there are instances enough of this latter kind, and I shall come back to them. But never can he understand, never can he learn to endure that in the purest or most sacred of all domains two measuring-rods should be used, and that no purification or consecration —no accomplishment, no renunciation of self, no toil or passion, no figure or image, no melody or vision— will suffice to bring him, as a matter of course, the confidence and dignity and inviolability which the least of those who stand in the opposed camp enjoys in full. But once he has recognized the vanity of his struggle, where shall he find words and motives, where the courage to demonstrate and proclaim his message?

In German life figures and images have a formal existence only. The German cannot find his way to them, never identifies himself with them; at most he appropriates an abstract of them; he has to be persuaded to accept them, to be convinced of their plausibility. Yet he cannot be persuaded nor really convinced; he believes only what he is commanded to believe, or what a majority forces him to believe.

Let it be clearly understood: I am not whining for

mercy. I have no wish to play the part of a penitent sinner or a *rara avis*. Nor do I wish to glory in a martyr's crown, or exult in suffering. Nor am I one who, having broken his ties in both camps, seeks refuge in boastful isolation. Nor one who, with the crushed pride and sullen obstinacy of the rejected, devises plots and sows dissension, or suddenly rediscovers and clings to venerably ancient relationships because his solidarity with the group of his intellectual choice is disputed.

No. The matter must be discussed. An accounting must be rendered, on either side. Right and justice are at stake. In the final analysis the question is this: Why do you strike the hand that bears testimony for you?

XVI

Such testimony appeared again, six years after *Caspar Hauser*, in *The Goose-man*. Once more I pass over the intermediate books, the experimental attempts, such as, for example, *Der Goldene Spiegel* and *Der Mann von vierzig Jahren*. At that time I was thinking of a cycle which would present the German world at the beginning of the century. *Das Gänsemännchen*, written in 1911, 1912 and 1913, did not appear until the second year of the war; and it happened that this book, unlike any of its predecessors, immediately met with a cordial and widespread response. I had often the impression at the time that the overwhelming nature of events lent it a sort of anonymity by virtue of which it was able to depend more completely on its own merits, and produce its own effect; a feeling new to me, and very comforting.

The book contains and presents a typical piece of middle-class German history, and German conditions about the year 1900; not so much in its descriptive passages, but as a whole, the decisive factor being human character and its spiritual transformation. The musician's life is only a helpful device, a pretext. I needed to find an intensely receptive membrane for every sound and echo, the most delicate, accurate, quivering instrument

possible, which would reveal the exact condition of ordinary German life, the relationship between reality and the ideal, between the general and the particular. The book is provincial in the sense I have just indicated. Perhaps I did not dream it so; but I would not have pulled down the circumscribing wall that held me prisoner unless I had hurt myself against it; and as I worked I noted the curious fact that I could achieve a comparative breadth of treatment only if, instead of foolishly attacking the wall, I contented myself with the space granted me, and, like a good architect, used the existing limitations as a means of development.

True, much artificiality crept in, much that was vulgar, narrow, strident, highly coloured. But this, too, lay upon my path, and the path brought me into that gracious region where the created work addresses man directly, touches him, serves him, commands him, not only by its manifest qualities but through that which is and must remain its mystery. Every product of organic growth is like this; all that proceeds from nature is at once manifest and mysterious. Whether Daniel Nothafft can be taken as a genuine German figure has been widely discussed. The question is of interest only with regard to my personal problem. Some have answered it in the affirmative, some in the negative; some have weighed it in the balance. There were expressions of amazement;

people began to doubt opinions they had always stubbornly upheld, because they could no longer see any connection between the author and his work. My formal attitude toward society and the German public remained practically unchanged. For inevitably one's formal attitude can be regulated by one thing only, by one's own soul, by the recurrent, blood-generated, star-governed tide of the inner life.

In the meanwhile, in the course of a sojourn at Nuremberg, I had met once more the friend from whom I had parted under such ugly circumstances in Zürich years before. He was now in the middle forties, I at their beginning; the storms of our youth lay far behind us, and because of the long time that had elapsed I could hardly feel that he was the same man. My memory of him had its independent existence, and the present had to come to terms with it. My some-time friend maintained a reserve that sometimes made me wonder and sometimes afforded me silent amusement, for I had a general idea of its cause. The mentor and guide of our years of growth cannot, once we have withdrawn ourselves from his influence, express satisfaction at the direction we have followed. Whatever we do, whatever our attitude, whatever our aspirations and our achievements, he has always had other plans, other wishes. To him everything seems a mistake and a betrayal, for

he was not with us, he did not give it his blessing; and it embitters him to know that he could be dispensed with. That he himself failed in the critical hour has been erased from his memory, must be erased. For who can bind himself to another for a decade and a half as an intellectual and spiritual debtor? That would destroy him. So he prefers to dwell upon the thought that at one time he was responsible for his comrade's weal and woe, and that the day when his power and responsibility ceased to operate saw the dawn of the evil star. In his heart, too, he probably cherishes an unpaid demand for gratitude, and although he is ashamed of it, this adds to his resentment. And further, his own life has not reached the heights to which he had aspired; he still must bear the old burdens, languish in the old chains, while his comrade-in-suffering of old has reached his goal, though to his own way of thinking that goal is false and detestable—and the situation becomes as painful, as lacking in frankness, as the situation that obtained between us.

I had many similar encounters. I should like to interpolate an account of one of the most offensive of these occasions, when the demand for gratitude was brutally presented: At Fürth one day I met a former schoolmate whose parents' house I had visited when I was fifteen or sixteen years of age. I had been received in friendly fashion, though with a certain condescension, which I

then felt was justified, since these people were well-to-do, while I was poor. This young man, who enjoyed an ample allowance, had sometimes, in the years of my Nuremberg struggles, helped me out with a gold piece. Knowing of my literary efforts, he considered himself my patron ; and to keep him in a good humour I would sometimes read some of my attempts to him. He was a friend of my Garrick's, and the latter, when he left our city for England, had given huge piles of my letters and manuscripts into his keeping. Twenty years later I met and recognized him in the street. I stopped him, greeted him, and innocently inquired whether he still remembered those manuscripts, and whether he still had them in his possession ; I wanted to look them over. Rarely have I seen such hatred, such sordid spite and offended arrogance united in one face. He replied : What ? You dare to demand the return of something that I can claim as my own property after all I have done for you ? You dare to pester a man about this trash after he lavished so many favours upon you, a man about whom you have never troubled your head for twenty-two years ? Such ingratitude cries to heaven ! With that he turned his back on me. This is no exaggeration ; he used just these words, and spoke of favours and ingratitude.

Between my friend and myself there was something

else in the balance, in addition to the cooled relationship of the past, which neither of us could re-endow with warmth and life, although we made every effort to make each other believe that nothing had changed. I was working in the municipal archives at the time; in the afternoons we would arrange to make excursions into the suburbs. The most singular thing about our relation was that my friend never said a word about any of my books, as though he had never read one or even heard of them. But I knew him well—his alertness, his ever-wakeful, suspicious, zealous interest in everything that occurred in the intellectual sphere; so that I knew, I could be certain, that he had eagerly consumed every line of my writings on which he could lay his hands. Not out of love, for he could not but regard me as one who had run away from school, or rather from his schooling, and hence was a failure; but with his characteristic stubbornness he had to read me, precisely in order to find renewed evidence of the depth of my fall. That stood written in his face.

Yet his silence seemed very strange to me, and in my depressed and regretful musings I discovered a cause which, I had to admit, would in his eyes make me guilty of something much worse than the parting of our ways and my withdrawal from our common aims. This was the fact that in two of my novels there was a character

which, by a certain constellation of traits and habits, pointed to him as its model. I do not deny that I had thought of him as I depicted this character, and that the similarity—which, however, did not by any means extend to identity—had not proved to be exactly flattering to the living man. I had committed no breach of confidence; I had no need to reproach myself with betrayal or censure; there was nothing to betray, nothing to censure. Nor could there be any question of malicious intention, for into that character I had put much of my own suffering, confusion and doubt; and in those years of anxious striving for reality in my work this man, this friend, this enemy, if you will, had stood before me like a twin ego. Enemy and brother—how near they often are! In that figure I had tried to portray something new, which had disturbed me to the point of dismay: the Jewish Christian, the German of indubitably pure blood, who, none the less, owing to the strange chemistry of fate or the elements, possesses qualities unmistakably Jewish: Jewish fervour, Jewish astuteness, Jewish ability, Jewish opportunism. Here is a pre-sensing and pre-forming of the affinity of the outward fate and the inner nature of *Deutschtum* and Jewry—an affinity which since then has even risen to the surface of public discussion, and to which I shall have to return.

It is a delicate question this, of how an author should

conduct himself when he is confronted by the necessity of transposing into his world of fiction people with whom he associates, or even those with whom he has come into but casual contact. In youth one is rather thoughtless in this respect; at all events, I was. One simply runs the risk; if old ties break, new ones are formed. One is proud of hesitating at nothing, not even at mischievous trespass; Art, one imagines, justifies everything, even offences against humanity—as if that were possible. In my Bohemian years I once had an affair of honour with an actor, a quite excellent fellow, whom I had described in a frivolous short story, as a ridiculous cuckold, thereby exposing him to the laughter of the habitués of a literary café. It was a worthless piece of work, hardly excusable even as a literary exercise. And I remember I once received a most despondent letter from Gustaf af Geijerstam, then in Sweden, who wrote that he was a lost and ruined man, because Strindberg, in his *Black Flags*, had drawn him, in a form which every reader could recognize, as the scum of humanity and the pest of his race. He feared that the knowledge of this fact might have reached Germany, and begged me to defend him. This proved to be impracticable for various reasons; I could not intervene in a Swedish quarrel. For the rest, Geijerstam died shortly afterwards; of shame and chagrin, according to his friends.

Things seldom go as far as this. But where does the limit lie? We know that Kestner too could not get over the fact that Goethe, in his *Sorrows of Werther*, had exposed to the public the family affairs of his friends. It is said that on the appearance of *Anna Karenina* the smart society of Moscow and St. Petersburg paid less attention to the merits of the work than to its characters, whose prototypes they ferreted out and identified with malicious curiosity. What is permissible, what is free to all? What is forbidden, what is automatically prohibited? Has the greater artist the wider scope, a special privilege to be inconsiderate and cruel? Hardly, for in this connection there could be no criterion of sufficient authority. I cannot dispense with reality and the material which it provides if I do not want to sink, together with my creations, into a fathomless bog. To avoid exaggeration of the hues of nature and arbitrary distortion of its truth requires more courage and energy than a romantic, falsely idealistic enhancement and generalization. An insufficient attachment to reality is to blame for the insipid tragedy, the hectic irrationality, the schematic, climacteric development which render the average German narrative so unenjoyable. On the other hand, it is not seemly to pillory human beings and their destinies merely because of their interesting or exceptional features. I may not seize or pillage that which

unquestionably belongs to another, and which he wishes to preserve; though I disguise or even improve it, for him it is distorted and caricatured, and he must feel himself impoverished. Yet there are cases in which the external obligation must yield to a compelling inner duty; but then it is no longer merely the interesting and the exceptional which are involved, but that which is valid and enduring: vision, transfiguration, renewal. Then the reproach of violence and betrayal becomes untenable; if misunderstanding causes some odium to cling to the work, time dispels it. Human happenings have no permanence; men themselves are ephemeral; the law of destiny is first announced by the poet. But what the scribblers and copyists make of reality is even more ephemeral than men and events. This raw, fortuitous reality—as a rule there is little to be done with it. It is a huge store-house of material; and of what use is it if there is no eye to bring order into its confusion, to perceive the simplicity in its complexity, the noble metal in the dross, the true countenance among the grimaces, the intimation of the whole in the patchwork, the law in aberration? The appearance belongs to me, in any case; who can dispute my right to it? As for my transmutation of it—that is a matter of grace.

XVII

But I should like to record a conversation between myself and my friend. He inquired after my family, and whether there had been a reconciliation; he displayed a lively interest in my personal affairs. Although there was something constrained in his exclusive dwelling on such subjects, I replied without reserve. While I was no longer the starving scribbler who once had been a burden of which he had rid himself, he nevertheless still had a certain power over me. For the power gained by a man of greater experience over a perplexed seeker can never be lost entirely unless one or the other of the two should himself be lost. Moreover, I still had for this remarkable man an affection of which he was certainly conscious.

It seemed to me that he wanted to sound me on a certain point; and finally he asked me outright whether I was still a Jew by conviction, as I had been then. I replied: A Jew by conviction? I did not know just what the qualifying words might mean. I was a Jew; that told the whole story. I could not alter the fact, and I did not wish to do so. Then he asked, had I decided to take sides? And his keen gaze fell on me through his spectacles. I tried to explain that I had

come to realize that such a decision was unnecessary in my case. It was necessary only for those who had resolved upon a voluntary restriction of their field of activity, and who contented themselves with this state of affairs, either in the pride of the wrongfully misjudged, or out of weariness and debility; and for those who had burned their bridges behind them, and who, with a conscience more or less clear, and a bearing more or less dignified, had surrendered themselves to the process of adaptation and assimilation. I, however, had neither any wish nor any reason to choose one or the other of these courses. I had a mission in this world; already I had reason to realize that in this I was not mistaken, that in respect of my consciousness of this mission I need not, so to speak, regard myself as a living lie. And it was in this sense that I had to prove myself; in this sense and no other I had to make my decision; nor could I make it once and for all and then fit myself into my skin; no, I had to decide anew every day, at every step, with every breath.—I knew that with the notion of "fitting myself into my skin" I had overshot the mark; but suddenly the scales seemed to fall from my eyes, so that I came to realize the meaning of the "decisions" that were demanded not by my own heart, but by another, whose purposes differed from mine, who was ambitious and overbearing and at variance

within himself. To crowd me out, to narrow my field, to force my surrender—that was his aim. He wanted to circumscribe me; against me he wanted to set himself, his own judgment, his concept, his form.

My violence somewhat surprised my friend. Thoughtfully he replied that either I was assuming too much, even the impossible, or he must believe I was content to fill an office that amounted to a spiritual luxury. I did not understand him, and asked him to speak more plainly. He said: It is useless. . . . What? What is useless? . . . He looked at me. Our spirit and yours can never mix, he said; such a thing has never been and never will be. No fruit can result, no organic growth, but only a conglomerate. Cases of apparently successful fusion—as, for example, Felix Mendelssohn—are actually superficial, lacking in true amalgamation; he was a gifted hybrid, still bearing vestiges of his origin, but favoured by a period when the invasion of the alien element was as yet inconsiderable and our sense of coming danger feebly developed. Then, and for another half century, the art was more important than the man, and all art was declared neutral ground; to-day we scrutinize and weigh the man, and we know that the most seductive and most perfect art may sow poison and the germs of disease.

Although I had heard all this before it seemed in a

way new. In one sense it was true, in another a mere froth of perverse unreason. Very German it seemed to me, very limited, very categorical; a philosophy and a final judgment issued on the speaker's own authority. Instead of protesting I asked whether he knew any of my books, any of them, even one; I was sure that he would understand that the question was not prompted by vanity. A curiously stubborn expression came over his face. But I did not relent; I importuned him as Jacob importuned the angel. Why did he dissemble? Had not my books shaken his dogma? With the slightest knowledge of my work could he, as a man of honour, a man who could think and see and feel, still persist in his opinion? He was evasive. He seemed taken aback, ill at ease. Finally he said: Even if I could admit your point conditionally in your own case, what would that prove? I will admit it; why not? It has always been my view that you are an exception. I will admit that you have brought us Eastern currents of thought, revealed Eastern visions; that you have the German nature in you, the essence of our nature—how I do not know, but it is there; I will admit that here something like a fusion, a new synthesis, has taken place. But what does that establish? It is only the exception that proves the rule.

Thereupon I replied, more fervently and emphatically,

I think, than I had ever spoken to him : If it is imaginable it is possible. If the idea exists the phenomenon itself is merely the immediate consequence. If one individual has achieved this it is attainable. I am only apparently an individual ; I stand for all ; I am the expression of a definite will latent in the age, in the race, in destiny. In me are all the others, even the recalcitrant ; I am clearing the road for all ; I am sweeping away the lie for all ; and the mere fact of my existence is evidence that what I say is true. The exception does not prove the rule, but demolishes it. Dropping water will wear down a rock. There must always be a first drop.

I do not remember what he answered. We parted soon afterwards.

XVIII

I HAD left Munich in the middle of 1898, and had made my home in Vienna; but now I could stay there no longer. As I have hinted, a woman had brought me to the verge of ruin, and had I not severed the pernicious bond with passionate resolution I should have been utterly destroyed. I had spent four years in the sultry fires of erotic slavery, inexpressibly engrossed, unconditionally surrendered, but inwardly ravished and abused. My whole being was scorched and tainted by it, my moral sanity in peril, my social existence precarious. Friends turned away from me, people who wished me well excluded me from their homes, gossip and slander soiled my name; so that in the end my sole salvation lay in a final rupture and flight.

It may be that I should never have been able to pull myself together and tear off my fetters had not a young girl, a Russian Jewess of seventeen, entered my bewitched circle like a loving little Madonna; when I come to think of it, she was the first woman to bring me good fortune. By nothing more than her manner of existing, smiling, understanding, her mutely generous, movingly sincere manner, she helped me surmount my difficulties and made me forget and persevere. She worked in a

tobacco factory; she lived in great poverty, but she might have been a young princess. She was proud as she was lovely, noble-minded as she was reserved by nature. We lost each other as quickly as we had come together.

Because of its lighter style, life in Austria and Vienna had a beneficial effect on me. Here obstacles were non-existent which at home I should have met at every step. People met me more freely, more willingly, more candidly; true, it usually turned out that they did not regard themselves as committed to anything by their friendly advances; indeed, any draft on their dependability met with a naïvely regretful refusal to acknowledge or honour it, and if one went so far as to take them at their word they were filled with slyly innocent amazement. But everyday life there was free of distressing friction, and the tone of social intercourse was more friendly, less captious. One merely had to know the rules; arming oneself with experience, one had simply to refrain from coming forward with blunt demands. Such things can be learned. With a little suppleness of mind one can learn this lesson in Italy, too, where similar faults vex the German's moral pride.

But these things go deeper, and the depths must be sounded. For I did not live in images and poetry only; in my secret heart I knew that I must examine the soil in which these had their roots and the atmosphere in

which they flourished. I was aware of the people who were the pretext for the ideal construction, and their world penetrated audibly enough the isolation which I had so painfully achieved. To-day that Austrian world stands before me as I knew it for two decades, half accepting, half repulsing me.

As one who had been brought up as a German I was accustomed to conceive the German land and people as a whole, indubitable, delightful in its rotundity and tangibility, impossible to misunderstand in any respect. Here, however, absolutely everything was open to question: the country, the people, the form of the State, the mode of life, nationality and society, tradition and defection from tradition, politics and art, organizations and individuals. The enigmatical is seductive, particularly in its superficial aspects, and amateurs and casual observers have not failed in their fashion to enjoy it. But the increasingly violent impact of different forces ended in catastrophe. Oppression legitimized by the centuries, pursuing, under the cloak of settlement and adjustment, a selfish dynastic policy, could not fail to produce its repercussions on public and private life. The inertly patient masses had so long been the plaything and prey of a heartless governmental machinery; they had so long been duped and deluded by a system with a sly talent for assuring itself of all available energies,

only to disembarrass itself of them at the proper time, with a heedless shrug of the shoulders, disregardful of promises and pacts; had so long served as the means whereby a powerful minority, in whose privilege they believed or were forced to believe, gained its ends; they had so long been under tutelage in respect of their intellectual and religious needs, so long accustomed to fulfil the greedy demands of the church, the court, the aristocracy, the great landowners, that no human wisdom could have guided matters to a favourable ending.

In Germany the Austrian way of life was regarded with a certain indulgent disdain. Every dissolute fellow who came from Berlin to Vienna, every commonplace Philistine who had grown exacting in the tedium of his home, and had sipped the sweet froth of that more Southern, more lively existence, felt himself qualified for the post of permanent censor of the country and its people. Every judgment was a prejudgment. The tasteful and attractive fashions of the metropolis, the innate courtliness and hospitality of its inhabitants, covered the wounds and the unsounded depths. People were not unduly perspicacious; they did not look too closely or take matters too seriously. Whether a Viennese book or a picture was in question, a doctrine, or an art, it was not taken seriously. The exceptions were music and the drama. Here were irresistible and incontestable master-

pieces; here was real merit, and a truly autochthonous growth, although not infrequently its luxuriance and too careless gaiety caused the more serious-minded German brother to grow suspicious wherever there was the least excuse for suspicion. In short, his objections, reservations and deductions were all marked down in his big note-book. I myself had some experience of this. From the time when I began to write my books in Austria I fell in the eyes of many of my German critics. Logically, I could no longer be taken quite seriously. Even my best friends jestingly warned me, and took it amiss that I had settled among the "Phæacians."

That the general situation, as well as the behaviour of certain individuals, caused me considerable suffering I shall not deny. To-day, when the wreckage is plain for all to see, when the German part of the nation lies stricken to the heart, its energies squandered and its resources exhausted, every child realizes what was happening. A presentiment of it oppressed me long before the catastrophe; for I saw that there was no centre of gravity and no community. The cynically open confession of conscious inadequacy repelled me, as did the frivolity, the over-ripeness, the soulless despotism, the lack of discipline. Mischief remained unrecognized, or, if recognized, was passed over in silence. The politicians were hampered by party considerations, and a perverse

joviality blunted even the edge of their animosity. The authors were, for the most part, either not independent, or if independent they devoted themselves exclusively to sexuality, the theatre, and an exaggerated sociability, which easily degenerated into vulgar gossip and grinning treachery. No human activity found an echo, no loftier interest met with selfless approval. Whosoever sought a path leading away from the trivial and the popular became an outlaw, and every activity that aimed at deeper, less immediate results was aspersed or simply derided.

But the German should not have let himself be led astray by his knowledge of the shadows and the vice so often and so movingly confessed there. By his arrogance he destroyed in its very origin something which at one time would surely have made him richer, fuller, more equally balanced. He might have inherited a flourishing estate; what he will now receive at the best has been plundered. Incapable anywhere of awakening love, he failed here too. He disregards human hearts, clumsily tramples on them as he ruthlessly issues his commands. This Austria—and here I am not considering the people —with its animated landscape, heroic and idyllic, delicate and imposing, charming and magnificent, with its softly transparent atmosphere, its brightness and freshness, might well, in many respects, exert a healing, rejuvena-

ting, transfiguring effect on the German character; a musicalizing effect, I would say, if the word be permitted. At all events, the country healed and rejuvenated and transfigured me when I, a broken man, found a refuge there. I learned there—perhaps from its landscapes, perhaps from its atmosphere, perhaps also from a few rare personalities whom I met there—the meaning of form, of intellectual discipline, of lineal rhythm. Out yonder I had set up the columns; here I could spring the arches.

As for the people, generally speaking—something of Nature adheres to them in their good qualities as well as their bad; the changing moods and caprices of Nature, her freedom and plasticity. A faint breath of the Orient floats about them. Sustained by ancient Germanic, Roman and Celtic elements, they have been subjected to a broadening and deepening of character by the proximity of the Slavic world, whose blood has sometimes mingled with their own. The traditions of the past still are fertile. Individuality has not yet been bred out of them; the type is not yet an empty form; here are still gestures and masks and playfulness; here life unfolds in twilight, and there is mystery in human relations.

XIX

One circumstance puzzled me before I had been long in Vienna. In Germany I had had hardly any intercourse with Jews; only now and again did one cross my path, and no special stress was laid by either himself or others on the fact that he was Jewish. Here, however, it turned out that all with whom I had intellectual or friendly relations were Jews. And not only did others invariably emphasize the fact that they were Jews, but they emphasized it themselves. This forced me to assume a defensive attitude, for such exclusiveness limited my field of view.

But I soon realized that the whole of public life was dominated by Jews. The banks, the Press, the theatre, literature, social organizations, all were in the hands of Jews. The explanation was easy to find. The aristocracy would have nothing to do with such things; with the exception of a few nonconformists and outcasts, a few solitary or enlightened persons, they not only maintained an anxious distance from intellectual and artistic life, but they feared and despised it as well. The few bourgeois patrician families imitated the aristocracy; there was no longer an autochthonous upper middle class, and the gap was filled by civil servants, army officers and professors; then came the closed circle of the lower

middle class. The court, the lower middle class and the Jews gave the city its stamp. And that the Jews, as the most mobile group, kept all the others in continuous motion is, on the whole, not surprising. Yet I was amazed at the hosts of Jewish physicians, attorneys, clubmen, snobs, dandies, proletarians, actors, newspaper men and poets. From the very beginning my private and public relations with them were full of conflict. To be candid, I must confess that among these people I sometimes felt as if I were in exile. The German Jews among whom I had lived had accustomed me to more refined and unpretentious manners, to social unobtrusiveness. Here I could never rid myself of a certain sense of shame. I was ashamed of these people's manners and of their bearing. To be ashamed of others is an uncommonly painful sensation; most painful of all, of course, when a blood and racial kinship is involved, and when an inescapable inner commandment as well as moral self-discipline require that one should in some sort be answerable for every utterance and every action of those others. True responsibility is like a pact signed in one's heart's blood. All the objections of reason notwithstanding, it remains binding; free will and judgment are powerless against it.

This sense of shame was sometimes aggravated to the point of desperation or disgust. Things small or great

might serve as provocation: the idiom; the quick familiarity; the mistrust that betrayed the ghetto left not far behind; immovable opinions; idle pondering over simple matters; sophistical fencing with words where it was enough to look and see; servility where pride would have been proper; boastful self-assertion where modesty was fitting; lack of dignity, lack of restraint, lack of metaphysical capacity. This last it was which dismayed me the most, and most of all in the more cultured. Through all these Jews there ran a streak of rationalism that cast a shadow over any more intimate relationship. Among the base it found a base expression, in the worship of success and wealth, in self-seeking and the lust for gain, in greed for power and in social opportunism. Among the nobler it was manifested by insolvency in respect of ideas and intuitions. Science was an idol, intellect was the sovereign ruler. Whatever could not be calculated was relegated to a lower category; even destiny became a matter of calculation, and the most obscure and secret depths of the soul were subjected to minute analysis. One and all they were resolved upon stripping the world of its mysteries; and in this they ventured so far that in many cases, to me at least, nothing remained to distinguish the instinct of research from shamelessness. I suspect that mankind gains less by the revelation of new knowledge

and new forces than it loses by the desecration of reticence and questioning humility. For the truth is only in the image, and in reverence.

Association revealed excellent and winning qualities in individuals, understanding and kindliness, readiness to help and serve, an eye for the rare and the precious. In them I found warmth of feeling, and even a certain psychological foresight; a nervous emotional sympathy was characteristic of them, and often enough an impatient rushing ahead, when the quickness of tempo masked the want of depth and intensity. I came to know highly cultured Jews, refined to the point of fragility; one might have believed that with these last weary offshoots the race had reached the end of its road. Then, again, types of an entirely different sort: the unexhausted emissaries of a great class that was still remote from European civilization, but was thrusting its way towards it, threateningly, hostile or eagerly fascinated. They were filled with a brutal resolve to hold their own; they came as conquerors, gained a foothold by violence, and by unscrupulous competition quickly seized the resources offered by the State and society. Twenty years later their sons were publishing literary weeklies or poems in the most modern style, and their daughters had acquired the art of mimicry to such a degree that in their bearing and idiom they were hardly to be distinguished from

countesses with ancient pedigrees. But besides these were men of an austerer cast, solitary, silent, persistent delvers; haggard intellectuals, in whom the stern and sombre religion of their fathers had begotten a stern and sombre relationship to life itself. Devoid of sensuality, they denied the most beautiful achievement of man, figurative form, and—just like their fathers, in whose eyes, however, they were apostates—became the slaves and untiring advocates of a doctrine. They too were resolved to hold their own.

At the time of my coming to Vienna, Zionism was in process of birth. The constant influx from the North and East of the Empire had created among the Jews a temper and a physical constitution totally unfamiliar to me. News of the outrages committed by the Tsarist government, the irrefragable evidence of oppression, murder, torture and violence, the debasing of the law and the derisive disregard of justice—all this, coupled with the wretched social situation of the Jews in the Slavic provinces of Austria, had gradually given rise to an extraordinary unrest; and a few men of courage and determination had dedicated themselves to the plan of establishing a Jewish State in Palestine. The effect was tremendous. The facts that the plan of settlement was not propagated as such, that as a public organization it had been lifted into the political sphere, and that in its

religious aspect it was Messianic in character, brought it countless adherents. At that time I heard of Jews who, living their tormented lives somewhere in Podolia or Bukovina, had burst into tears when the new tidings of salvation reached them. I heard of Jews who made pilgrimages requiring days or even weeks of travel merely in order to see the man, the prophet for whom they had longed, and, as they put it, to kiss the hem of the garment of him who had given them the possibility of this blessed deliverance. For centuries they had lived under a frozen sky, and their world had been a prison-house.

My personal attitude toward this movement was uncertain; sometimes painfully so. I necessarily had, from the first, quite a different opinion of its significance. I had lived among quite different associations. Many of its adepts told me that I must rouse myself, that one day I too would awake to the truth and to action. They did not know me. Further, it happened that I had come into social contact with the author of the idea, and I found it impossible to regard him with sympathy either as a writer or as a man, nor could I believe in his uniqueness as he assumed and demanded that I should. I cannot refrain from mentioning this, for I have often thought of it, and found in it cause for self-reproach. Complete and persistent refusal to recognize a man's

significant qualities would be proof not only of blindness but of self-delusion. I was obstinate, and doubtless unwilling. The sight at close quarters of little weaknesses and vanities annoyed me; I was not able, I could not be induced to become his follower. Because I thought I could see through the man I disregarded his work.

That I was constantly invited by the Jews to join them in this vital Jewish cause is comprehensible. Such invitations always embarrassed me. I was prepared to recognize the effort expended on the cause, their self-sacrifice and devotion, and even to share their hopes; but my position was not theirs. I was not sensible of the solidarity which they considered to be obligatory upon me merely because I was a Jew. Not only the religious, but the national ties as well were lacking; and so, in my still obscure resistance, I could not, for the time being, see Zionism as anything more than an economic-philanthropic enterprise. Frankly speaking, I recoiled from what they called the Jewish nation, for it seemed to me that a nation could not be created by the conscious efforts of men. The ideal nation surviving in the Jewish diaspora appeared to me finer, nobler, more fruitful than any reality. What would be gained, I asked, if in this century of nationalistic madness the two dozen existing little nations—eternally wrangling, mutually jealous, slaughtering one another—were, by the addition of the

Jewish nation, to become two dozen plus one? From the historical and philosophical point of view I was probably right; but this phenomenon, born of necessity, constantly showed me to be in the wrong. And it is necessity that builds the road and leads the way.

The conflict persisted. It was the people themselves who were in question, their faces and their characters, their gestures and their words; the question, ultimately, was whether they had entered into me and I into them. I could respect and esteem and love a man simply because he was what he was, and for this reason worthy of respect and esteem and love. But I could not give respect and esteem and love to a group, an aggregate, merely because I was included in the community. Perhaps others can do so; but God did not make me that way. To the demand that I should love the group, the aggregate, the people for the sake of the ideal, I reply: I was born to believe in one unswerving ideal that permeates my whole being and dictates all my doings. To supplant it by another or to place another on the same plane is impossible, humanly, intellectually, organically impossible; else truth and earnestness have no importance, and nothing matters but experiment, opportunity and makeshift. Whatever one is and does one must be and do with all one's might; otherwise everyone could do his neighbour's business.

When I saw a Polish or Galician Jew I would converse with him, try to peer into his soul, to learn how he thought and lived. And I might be touched, or amazed, or filled with compassion or grief; but I could feel no sense of brotherhood or even of kinship. He was totally alien to me, alien in every utterance, every breath, and if he failed in any way to arouse my sympathy for him as an individual human being he was even repellent. Many Jews who feel themselves to be Jews refuse to admit this to themselves. Because of a concept of duty, or a party decree, or in order to avoid exposing themselves to hostile attack, they keep their feelings in check. But in my case such restraint would be purposeless. I do not ask anyone to imitate me, nor do I claim that my attitude or my actions were right; I am simply describing my experience and my conflict. A few years ago I spoke to a Jewish Nationalist of my acquaintance, a man of great nobility and excellence, about this matter, which oppressed me as it perplexed others. I said: Does not our dissension derive from the fact that you are a Jewish Jew while I am a German Jew? Are these not two distinct species, almost two distinct races, or at least two distinct modes of life and thought? Am I not more perilously exposed than most, since I do not give way in either direction, and do not consent to any compromise, but simply standing at an outpost, seek to

express myself and my world and bridge the gap between them? And in this way am I not ultimately more useful than one who has bound himself to follow a certain line of march?

He would not allow himself to be drawn into a discussion, but replied with a smile: You really oughtn't to worry about all these things. You are a poet, and as such you enjoy a special license. I remember that this rejoinder hurt me painfully, for despite its well-meaning cordiality it had an element of evasive depreciation, as if he had meant to say: We do not count on you, and can very well do without you.

XX

If anyone were to ask me among what people I had found the greatest understanding, encouragement, response and support, I should have to reply: Among Jewish men and women.

If the same question were put to any writer or artist of non-Jewish origin the answer would, in the majority of cases, be the same. I have looked into the matter, approaching with this query many artists and writers of eminence; and my surmise, which was already half a certainty, met with confirmation every time. This confirmation may also be obtained by examining the careers of the men who embodied the regenerative and creative forces of the nineteenth century; whether we study letters, and casual and, of course, often reserved comments, or judgments, and especially the first, spontaneous judgments of contemporaries, of the moulders and representatives of public opinion. Jews were their discoverers, their receptive audience, their heralds and their biographers. Jews have been and still are the caryatides of almost every great name.

In my own case a very peculiar difficulty makes its appearance. The cultured Jew finds it hard to believe in the creative gifts of another Jew. And as the degree

of culture diminishes this attitude becomes an undisguised cynical scepticism. Probably it is atavistic in origin, born of the secular memory of familiarity due to domestic and communal congestion; a sense of being in chains together, of being condemned to enduring proximity. It seems to say, crudely: I know you; you cannot beguile me, I know too much about you; I know your tricks as well as you; as when one conjurer encounters another. Yet I can trace here also a deep-rooted democracy that seems to go back thousands of years to the natural equality obtaining among nomadic tribes, where none can rise above his neighbour. The Jews always confront their great men with an unspoken commandment: Thou shalt not lift thyself above us, for in the eyes of God we are all equal.

Among Jews the plastic, image-forming element has never had the opportunity of free development; true creative talent is comparatively very rare. Some deny its existence altogether; they would refuse to admit any example, even if one agreed beforehand on the concept of creative activity. But the longing for the creative is more deeply rooted in the Jew than in any other race. It is the longing for the creator: the Jewish consciousness of God, the fear of God, so to speak, explains it; and we ought really to inquire how and to what extent fear and longing are coupled, or longing involves fear.

I have seen longing manifest itself in many perverse and intermediate forms, often cloaked and disguised; often ludicrous and bizarre; often false and self-degrading. I have known many Jews who have languished with longing for the fair-haired and blue-eyed individual. They knelt before him, burned incense before him, believed his every word; every blink of his eye was heroic; and when he spoke of his native soil, when he beat his Aryan breast, they broke into a hysterical shriek of triumph.

They do not want to be themselves; they want to be that other. Once they have chosen him it seems to them that they too are of the chosen, or at least that the blot upon them is forgotten; their inferiority is covered over. Until recently, rarely though I attend the theatre, I used to see them in every theatre lobby, in every concert hall. I do not know whether they still congregate there.

I was once greatly diverted by a young Viennese Jew, elegant, full of suppressed ambition, rather melancholy, something of an artist, and something of a charlatan. Providence itself had given him fair hair and blue eyes; but lo, he had no confidence in his fair hair and blue eyes: in his heart of hearts he felt that they were spurious. And, living in constant terror lest others too might doubt their authenticity, he went a step farther than even the Germanic ideal demanded, and became an Anglomaniac, and that of the most unbending type.

But what have the masks to do with the essential character? Without the devotion and unfailing enthusiasm of the modern Jew art would have had but a sorry reception and understanding during the last fifty years. This was stressed again and again by Nietzsche himself, to whom *Antisemiterei*, as he called it, was a horror and an abomination; nay, more—an indignity. Jews were always ready; Jews had ears that heard and eyes that saw; they were endowed with the faculty of discovering the mysterious, conceiving the miraculous, and realizing the unknown. Often enough their active enthusiasm aroused the public mind to attention; and I have known Jews who, when this happened, were overcome with emotion, as though until the hour of their election to their beatific mission they had been merely empty vessels, and now were scarce able to bear and contain their new fullness.

I found this particularly true of women. Jewish women and girls constitute the noblest, most promising element of Jewry; incomparable in their crystalline purity. Such women came within my field of view, many to encourage, a few to save; they were the first to give me confidence, the first to still my gnawing doubts, the first to answer my call, to give authenticity to my inner world.

I can still see the woman who came to me after the appearance of *The Jews of Zirndorf;* a stranger, she

came in winged haste, as though she had an urgent message to deliver, a message, as it were, from many who remained unnamed. Suddenly through her my solitude was joyfully filled by those unnamed souls, and the fantastic incredibility which every work has for its author gave way to valid existence. It is not a question of approval and confirmation, nor, assuredly, of applause and admiration; it is simply the test of life that is applied; and the response to this test is given by such messengers. Later I found her hard to satisfy; she was obstinately exacting, always expecting the exceptional, the uttermost; she compared and scrutinized and weighed, set models before me, and angrily disowned abortive attempts. I must add that I cannot help smiling when I remember that this particular woman had amazingly fair hair and blue eyes.

Then I see the image of another woman, an ecstatic creature of infinite spiritual grace and brilliant wit. To her a fictitious character was so real that she could quarrel with it, suffer because of it; there is something alarming in such a challenging, radiant entry into a sphere which for most people is but a painted curtain. One feels that one is literally accepted. Understanding would be too colourless a term, for what happens here is that rarest phenomenon of all, a visible transformation.

Others, again, were able to discard their own lives

entirely. Renunciation, even asceticism comes into play here; neither sensuous enchainment nor the bare image will carry the reader so far. Here, beyond a doubt, an attribute of blood and soul is at work which the Western races do not possess; a mediumistic quality, enriched and ennobled by the will to choose, and to surrender only after the choice has been made.

XXI

At times, however, I fear that the peak of this development has been passed. These are the signs: I see drunkenness and profligacy where a flame once burned; inspiration and impulse have given way to the latest fashion, familiarity to need. They make their claims before anything is given to them; they dictate æsthetic judgments in the spirit of the dilettante; they are immersed in stifling abundance, and the rarest things are just good enough to use for decoration and the titillation of the senses.

The receptive passion has been appeased in the course of two or three generations; now their senses have grown languid, and respond only to the most powerful stimulus. The result is the appearance everywhere of a misguided and wanton tendency to produce works of their own. Every *nouveau riche* Jewish family to-day contributes one of its members to the ranks of artistic youth, as an author or painter, composer or conductor; the tendency is becoming a positive nuisance.

No longer willing to be the vessel, they want to be the fount. But we must remember that when the vessel seeks to become the fount the parched lips that cling to it must perish of thirst.

It is a nuisance because it signifies a withdrawal from human obligations and a glossing over of an instinctively felt incapacity for life. But it is something worse, too : it is the squandering of reserves of energy. The maternal, nurturing elements yield to the infantile, consuming elements—a symptom which not only dismays the observer in the life of the Jews, but which is related to the general malady of our age, the atrophy of the heart and hypertrophy of the intellect. The extent to which Jewry has a share in this, the degree of its responsibility, has for me long been a subject of most painful meditation.

XXII

THERE are meetings which at first seem unimportant and devoid of deeper connotations, but which grow in retrospect until they yield a magical interpretation.

I recall a night in a Hamburg café; it was some years before the war. A young Russian Jew came to sit at my table, and after a little while we got into conversation. His father had died in prison; his brothers were in Siberia; his sister had been killed in a pogrom. He himself was destitute, homeless, a fugitive. If the police chose to do so they could arrest him next day and send him back to Russia. At that time the German authorities were always eager to accommodate Russia in such matters.

The manner of his recital was exceptionally cool. His face was white, almost immobile, his forehead narrow and high, his eyes a dull black, their fire carefully repressed: the face of a monk. His talk was masterly; every sentence was polished; even incidental remarks were made in the tone of one unshakably determined in respect of the cause of which he must not speak. Hence he received even contradictions with a smile half inattentive, half surprised. Here was the diplomatic manner, full of caution, and full of background, but with a steady,

profound, tenacious awareness. All passion had been stifled; it had been replaced by an icy fanaticism, scorching in its iciness. And so, as a fanatic, consciously, inexorably, coldly, ardently, he appealed to the doctrine that supported and vindicated him. Three qualities amazed me: his acumen, his knowledge, and his serenity. Although he seemed to me rootless, abandoned as only he can be who himself abandons the world and humanity, I felt, more certainly with every passing moment: here is explosive stuff; here is the catastrophic man.

His experience was appalling, whether considered individually or symbolically; his manner of accepting it, sublimating it, making of it a spiritual motive force, equally appalling. The scandal of the ages was unmasked, and justice bowed her head. Yet why was that austere masculine face transformed into a Gorgon's head before my eyes? Was it because of the terrible presumption of the individual who set himself up as the judge of all humanity? I could almost hear the cry of his soul, the ancient cry of an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. I should have preferred to hear it; it would have told me of fury, the tumult of the blood. Could I have wished him to be resigned, humanely sensitive, philosophically weighing and balancing? No.

His keen logic and the scientific basis of his will to destroy laid bare the gulf between us. Not only did he

intend to wrest retribution from fate, but he hurled his defiance in the face of society in the name of those who still brooded in somnolence over their sufferings, and even in the name of those whom calamity had not yet marked. And thereby he appointed himself judge over their heads.

It is contrary to the divine ideal for the individual to claim the deciding voice in the relation between crime and atonement. With this belief I stand and fall. He may rave, he may destroy everything about him, with a flaming torch in his hand he may become as a demon accursed; yet with all his passion, and even by reason of it, he still submits to the divine ideal; or so it seems to me, for he remains within the sphere of humanity. But when he comes forward with a self-assumed judicial title, and by virtue of his sovereignly enlightened spirit seeks to arrest and adjust the scales that with their secular burden rise and fall incessantly between heaven and hell, then he is only the enemy of the human race, the man whom God has cast out.

Was this his intention? Did he take this upon him? I believe the idea held no terrors for him. He had considered all possible consequences, was aware of them all. That was the purpose of his logic and his knowledge.

Why was it that political radicalism grew out of Judaism, that ancient, venerable faith, based upon sacred

traditions? Was the crushing pressure the cause? Did the tension between longing and fulfilment grow so unendurable that the dams burst? Was Jewish tradition only the thesis which produced the antithesis? Was the cultural rise of certain groups too abrupt, so that they lost their footing? Is it greed for power? Is it the revolt of slaves? Is it an apostolate, the impulse to martyrdom, or a herostratic craving?

Questions upon questions, none of which I am able to answer.

Instances of such exclusiveness of purpose and dynamic power as that which I encountered in Hamburg are, of course, rare. But their rarity does not diminish the danger; on the contrary, it makes the menace all the greater. These are magnets with an irresistible attractive force for loose fragments. Within them dwells such eloquence, such power to inflame, to disorganize and disintegrate, to transmit energy, to break the will of the weaker, to command adherence, that no man can resist them unless his roots are firmly planted in the earth.

Without effort they win over the discontented; the deniers; the debilitated and the decadent; the surfeited; the disappointed; the born traitors, and those who find treason useful; the godless and the seekers after God; those who cling to words and believe in words; the dilettante reformers of the world; the

adventurers; the opportunists; the pirates of public life and politics and literature; all those who fritter away their lives in unsubstantial opposition—and their name is legion. They gain men ruined by poverty as well as fugitives from miasmal luxury, and the young who have neither ideal nor guiding star, but only erring and quivering hearts: and their name is legion. All these, perhaps, were once an expression of creation; now each becomes a living phrase.

The process is as follows: In order to rule the intellect needs conviction. But conviction destroys reason, breaks the image, strips the form of its flesh until it becomes a skeleton, a phantom. He who is swayed by conviction can no longer see the form, and becomes detached from life and growth.

The intellect gives birth to the phrase. How has mankind attained to the point where it now stands if not by phrases? Phrases are like the inflamed cell that eats its way through the tissues, finally to become a malignant cancer that kills the body. They swell and swell and eat and eat and darken the earth and the heavens above the earth.

XXIII

THESE circumstances, in conjunction with those already touched upon, brought about and fanned the conflagration of hatred of which Germany is the theatre to-day.

This surprised no one who was accustomed to watching the compass, and who looked from time to time into the eyes of the helmsmen. It was no surprise to me.

A historian who should write of Antisemitism would necessarily write the history of an important phase of German cultural history.

It would be interesting to examine the tempting bait which from time to time was hurled into the streets from the ministerial chambers or the haunts where the Junkers brewed opinion: bait which the man in the street, too hungry for squeamishness, eagerly consumed.

It would be interesting to disclose the complicated, calamitous Antisemitic machinations by means of which, in the 'seventies and 'eighties, the sworn Wagnerians, in a curious, spell-bound state of mysterious unrest, succeeded in explaining away to the German world the incongruity between Wagner the expression of the German spirit and Wagner the musician. For there seethed the most imposing of the witches' cauldrons.

But that is not my office.

The unfortunate fact is that the Jew to-day is outlawed. If not in the juridical sense, then at least as regards national feeling.

The unfortunate fact is that one cannot dispute the truth that the persecutors, prompted agents and volunteers alike, had something to go upon. Every iconoclastic incident, every convulsion, every social challenge has seen, and still sees, Jews in the front line. Wherever a peremptory demand or a clean sweep is made, wherever the idea of governmental metamorphosis is to be translated into action with frenzied zeal, Jews have been and still are the leaders.

Jews are the Jacobins of our age.

True, if fairness were to be expected it would have to be conceded that these Jews, almost without exception, were inspired by honest conviction; that, Utopian idealists, they felt that they were bringing salvation to the world. It would have to be conceded that their activity displays a consistency which, though it may perhaps be absurd and criminal, may, on the other hand, be prophetic of the distant future: the transplanting from the religious into the social field of the messianic ideal derived from Judaism. It would, further, have to be conceded on closer inquiry that those who profited from the confusion, who feathered their nests, who fanned the flame as long as they could do so undetected

and unimperilled, and then managed to hide when our fine old police force intervened, were never the persons incriminated. It would have to be conceded that it was they who pulled the chestnuts out of the fire, and now, since the chestnuts are burned, as apparently they are, it is decided to chop off their hands for it.

But then it would have to be conceded that Jews are also the preservers and guardians of tradition, thoroughly versed in the law, and observant of its commandments.

But fairness cannot be expected. Nor is fairness intended. Hatred is intended, and hatred smoulders on. It makes no distinctions as to persons or achievements; it does not inquire as to meaning or aim. It constitutes its own meaning and aim.

It is the German hate.

An aristocratic Dane once asked me: What is the reason for the German hatred of the Jews? In my country the Jews are almost universally loved. They are known as the most reliable of patriots; they are known to lead honourable private lives; they are regarded as a sort of aristocracy. What do the Germans want?

I ought to have answered: Hate.

I ought to have answered: They want a scapegoat. Whenever things have gone badly with them, after every defeat, in every difficulty, in every trying situation, they

shift the responsibility for their distress upon the Jews. So it has been for centuries. The menacing embitterment of the masses has always been diverted into this convenient channel. Even the Rhenish electors and archbishops knew that when their military exploits had failed and their treasure-vaults were exhausted they had only to institute massacres of the Jews to secure an infallible means of control.

But what I did say was : A non-German cannot possibly imagine the heartbreaking position of the German Jew. German Jew—you must place full emphasis on both words. You must understand him as the final product of a lengthy evolutionary process. His twofold love and his struggle on two fronts drive him close to the brink of despair. The German and the Jew : I once dreamt an allegorical dream, but I am not sure that I can make it clear. I placed the surfaces of two mirrors together ; and I felt as though the human images contained and preserved in the two mirrors must needs fight one another tooth and nail.

The Dane simply replied : I believe the Germans have too little liberalism, at least since the founding of the Empire.

Probably that is true ; but it is the mildest thing that can be said on the subject. Imagination and freedom and goodness of heart also are lacking. There must be a vital

defect in a people if it can—so lightly, so habitually, so unscrupulously, heeding no appeal, admitting no sincere discussion, capable here of no generosity, although a people that incessantly proclaims itself the leader of all nations in culture, art, research and idealism—continually practise such injustice, sow such dissension, heap up such mountainous accumulations of hatred.

Let me endeavour to interpret my metaphor of the mirrors.

That a similarity of destiny and character exists here is evident. Here as there we see centuries of dismemberment and decentralization. A foreign yoke, and a Messianic hope for victory over all foes, and for unification. Indeed, in this connection a special German God was invented, who figured in every patriotic hymn as the Jewish God figures in prayers. Here as there we find misunderstanding on the part of the outside world, ill will, jealousy and suspicion; here as there a heterogeneous configuration within the nation; dissension among the tribes. And we find irreconcilable contrasts of individual traits: practical activity and dreaminess; the gift of speculation in both the higher and the lower senses; the impulse to economize, to accumulate, to trade; the impulse to learn, to acquire knowledge and serve it; a superabundance of formulae and a lack of form; a detached spiritual life that imperceptibly leads

to *hubris*, to arrogance and unteachable stubbornness. Here as there, finally, we find the dogma of election.

Contact has resulted in abrasions, and the abrasions have become bleeding, festering wounds. In the weaker body, wounds that will never heal.

With what do the Germans charge the Jews? They say: You poison our pure atmosphere. You seduce our innocent youth to copy your tactics and practises. Into our radiant Germanic *Weltanschauung* you bring your gloomy meditation, your negation, your doubts, your Asiatic sensuousness. You want to enchain our spirit and eradicate the Aryan principle from the face of the earth.

My answer to this is all that I have hitherto said. He who still upholds these accusations would not be convinced though I spoke with the tongue of an angel.

Others say: You ruin our business. And these are honest. The Germans may remember how at the beginning of the war, gnashing their teeth at the hypocrisy, they had to endure the outbursts of moral indignation in which the English were indulging themselves. But when some Englishman told them: You are ruining our business—this they could understand, although that indictment, when directed against an entire nation in order to sanction a war, is stupid and inhumane.

A young friend told me the following story: In Poland he was billeted in the house of a poor Jew who had three sons, eleven, thirteen and fifteen years of age. One day,

in the course of a talk with them, he asked each what he wanted to become. Eagerly the eleven-year-old boy cried: I want to become a great man, a millionaire. The second replied, seriously: I want to be a Jew. The third, who stood gloomily aside, and for a time pretended not to hear the repeated query, at last replied to the insistent questioner: I want to become of the same dust as you.

These three instances represent the three categories of the Jew as a human being. The queer and painful thing is that the Germans always, from all time, have seen only the one, the first; that they speak only of this and vent their wrath only on this, whatever other excuses or pretexts they may bring forward.

They like to point to Christianity—as though *that* were Christianity!—and by Christianity to excuse deeds contrary to all humane customs. I can put up with racial theories and philosophic systems, even with the evidence adduced by some zealot of hatred, that Christ was of non-Semitic descent; the superficial may be dazzled by such things, and the rabble deluded. But to me Christianity does not seem appropriate for their purposes. For it is precisely in the nobler Jews, and of course the least voluble, scattered here and there throughout the land, that the Christian ideal and the Christian mode of life find their purest expression; a phenomenon of transformation that points forward to the future.

XXIV

With the realization of the hopelessness of effort the bitterness in one's breast becomes a mortal agony.

Vain to adjure the nation of poets and thinkers in the name of its poets and thinkers. Every prejudice that one believes to be disposed of breeds a thousand others, as carrion breeds maggots.

Vain to present the right cheek when the left has been smitten. This does not move them to thought; it neither touches nor disarms them: they strike the right cheek also.

Vain to interject words of reason into their crazy shrieking. They say: He dares to open his mouth? Gag him.

Vain to set an example in your life or behaviour. They say: We know nothing, we have seen nothing, we have heard nothing.

Vain to seek obscurity. They say: The coward! He is creeping into hiding, driven by his evil conscience!

Vain to go among them and offer them one's hand. They say: Why does he take such liberties with his Jewish obtrusiveness?

Vain to keep faith with them, as a comrade-in-arms or a fellow citizen. They say: He is Proteus, he can assume any shape or form.

Vain to help them to strip off the chains of slavery. They say: No doubt he found it profitable.

Vain to counteract the poison. They brew fresh venom.

Vain to live for them and die for them. They say: He is a Jew.

In the desperate days of my poverty in Munich I had the curious habit of going to the churchyard every morning and looking at the bodies laid out in the mortuary chamber. I never wearied of looking at them. Those waxen foreheads, eyes and lips spoke to me; and it seemed that they were in fact all victims of murder, all somehow murdered by misunderstanding and unnecessary suffering. Sometimes, mysteriously, they waked and peopled my dreams. When I no longer knew where to turn the confusion that beclouded my mind would urge me toward them, and with them I would voice my indictment of the living.

Even to-day I often feel like that. I feel as though only among the dead is it that justice can be done upon the living. For what the living do is more than flesh and blood can bear.

XXV

But there is, of course, something absurd in this constant harping on " the Germans." I know enough of German life to realize what lies on the surface and what in the depths ; what goes on in the street and what in the silent soul of the nation itself. What is more, I know enough Germans to be well aware of what most excites the disapproval and secret disgust of the finest among them. I know that here and there I have friends and comrades ; proud, solitary figures ; brave swimmers who fight against the current ; artists, scholars, aristocrats, merchants ; men to whom I am bound by a common goal and a common will, and men who simply give me their affection ; unknown persons from whom I receive an occasional greeting, but on whom I can count none the less ; and far away, on the periphery of the circle, are many whose presence I can only feel, as though through the medium of electric waves : I am subtly aware of the earnestness of their gaze, the earnestness of their essential natures, their perseverance in fruitful labour, the indestructible influence of their wise and great thoughts, their profound and illuminating works.

These, to my mind, are " the Germans." They are

the Germans among whom I count myself, with whom I take my stand.

They know this, and consider it natural and normal. But if I go to one of them, even the most tried and noblest of my friends, with my torment and my bitterness, my inextricably complex problem, my proofs and my questions and my cares, he cannot grasp the full scope of my misfortune, and aggravates my helplessness with arguments that no longer carry weight with me. He thinks that he can console me by speaking of the ebb and flow of spiritual pestilence; he forgets that it is precisely in this field that I consider myself the physician, and that I cannot but ascribe the failure of my efforts to a deficiency inherent in me. He says that the madness of noisy tilters at shadows cannot be taken as evidence of the nation's feeling and moral orientation. But he forgets how large is the number of the victims; he forgets the eloquence of the terrible facts; and he forgets that it is a poor consolation for one imprisoned in a room full of coal-gas to be told that to-morrow the windows will be opened. Ultimately, therefore, even he fails to understand that at bottom I feel more sorrow for the Germans than for the Jews.

Does not one feel the greatest sorrow for those one loves most deeply, even though that love be wholly unrequited?

And, thoroughly alive to the need for a change, he may ask, although half-heartedly: What can be done? What must Germany do?

I cannot answer him, for the answer is too obvious, and I am filled with shame for him.

If I see a driver abusing his weary horse so mercilessly with his whip that the beast's veins are bursting and its nerves quivering, and one of the passive if compassionate bystanders asks me: What is to be done?—I tell him: First take the whip away from that savage.

If someone then rejoins: The horse is stubborn and malicious; the horse only wants to attract attention; the horse is well-fed, and the wagon is loaded with nothing but straw—then I tell him: All that can be investigated later. First take the whip away from that savage.

Certainly, as far as I can see, Germany can do no more. But it would be much. It would be enough.

XXVI

But what can the Jews do? That question is more difficult to answer. In its inexhaustibility the subject mocks at every effort.

Sacrifice is not enough. Friendly advances are misconstrued. A conciliatory attitude meets with coldness, if not with jeers. Apostasy is automatically excluded for anyone with self-respect. Secret assimilation is effective only for those fit for assimilation; that is, for the weakest individuals. Rigid adherence to the ancient form involves petrification.

What remains? Self-destruction? A clouded, oppressive, joyless life, perhaps possible for those who look for mere existence and its external embroideries, but inconceivable for men of intellect and soul, who now can choose only between infinite loneliness and hopeless struggle . . .?

It is better not to think of it.

But perhaps there is a future. Perhaps a possibility of hope remains. Perhaps there is a saviour, man or spirit, on this side or that, or on the bridge between. Perhaps he has already sent out his heralds. Perhaps I may regard myself as one of them.

At the close of the fifth decade of my life I stand

surrounded by a circle of figures, and they try to assure me that what I have done has not been done in vain. I am a German and I am a Jew ; one as much and as fully as the other ; I am both simultaneously and irrevocably. I feel that in a certain sense this is new ; probably because of my perfect awareness of it, and because I am so completely permeated with elements from both spheres, the Oriental and the Occidental, the ancestral and the freely chosen, the racial and innate and those conditioned by the soil. In former years this novel feature often disturbed me, doubtless because I was unable to understand it. For it was not born of my will ; its source lay in my nature and my development. It was disturbing, too, because on both sides I constantly encountered arms that received or repelled me, voices that cried a welcome or a warning. I am not a man to render regular accountings. Although I have always been attached to the individuals about me, and have even depended on them, I can do only what the inner impulse commands me to do. And since I have gradually learned to be sure that it has urged me on in the right direction, I have gained some measure of peace of mind.

In my field of endeavour everything depends on one's ability to touch the hearts of men, to move them and uplift them. Not that I stand on a height and, godlike, raise up the lost. Nothing of the sort. He who opens and

takes possesssion of men's hearts is uplifted with them, because of love. That is why I believe that the renunciation of ignoble things will cause the ravings and frothings of hatred and injustice to grow powerless, and even the misdeeds that lie to their account will find expiation.

TWELVE YEARS LATER

An author who can look back upon more than forty years of work, who has produced more than a score of volumes, has naturally—since men of letters are, in a way, intellectual conquerors—absorbed the world about him in manifold shapes and figures, to reproduce it in new and unified shape and form, as a priest might do, for himself and for those whom he addresses. The process is comparable with a chemical reaction. In some cases, indeed, it corresponds to the transmutation of an element. When, for example, one compares a landscape by Stifter with the scene that served as its model, one is struck primarily by the heightening or exaltation, the purification that has taken place. This not in the sense of cheap idealization or romanticizing; I mean a purging away of inessentials, of the formless dross of actuality—a transformation fundamental for all art. We cannot get reality into our grasp. It must be clipped and pruned and kneaded, it must be moulded into new shapes, and the furnace in which it is moulded is the imagination. In former times this process depended upon æsthetic considerations and rigid traditions that to-day have been lost or abandoned. In their place we now have something like biological necessity, the knowledge of the close

relationship on the one hand, and the profound difference on the other, between man's views and mode of life and events in nature, the mutability of nature and the variations in its basic forms. And every writer is the product of his time, and sees with the eyes of his time, at least superficially, even though he has, behind his physical eyes, another pair, whose vision extends above and beyond time.

First impressions are ineradicable. Born into a German landscape of specific character, I felt in my youth that it represented the prototype of all landscapes. It had nothing of the picturesque, no sweetness or charm; but its harsh severity did not fail to exert an educational effect. We know that sordid surroundings often stimulate the imagination; that is why so few artists of international standing have emerged from the upper classes. In this sense the sordid excites suspense and longing, spurs on that will to change which is the esoteric mystery of all artistic endeavour. But sordidness must not be confused with simplicity. A scene subdued in colour is not necessarily monotonous; on the contrary, it accustoms the mind to a certain faithfulness of perception, and forces it to counterbalance the lack of external beauty by inner concentration, by a modification, a deepening or abstraction, of the field of vision.

One's knowledge of home is hard to formulate in words.

Undeniably it resembles one's knowledge of one's mother. One absorbs it not only through the senses and the atmosphere, but in a mystical and metaphysical manner also. One is not simply born by chance in such and such a city, on such and such a river, in such and such a landscape; birth is no independent physiological act, if I may use the term. History, the general form of life, the course of the generations, a complex embracing thousands of years, have contributed to the creation of the individual, so that he is subject to wholly indeterminable influences which find expression in the landscape, as in a crystal that is the product of unfathomable combinations and of the laws that govern them.

Thus Nuremberg—the city itself and its historical significance—had a decisive influence upon me and my development. A child cannot, of course, understand or estimate the meaning of a Gothic cathedral, of a figure by Veit Stoss, of a picture by Dürer; even the faintest notion of it hardly reaches him. But he can see and grasp the legendary element in it; the legendary will always be the first foundation of reality. The transition to history is nothing more than forced habituation to facts. But no fact, no event and no catastrophe can alter the structure of that root which goes down into the dark, infinite depths of the ages.

When, as children, we played in the market-place, when

we were told the tale of the *Schöne Brunnen*, when we ran about in the dark, narrow little streets, under the broadly arched gateways, in dismal old lofts, on the stone bridges, and in the half-ruined ancient towers, then all this was history which we ourselves had lived through; temporal change had not yet reached our consciousness; that is to say, the centuries were yet nameless, the image unconnected with formal knowledge. And the image has remained ineradicable in me, though gradually it became sublimated into a frame of mind whose solid essence may be found in my *Jews of Zirndorf*, *Goose-man* and *Caspar Hauser*.

To this urban scene I owe something else also, which I am particularly anxious to mention, because it led to a study that is often underrated among the Germans. I mean the architectural aspect of a literary composition, of a story or a novel—its construction and execution and climacteric development. I am certain that the early viewing of organic works of art drew my instinctive attention to the nature of the building process and the laws governing construction. I remember that one day, when I was surely not more than eight years old, I stood before the church of St. Lorenz, completely spellbound, staring at its Gothic rose-window, which struck me as something altogether incomprehensible. And perhaps I may also observe that my faith in form, in literary form, my

conviction that it represents the acme of art and the essence of creative endeavour, would never have become so deeply a part of me if in my early youth I had not had so much man-made form before my eyes; though conscious awareness of it reached me only very much later in life, much chaos and obscurity having clouded the beginning.

It is far from my mind to speak disparagingly of my native Fürth, which stands near Nuremberg like a smaller sister; but that city has always been characterized by a peculiar formlessness, a certain aridity and meagreness. Quite early I came to feel that the proximity of the two cities would determine my spiritual destiny: a union of antiquity and modernity, art and industry, romance and manufacture, design and dissolution, form and deformity. At the age of ten I had already begun to make long expeditions into the surrounding country, and never could rid myself of a feeling of inescapable melancholy. The harshness of the contours, the monotony of the outlook, the complete absence of anything that might appear poetic or charming to the childish heart—all this, as I can see far more clearly to-day than at the time, brought into my whole attitude toward the world a certain yearning sensation of chilliness, as though in a previous existence I had known scenery of an entirely different sort, a landscape definitely opposite in character.

TWELVE YEARS LATER

After I had published the novel *Alexander in Babylon*, in 1905, I met a man who had travelled widely in the East, and who, after reading the book, remarked that I must have spent a considerable time in Asia Minor and Persia. I replied that I had never been there. Thereupon he declared that he would never have believed this had I not told him so myself, for the scenic descriptions in the book were such that he would never have thought it possible for anyone to write them without having visited those countries at least once. Afterwards I often pondered over his words, and the whole phenomenon involved. Just as, in the realm of art, I believe in a pre-existent form, an innate form that arises of its own accord as a work is composed—a form that existed within the product before it was created, so to speak, as a statue may be said to exist within a block of marble—so I believe in a pre-existent landscape, deriving from that which I would call the racial memory. Here, it is true, bewildering mysteries confront us. It is better not to attempt their rational solution. No doubt the procreant germ lies within the imagination, but the imagination has its own springs and origins, and in every individual is subject to its own laws. On becoming acquainted with strange countries or cities we often have the curious experience of finding not only that they are unlike our mental picture of them, but that this mental picture was

more accurate than the reality. This sounds paradoxical, but it is true. In America a man I knew told me, very angrily: America is a fraud—I am sorry that I came here; my own idea of the country was much more nearly correct. A rather perverse way of putting it; but there is here something of the idealism characteristic of all imaginative thought. One does not need to have direct knowledge of a landscape; one may know it through a mental image.

By birth I am a man of the plains. Three sorts of biological character-conformation may be distinguished: there are men of the plains, men of the sea, and men of the mountains. The differences are elemental. The influence of atmospheric pressure, climate, cloud-formation, humidity, vegetation and mineral elements is of far greater significance than we have as yet determined; for the findings of science have referred rather to geographical and ethnographical factors, to specific historical and national elements, than to the magical-telluric forces that operate here. The visual adjustment of the men of the plains or the sea differs entirely from that of the mountain men. The gaze of the former is lost in horizontal expanses, while that of the latter must be vertical in direction. This influence finds expression in their attitude toward life also, and even in their conception of God. We know that the really religious peoples lived in or

near deserts, or at least in regions where their field of vision was an infinity of plain ; it seems that the imagination is stirred more deeply by plains than by heights. I remember seeing, in my youth, magnificent sunsets, with the memory of which my concept of a plain has since become fused. Sandy regions and slow-flowing streams engender a kind of perennial melancholy that may determine one's whole life. Man's visionary qualities are fed by monotony of the landscape. There is a demonstrable connection between external space and the scope of the soul.

When one looks back from a higher standpoint of life and experience, events lose their fortuitous character and stand revealed in the light of predestined fate. My transplantation into the Austrian life and scene at the age of seventeen—a change temporary at first, then permanent —led in the course of the decades to transformations both constitutional and spiritual or intellectual in nature. In earlier times it was possible to conceive of an author without metropolitan experience ; but not to-day, nor even at the close of the nineteenth century. It was then that the metropolis, the city in the abstract, as it were, began to play its sociological rôle, and no writer who used contemporary life as the basis of his creative work could withdraw from its sphere of influence. French literature had set the example a half century earlier : Paris was not

only the political, social and geographic heart of the country and the nation, but also a kind of symbol in the literary life. The German world and German life fought against such a centre. The disadvantage deriving from this was that no true social organism ever came into being. The advantage was greater variety of colours, a multiformity and spiritual freedom, which produced something scarcely found among other nations, something which I would call the triumph of the provincial, and to which we owe such great personalities as Gottfried Keller, Möricke or Stifter. For the creative work of the German imagination is founded on an entirely different national relationship, one that gives rise to new alliances, new conflicts and new ardours in the midst of upheaval, deplorable though the latter is from the political point of view.

In a sense Vienna complemented my Nuremberg experience. In another sense, again, it totally obliterated that experience. For here was nothing of the obvious, no purity of impression. The admixture of Slavic and Southern life and the concomitant political and social unrest soon directed my attention to catastrophic possibilities. I came to Vienna for the first time shortly after the death of the Crown Prince Rudolph. That was more than forty years ago, but I still remember clearly the powerful wave of agitation that swept over the people.

At the time I was working in a factory, so that my knowledge of the actual situation was far deeper than that of a casual observer. In those days, without being conscious of it, I grew aware of the meaning of Austrian life as a symbol and as destiny; I stood, so to speak, at the root of the great European struggle between liberalism and autocracy, between the individual and the power of the State. The fact that in this case the heir to the throne had been the representative of liberty and individuality, a downright rebel, had a tremendous effect upon the popular mind; indeed, a far-reaching and disintegrating effect on every stratum of the people. I had the opportunity of noting this over a long period of years. In the shop where I worked there was a young foreman who, though he was an out-and-out revolutionary, spoke of the Crown Prince as of a saint. This union of subversive tendencies and loyalty to a dynasty is thoroughly Austrian, and the enigmatical quality of this foreman's character could not but attract me. This man was also the first to take me, passionately fond as I was of excursions, into the mountains. A stirring sight for the man of the plains, radically new, oddly dramatic. In that period I became acquainted with the different ways of realizing a landscape: the amateurish, voluntary experience of it, and the knowledge compelled by circumstances and acquired through drudgery. The first I

found sterile, because it satisfied only inner desires for luxury; but the other, though painful and hard to endure, made indelible impressions on the soul. A typical example of the latter is my year of military service in Würzburg. There I did not merely gain a superficial acquaintance with the Lower Franconian landscape, that scene which is the heart of Germany, but I experienced it deeply, through suffering; for it was military drill and discipline that took me into it, in day-long marches, nocturnal exercises and manœuvres, heavily loaded, forced to endure a strain which my seventeen-year-old body could never have borne if my will had not harshly insisted. Through suffering I came to know the beautiful forests, the tree-covered hills, the river, the peaceful villages, the gloomy Spessart, the ancient cloisters, the historic cities, in every season, in every sort of weather. Scenes thus experienced through suffering remain ineradicable in one's memory and determine one's spiritual course. In one of my least-known books, but the one which I like best, *The Triumph of Youth*, I reproduced these scenes, which have always remained alive for me; whether my picture lives for others I cannot, of course, know.

The strict discipline which I underwent during the period when I was absorbing this landscape, together with my resistance to that discipline, which roused all

my rebellious instincts, and yet taught me to subdue those instincts and subordinate them to a general concept of order—this discipline may have caused the scenery itself to become a conceptional and necessary element of my life. The landscape was no longer merely ornamental, an object of excursions, a land of adventure for city-dwellers, but a part of my being, the expression of a spiritual state, a formative factor. It is, indeed, true that any landscape which somehow becomes part of our destiny generates a definite rhythm within us, a rhythm of emotion and thought of which we commonly remain entirely unconscious, and which is therefore all the more decisive. It should be possible to recognize from the cadences of a writer's prose the landscape which it covers as a fruit covers its kernel. But that, I am afraid, would lead us into occult regions. I should like, however, to see the faces of our critics and historians of literature if they were required to ascertain this scenic background without knowing the author's formal denomination. They would be greatly embarrassed, and all the racial theories and attempts at rigid classification would suddenly reach a point of beautiful absurdity. Who, for example, could recognize the hand of a genuine Frenchman in *Peter Schlemihl*, or the tongue of an Italian in the manifestoes of Napoleon ? For the secrets of Nature are not as patent as the facts recorded on one's passport

or in the bureau of vital statistics. The latter, however, make it easily possible for artifice to interpret a man's birth-certificate as evidence of a good character or a reason for condemnation.

Beginning with my twentieth year, travelling was part of my life, and until I was thirty I was driven to it by necessity and homelessness as well as by an inner unrest. I wandered through the whole of Southern Germany, spent many nights in the wooden huts of the Black Forest, journeyed into Switzerland on foot—and not only on foot, but on my bare soles—and often had above me no other roof than the open sky. When I did settle down it was but seemingly. No place could hold me long; when I had spent three months in a city I was seized by a sort of thirst for air. Mountains and mountainous regions attracted me more and more. I would wander about for months, as though in search of a suitable landscape. Between my thirtieth and fortieth years I travelled through Italy, from city to city; but neither my delight in their beauty, nor the satisfaction of my longings could hold me there permanently. After a while I would long for a forest or a meadow, a shady tree, or even a heavily clouded sky. The South called me, but I belonged to the North. Until at last I found the place which I made my permanent home, a valley in the Styrian mountains; and this landscape became my friend

as a man may become one's friend, tried and true through the years, put to the test of winter and spring, of earth and atmosphere, of people and trees. For this reason, also, my decision was not impetuous, but the result of the gradual experience of a beneficial influence. It was not only the isolation and quiet that lured me and eventually held me there, but, to a far greater degree, a supersensual tie, if I may be permitted the term. I noted ever more clearly a constitutional correspondence between the landscape and myself, a correspondence residing in what I have called the rhythm of the landscape, and which had a manifestly beneficent effect on my creative work, so that only there were all my senses fully awake, only there everything I saw had the power of conviction ; and with this knowledge I stood before a miraculous fact. Even to-day I still believe that rocks and minerals exert an influence, and the water and air also. For it is these that determine the external appearance of the scene, the calm surface of the lake, the overlapping tapestry of the hills running up to the dominating glacier, the whole revealing an unparalleled and harmonious order, as though the hand of the Creator had worked here with peculiar love.

I was speaking of rocks and cliffs and mountains. There must be a law that would throw some light on the relationship existing between the apparently dead mass

of the earth and its living creatures. Animals, by virtue of their instincts, seem to know more than we of such things. It is a well-known fact that mice and rats will abandon a region in vast swarms when an earthquake threatens, and this long before the disturbance. All sea-farers know that birds will herald a storm that breaks only twenty-four hours later. In our country it is usual for the titmice to leave the mountains for the valleys just before a severe snowstorm. Many mystics hold the view that all creatures are aware of the state of the elements, and that under certain conditions the elements behave like living creatures. I recall the words of Görres, who says that when the fresh-pressed juice begins to ferment, the old wine in its casks and bottles is likewise disturbed. It has been my own experience that a change takes place in me when I move from limestone mountains to mountains composed of crystalline rocks, though the altitude remain the same ; it is as though the red and white blood corpuscles entered into new combinations, thus giving rise to new moods and new thoughts. The landscape in which a person lives does not merely frame the picture ; it enters into his very being and becomes a part of him. This can, of course, be seen much more clearly among savages than within the frontiers of civilization. That is why rivers, deserts, oases and groves play so important a rôle in the formation of myths, which often represent

only the scenic experience of a long succession of generations.

The charge has often been made that landscapes, or nature in the broader sense, receive but little space in my books. The charge is difficult to answer. True it is that I have never laid particular stress on descriptions of landscapes. Scenic descriptions as such, for their own sake, conflict with the congruity and dynamic quality of a narrated event. If we look over the fiction produced during the nineteenth century we constantly meet with long-winded descriptions of regions and scenes, descriptions that grow less and less vivid as they go into more and more minute detail. An art that sets itself the goal of portraying men and human lives cannot pause for ecstatic rhapsodies, just as serious travellers do not stop to admire a group of trees; their course is marked by continuous, unswerving progress. They fulfil their purpose only in so far as they adhere to the set rhythm. I have always endeavoured to inject scenic elements into my figures, that these elements might emerge from them as characteristic traits, as signs that they belong to their environment. Any duplication disturbs the imagination. After I had simply given up the direct portrayal of landscapes it appeared that my writings contained more scenic elements than had previously been the case.

But I do not use the term "inner landscape" in this

sense alone. The significance of the concept is much broader. To me it means not merely the landscape that resides in a character as an innate element of it, but, in a far higher degree, the inner condition of my own soul, which is the generator of the landscape corresponding to the figure, and which, indeed, produces the figure itself and the whole complex of characters. This is a little difficult to understand. I shall try to make it clear.

All creative work derives only partially from the world of reality, from actual experience and observation; for the rest, and probably for the more essential part, it consists of dreams and visions. Even if we accept naturalistic descriptions—as those of Zola, or Tolstoi's incomparably genuine portrayal of a hunt or a race, or Gerhart Hauptmann's picture of the life of the weavers—as a literal transcription of reality, made without art or effort, we are grossly deceived; and this very deception constitutes its author's purpose and triumph. For all art rests upon an apparent homogeneity and identity with life; but as a matter of fact it differs from real life much as a pyramid differs from the kiln in which its constituent bricks were manufactured.

The dreams and visions within me are the product of not only my own experience, but also experience of my ancestors: racial experience, which, effaceable from individual memory only, survives eternally through suc-

cessive generations. Perhaps this is the source of that well-known feeling of having already experienced a certain event or situation; though here too we must beware of rationalistic speculation. For these things are far more mysterious and obscure than we can imagine. In the final analysis all the moral precepts, religious impulses and spiritual tendencies of the individual proceed out of deeply rooted racial memories. So that it is but seemingly that my work is determined by my personal volition. The scene in which I have my unconscious being is thousands of years old. A soft stroke of the bell of fancy, a cue from the land of dreams, will suffice to take me whither I have never been before, to make me follow roads I have never known. Innumerable strata, reaching down to the very beginnings of time, constitute this inner landscape, which not only moulds the soul, but gives the human countenance its uniqueness of feature. Accordingly we have types of faces that suggest rocks or stones, rivers, forests, or the sea. Out of the vast ebullient mass of material at her disposal, Nature, unlimited as to time, invariably creates only the unique. It seems that this is coming to be realized more and more clearly and vitally; hence the fundamental problems of modern man are the problem of time and the problem of uniqueness.

Thus my inner landscape is the organically basic element

in me, that which by its very nature is immortal. My mind and my will aim at intrinsic uniqueness, and are aware of nothing else. My soul, on the other hand, seeks universality of form in what has been, and, consequently, in what is to be. These are axioms which in one respect border on the religious field, and in another receive the confirmation of science. One of the most noteworthy and fertile of biological discoveries tells us that changes in the substance of the brain cause no change in one's sense of individuality, but that modifications in the constitution of the blood or in the circulation do have such an effect. Personality is engendered at the point where the inner and outer landscapes are contiguous, where the mythical and the permanent flow into limited time. And every literary work, every deed, every achievement is the result of an amalgamation of the palpable and the imponderable, of the inner vision and the actual picture, of the idea and the actual situation, of conception and form. The outer landscape of the world no longer needs to be discovered, though its influence and effect on the soul are not yet fully known. But the inner landscape of man remains largely *terra incognita*, and when it comes to illuminating this unknown region our so-called psychology is but a pale little lamp.

An author does not need to give special proof of the determination of his mental and spiritual development

by the elements and by the earth from which he has sprung. His work provides and contains that demonstration. In my own case, however, the factors which I have already expounded are complicated by the fact that I am a Jew. Behind my intimate relationship to the landscape, therefore—or so, at least, I have heard ever since I can remember; so those who, so to speak, give no credit to the air I breathe would have me believe—lies a background said to contradict all that is manifest in me, all my natural experience and my spiritual ties. At the first glance it does not seem very easy to detect a connection between the landscape that governs a man of letters, be it outer or inner, and his racial descent, his religious denomination, or even merely that which is called his creed—a concept which at the present time no longer has any true reality. But the differentiation here involved is not of my making; I have been forced into it by circumstances. Objectively viewed, from the standpoint of my life as it is, my life as a human being—as a feeble instrument used, among others, by the divine force for the interpretation of its mysteries, as a fashioner of forms and symbols, who has been endowed with words that will make known to all men his essence and his heart—I ought never to have had to make such a decision; but the opposition compels me to make it, compels me by casting doubt on all I have achieved and effected, and by

forcing me into a defensive position that is contrary to nature, to intelligence, to art and to truth. I confess frankly, however, that it goes against the grain. I will even declare that it would be incompatible with the dignity which I choose to ascribe to myself. If an artist should be required to vindicate his work, work which was born in him, born of the most unfathomable impulse known to creation, born of the immutable essence of his being, born of the mandatory formula by which he stands or falls, then life becomes an absurdity for him, and he is guilty of self-denial and self-betrayal. I refuse to deny myself; I refuse to betray myself. Those who dispute my essential identification with the country of my birth, who take the blood in my veins as a pretext for relegating me to an inferior category of humankind—blood! as if blood could serve as an index of excellence or baseness, as if blood could be appraised and weighed like gold, as if all of us were not condemned to live with the same blood in the same world of woe—they also refuse to believe the landscape out of which I have sprung and in which I work, and of whose validity I have no proof except myself and my living awareness of it. If what I have produced is truly alive it needs no attestation; if not, no argumentative skill or defensive action can make it so. Nor do I know of any arbiter to uphold me except my inner voice and the voices of those

who tell me that I exist for them, for the community and for the world. This you must take as a confession of faith. For fundamentally, from my earliest beginnings, I am bound up with what I fashion and with the heritage of history—racial history, scenic history, spiritual history —that with fateful inevitability is interwoven with my being, and shapes my life from stage to stage. And I feel that this is more than a spiritual confession of faith : it is religious, if indeed religion is meek submission to an unknown higher power that we declare to be holy because it stands above and beyond our earthly standards and relationships. In this sense, and only thus, am I a Jew, am I a German, am I a human being.

I have attempted here to elucidate, with the aid of the landscapes I have known, my intellectual and spiritual origins, my inner relationship to my work and my age, and, in a certain sense, the path I have followed. Perhaps this is too discreet a means of explanation and self-interpretation. Perhaps I am expected to do what to-day is called taking a stand, a militant attitude toward our time and the events now occurring. Some hold that I am too half-hearted or too restrained in my defence against the theories and political plots that menace all art, all intellect, all culture and, ultimately, myself, my life and my work. Perhaps, indeed, they even feel that one's own person is not so important or so central or so

interesting as to warrant the citing of it and its achievements and aspirations in the battle against the darkness and savagery of a new medievalism, against the madness and hate and racial conceit that threaten to shroud all of us, our children and our children's children, in darkness.

These objections may be justified. But it must be considered that a man of letters who has devoted his entire life, almost forty years of work, to the transfiguration of men through the medium of imagery and form—not didactically, nor with any intention of instructing them, but through the eyes and the imagination and the heart—must find it difficult, more difficult than it is for others, to restate expressly that which he has already portrayed and shaped. It is simply impossible. Did we not live in so shattered, so incoherent, so horribly forgetful a world such a question would never arise, and I should not need to point to the fictitious but none the less living characters that testify for me (and must testify for me, if all my life has not been a farce). I could refer to unequivocal manifestoes, to desperate and tireless direct efforts to ward off the demon of politics and all its disastrous appurtenances, to prevent the suicide which Europe is committing. I foresaw it all and issued a warning twenty-five years ago. In my book on the literati I sounded the first danger-signal. Twelve years ago, in a speech

on humanity, I tried to throw myself upon the mercy of the raging furies. In an address to youth on the life of the spirit I endeavoured to bring my young friends in Germany to their senses; finally, in my contemplation of myself, I indicated—with deep sorrow, with sincere and solemn entreaty, with the most incontrovertible arguments—the fatally catastrophic consequences of national and racial arrogance. Thirty-six years ago, in my first book, *The Jews of Zirndorf*, I opened my vizor and, so to speak, laid my cards on the table; this at a time when it had not yet occurred to any Jewish author in Germany to publish the state of his soul, to reveal his roots and disclose the associations engendered by his blood. Is all this nothing? It would appear so, if I understand correctly an indictment which I have read in a Zionist journal, wherein I am said to have touched only lightly, with a few indifferent phrases, on the nature of the conflict that involves me and my kind. These gentlemen are pleased to forget. They have forgotten, especially, that opposition and ephemeral movements are not the only means of helping humanity; that there are other methods. They have forgotten that beyond the day stands the century, and beyond the century eternity. Not that I presume to claim immortality; but in every man who is sincere, sincere before God, truth is operative beyond physical and temporal limitations. May I remind

the forgetful that in *Etzel Andergast* there is a song of the Jew which I wrote in my hour of blackest torment? I shall plead my case only by quoting it; it runs as follows:

I come from the world's first day and go on until time's at an end.
In the beginning, they say, was the word; what does that portend?
Blood and woe, scars and tears,
Trembling, begging, want and fears,
Fleeing, quaking, roving, pain,
From the Tigris West to Spain.

Who sings this pretty little song? Say, who?
The nice little Jew, the pert little Jew!
Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Co.
(Red rose of Jericho.)

In Worms and Vienna, Rome and Madrid I knew the flail and the dirk.
War, famine and pestilence, all were my handiwork;
So emperor, pope and tsar all stated,
So their councils asseverated.
Dogs and men, soldier and priest and knight
Through the bars of my prison-cell would spit their spite.
Tenfold payment, a hundred deaths and a thousand penalties,
And then to kiss the hangman's feet as I crouched there on my knees.

Who sings this pretty little song? Say, who?
The nice little Jew, pert little Jew!
Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Co.
(Bleeding rose of Jericho.)

King David was my ancestor—it really slipped my mind—
Blood royal through and through, and yet on how much filth I've dined!
But I pretend to low degree,
For that is the divine decree.
Be of good cheer—two thousand years: a drop in time's unmeasured sea,
And so much patience still is mine, enough for all eternity.
Rise proudly, son of Zion, as you may,
Your persecutors are of baser clay!

Who sings this pretty little song? Say, who?
The nice little Jew, pert little Jew!
Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Co.
(Holy rose of Jericho!)

And now, all this notwithstanding, I would again employ that most indirect method—which for me is the only one that has dignity and meaning—to show what I mean by transformation, to give a picture of that higher realm where souls attain their divinely fixed purpose, where dream and vision hold sway, and where imagination makes us subject to a law, our mute adherence to which alone can lead to a purification of life.

Indubitably the work of every outstanding author may be viewed as centring about one dominant idea. In my case, I believe, this dominant idea is that of justice. Of course, one cannot know to what extent the conscious cognizance of events, and demonstrable experience or inherent tendencies, have determined this attitude toward life and this spiritual aspiration.

To begin with, one must have a clear definition of justice. Evidently it represents a balanced state of soul, guilt being placed in one scale and expiation in the other; or the crime in one and the punishment in the other; or suffering in one and in the other relief of suffering. Moreover, the suffering or the guilt may be mine or my fellow man's, so that my interest in the amending of it may be direct or indirect; that would determine my view of the nature of the case, my judgment of it, and the pain caused by the lack of adjustment, to which one can never become reconciled. In any case, the question is one of the standard applied, and related to the inner constitution of the individual, his feeling for the world and for God, his confidence in the immanent order of things. I may say that here a question of light is involved; our life is blessed with light or condemned to darkness according to the conviction we acquire—empirically, from personal or extra-personal experience—concerning that spiritual quality which we call justice. From this no

human being can disengage himself. The standard of justice employed in any community, be it the State or the family or humanity as a whole, determines the sum total of the joy, inspiration, willingness, service and comfort, of all the happiness, in short, which that community is capable of producing.

None can deny that justice—not merely as an abstract idea, as the incarnation of deity, but as a moral command of supremely forceful urgency—constitutes the moral and legislative, political and religious fundament of Judaism. Can sixty generations delete this mark so deeply branded in the heart and soul of a people? I think not. And is it not logical to suppose that such a command, uttered in hoary antiquity—such an idea, operating in the dawn of history—grew out of a long memory of suffering, a tortured path of suffering? More than the result of past suffering, it represented a spiritual bulwark against the pre-sensed future agonies beyond which stood he who would deliver them from all wrong, the great equalizer who would bring them compensation: the Messiah.

Let us survey the last twenty centuries of Jewish history. Or we might consider only ten, the last ten; that would be enough. It is a path of sorrow and tears unparalleled since human deeds and suffering have been recorded. People forget this, erase it from their minds.

How else could they continue to live? The individual wants no share in the misdeeds of his contemporaries, nor posterity in those of its ancestors. Whether a hundred or a thousand or thrice a hundred thousand men perished at the stake or at the hands of murderers, instead of dying of old age in their beds, may possibly make no difference five centuries later, or even twenty years later. Some derive comfort from the consideration that mankind is beyond all cure and help. Yet every occurrence is preserved in the group and tribal memory, and constitutes the experiential nucleus of history and mythology.

To this constant confrontation with the past the Jews were more exposed than any other nation, for their entire spiritual life has always had its sphere in the region between law and legend. Now let us visualize these centuries of accumulated criminal fury, ruthless massacre, spiritual and bodily ravishment, malicious slander, systematic blood-baiting mitigated by no scruples whatsoever, fanatical persecution to the point of utter exhaustion of the victims, orgies of greed and cruelty under the cloak of religion, and with the ulterior motive of abolishing business competition: truly, only a dullard can live on without realizing that this Christian Europe is a shambles dripping with human blood. Of expiation and reparation, however, there is not and never was a

sign; the miserable alms granted in a brief period of humanization are too insignificant for consideration. The fathomless hatred has never ceased to smoulder; the Jew drew a deep breath whenever it did not actually scorch him. The means of persecution have become more defined. The indictments no longer cite well-poisoning and the crucifixion of the Saviour, but they go even farther: they undermine life itself, human and civil rights as such, and, when they carry the matter to its logical conclusion, extend the anathema to the very person of the Saviour. A sycophantic science serves to perpetuate the lies which even without it were ineradicable. They are brought forward in the exultation of military victory; they are brought forward when a war is lost. For someone must bear the guilt, and who can bear it better than the Jew?

The transgressions of individuals are interpreted as indicating the degeneration of the group: their anarchistic spirit, which harks back to their exclusion from the law; their consanguinity and solidarity, which are due to the social barbed wire that bars them off; their preponderant commercial and mercantile interests, which go back to the centuries of prohibitions and special measures that permitted them to act only as money-lenders and the bankers of princes; their intellectualism, which is the fruit of centuries of pressure, of their total spiritual

isolation among the nations, their sole salvation having lain in meditating upon the meaninglessness of life while facing death; their conspicuousness, their industry and shrewdness, and that radicalism, translated into action by their ancient fear and desperation, which runs the gamut from petty impudence and insubordination to the destruction of the existing order; their alleged physical cowardice, which, where it is not actual fear and trembling, branded into their hearts by the experience of centuries, represents nothing more nor less than an easily libelled expression of the fact that the Jew shuns violence; and, finally, their inability to become assimilated in a larger community—as if an opportunity for this had ever been offered them sincerely, without intent to humiliate, and without ignominious stipulations. (Even in Napoleon's negotiations with the French Sanhedrin the reluctant Emancipation Edict was inspired only by the lust of power and ill-concealed self-interest.) No exception is admitted here. In the case of every other people on the globe a few noble and outstanding individuals are taken as indicative of the merit and culture of the group; only in the case of the Jews are all judged by the basest. This would not let me rest, even if I were not a Jew; I know that I should not be able to rid myself of the sting, the reproach, the call of conscience, the feeling of a festering wound in the body

of the nation. But fate has made me a Jew—that is, a man who will dedicate all his powers, his blood and his soul, his present life and future life, to the attainment of a state of balance; so that it is not surprising that the idea of justice hangs over me like an empyreal flame.

One may not insist on one's own exception from the rule. To do so would rouse the opposition of the "mothers"; and declaration of membership in a community for which one is held accountable is a point of honour for so long as no reparation has been made for the wrong done to that group. Some men hold their own against the world by their spiritual power, others by their character; that is to say, by the wholeness of their being. The spirit, as defined and understood in the nineteenth century, has to-day been deposed from its throne. Now it can assert itself only as an agent for the development of individual character, with the tacit assumption that the individual is a link in the chain, a responsible and sustaining part of a whole.

Not that men's hearts are not sometimes stirred, have never grown contrite and capable of transfiguration. But the course of the world is in no wise changed, nor the hatred, the falsehood, the misunderstanding, the madness and the injustice. When, twelve years ago, I published *Mein Weg als Deutscher und Jude*, wherein I indicated—all too feebly, as I willingly admit—the

deleterious effects of this universal and historical disgrace on my own life, I received letters from every class of German society; women and girls, ex-officers and teachers, professors and public officials wrote that they had had no idea of all these things; that I had opened their eyes; and they gave their pledge—some, indeed, very solemnly—that in the future they would do their utmost to change the situation. Those were empty words. Everything has grown infinitely worse.

In New York, very often, when I walked through the streets of the Bronx, I saw such glaring masses of Jewish misery that the sight was hard to bear. This immense ghetto has a population of close upon half a million, of whom each year about a thousand become well-to-do, and perhaps a hundred achieve wealth; this minority provides the tinder for the furnace of Antisemitism, in which the millions are then consumed without more ado. The fire consumes them, whatever happens. If not actually, then in effigy, which in the eyes of God does not improve matters in the least. At the time of the First Crusade a single monk succeeded in bringing about the massacre or suicide of sixteen thousand Jews in the Rhenish provinces. Why can a single individual work so much evil, while one man alone can accomplish so little good? This is true in great things and in small alike; it destroys our courage. Evil is much more active by

nature; this may be the reason; indeed, most of what we call action stands on the border-line between good and evil. Perhaps that explains why the wisdom of Buddha is so profound and the Buddhist ideal the farthest removed from action.

But I am not an Indian; I am a European, full to the brim with my European destiny, moulded by the European spirit. What race and blood make of us is unfathomable, but the inner influence of climate, landscape, language and environment is demonstrable and palpable. Some might tell me to extricate myself from the vicious circle and to stand alone in the future, to declare myself an exception, and thus to become exceptional; then I might be able to free many others from the same compulsion to conflict—for often only the formula is needed for a definite shaping of one's life, the necessary forces being latent. . . . This is easily said: but to achieve it constitutes one of the most difficult of all tasks. What, in the final analysis, does the European spirit mean to the men of Europe? A fiction grown untenable. To-day one can hardly venture to think as a European; to write as a European is considered almost treason. Europe has surrendered herself. How can she sustain us?

Not very long ago there was a moment when I felt that I could shake off that mysterious attachment which is sometimes more heedful of appeals from without than

of the inner voice. Something in me resists any attempt to pin me down, to judge my work by the views it expresses; especially if the critics are my fellows, whose demeanour is often much more orthodox than that of the enemy. I thought I might rise above all this into a realm which I had conquered for my own, and for a moment I revelled in the dream that I would thus set an example and a precedent such as would be natural in a rational and decent world. It proved to be impossible. Injustice welds one to those who suffer wrong, and the hatred that darkens the world makes an inner obligation of the external appeal. On one occasion I wrote: "I feel that there is such a thing as justice, perhaps as a binding force in the crystalline absolute, but never in human deeds, which themselves become motor impulses. That crystalline element stands high above us; words can but grope for it awkwardly; seek to grasp it, and it becomes error and falsehood; and if you would express it you must grow as still as a lake of the plains that mirrors the heavens."

Does not this say everything?

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