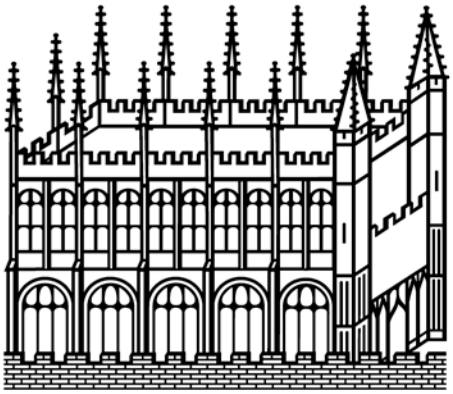

THE TARN & THE LAKE

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THOUGHTS ON LIFE IN THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE

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TO
THE MEMORY OF
MY BROTHER FRANK
MARCH 5, 1871—JAN. 26, 1890

PREFACE

ORIGINALLY designed as an Introduction to a few studies of Italian painting and sculpture, this essay has overrun its intended bounds. At the outset it proved impossible to recall the pleasant waters of youth, without recalling also the much-enduring affections and friendships so lightly accepted then; and the sad story of the inhabitants of the Lake would not tell itself without the trivial angling incidents whereby acquaintance with their habits was slowly and painfully gained.

Indeed it has often seemed to me curious that the experience of anglers has been so little utilized by scientific inquirers. *Salmo fario* may, for the ichthyologist, be no more than a single species with perhaps a few local variants. To the trout fisherman, however, he is no mere trout, one and indivisible,

> ἀλλ' ἐστὶ πολλῶν ὀνομάτων ἐπώνυμος.
> ἔστιν μὲν Ἄιδης, ἔστι δ' ἄφθιτος βίος,
> ἔστιν δὲ λύσσα μανιὰς, ἔστι δ' ἵμερος
> ἄκραντος, ἔστ' οἰμωγμός.

Which signifies, as Brother John would interpret it, that the trout is no single, common, identical, definite, determined and measurable fish, but rather ten thousand tantalizing, distinct and different devils.

To those who angle not, the angler is a miracle of misapplied patience; a watcher of floats, a wielder of feathers, who wastes time and money and temper incalculable in hunting, usually without success, what the local fishmonger can always supply for a shilling or two. The angler's mind is bent on no such material problems. He is asking himself, "What are the fish doing to-day?" To him that under-water world is no vulgar provision tank—which could after all be unloaded far more effectually by a net or a dynamite cartridge than by the rods of a hundred experts—but the abode of a community of intelligent, if edible, beings. After a time he knows that sound logic underlies their apparent caprice, and that the trout of different rivers are as various in their diet, their habits, their character and their appearance as are the races of mankind.

The angler visiting a new water is like a restaurant proprietor landing in a new country. Until he has made himself fairly well acquainted with the manners and customs of the place, he will find but few clients. He must consider the available food-supply from natural sources, and utilize it as his craft allows. He must consider how the appetite of the community is affected by the climate, the prevalent winds, and the

chances of drought or floods ; how its physical strength and the size of its members is influenced by the kind and quality of that food, by their fertility or sterility, by the presence or absence of predatory birds or fish, and select his tackle and his lures in accordance with the conclusions he draws. And then his thoughts may naturally lead him, if his experience covers more that one class of water, to ask himself why the trout in one water are many and small, in another few and large ; why some are light and some dark ; why some are slender, others short and thick ; some brilliantly spotted, others dull brown and grey ; why some grow fast and others slow ; why some fight like tigers and others are fat and scant of breath ?

It is unlikely that he will find answers to all these questions, though some of them after a time will appear simple enough. But those answers which experience seems to prove correct, will in every case have their root in our common human experience. Trout become stout and short-winded from the same causes that make men so. Give them proper exercise or a more stimulating diet—their natural strength and activity will return, even though the stimulus be artificial. Place them in some strong mountain water where flies and their larvæ are few, and their breeding grounds extensive ; they will become numerous and small. Place them in a pool where food is plentiful, but where there are no shallows for breeding ; they will

grow large and remain few. Leave them undisturbed and they will grow unsuspecting; fish for them and their native wits will expand to challenge yours. In virtue of this instinctive response to outward conditions the trout becomes to the angler no unworthy antagonist. He is a being of like intelligence and appetites, so that the opponents meet on equal terms. The successful angler is the man who most fully recognizes this parity, and can act upon it.

So much then for the analogy I have been tempted to draw between certain communities of fish and certain societies of men. To carry the argument to its logical conclusion it was necessary to pass from the Renaissance to our own day, although now that the deduction is made I view the unexpected result with some disquiet; and, being naturally inclined to repose and security, wish that salvation for the soul could be found in some other way than through their troublesome opposites.

C. J. H.

June 1913

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I

THE TARN

AMONG the hills, not far as modern journeys go from the dark country of my boyhood, there lies a lake. I well remember the first sight of it, as we alighted by the little wharf and looked out over the glimmering surface to the great fell that swept down beyond, nine hundred feet through the fir woods. In point of mere size that fell would be hardly even a molehill compared with the world's real mountains, but in his own district he reigns supreme—a huge *genius loci* whose solemn shadow never fails to exact its due of pleasurable awe when the place is seen again. Then peering down through the five or six feet of clear water—it seemed clearer then than now—we were suddenly aware of movement, and a lordly perch, hardly to be distinguished from the pebbles save by the bars on his back, sailed majestically along the roots of the piles in search, no doubt, of some careless minnow. To unpack rods and make a hasty attempt at capture was the first impulse; but the luggage had been stowed

away, the carriage was waiting, and appeal to our seniors was out of the question. We were swept off, full of excitement and anticipation, only to meet with other novel and distracting pleasures—a garden rich in green gooseberries, the largest ever seen; a cherry-tree no less ample and inviting; a manure heap full of such brandlings as transmuted the even then distasteful labour of digging for worms into an exhilarating, almost a refined, pursuit; bluff, kindly Willy P——, with his dogs and guns; a beck with trout which might sometimes be caught, if only you could keep out of sight; and, high above all both in wonder and in altitude, the Tarn.

The Lake was soon discovered to be but a place of boating parties and picnics. But when once you had scrambled up the path through the woods, taking toll of the wild raspberries by the way; passed through the straggling upland pastures, hugging the loose-knit walls when the shaggy cattle seemed suspiciously like bulls; you emerged upon wild steeps of heather and deep bracken, clogging thorns and juniper bushes, to which the spice of adventure was given by the legend that the place swarmed with vipers. Then, at last, when apprehension in little hearts had long been replaced by aching in little legs, came an escarpment of grey rock, and beyond it a level sheet of blue water stretching far to the unknown horizon.

On the ordnance map the Tarn shows but a small

ragged spot, yet when revisited, even on the verge of sober middle age, it still conveys the same impression of vastness which charmed our childhood. Nor was the illusion ever dispelled by making a circuit of the water. The heather there grows deep and thick; the ground is wrinkled everywhere with unseen crevasses, full either of black bog or sharp unkindly stones; while the long arms of the tarn, running up into the land, make the journey seem interminable.

Besides the enchantment of air and light and space, the mystery of remoteness, there was also an exhilarating sense of freedom. Nothing was there but the blue water eternally lapping on the rocks; the walls of the boathouse—dilapidated even then, and swept away long since by some winter storm; the low, rocky, heather-clad hills all round; with one dark clump of firs, now like the boathouse a thing of the past, shadowing a calmer bay to the west floored with bright water-lilies.

But the fishing, the ostensible object of these visits, was a disheartening failure. We had already served an apprenticeship among the ill-stocked waters of an industrial district; we had an ample supply of perfect worms, scoured and made doubly attractive by the fresh white moss of the fells, yet the total result of our joint efforts for a week was one sudden solitary bite, followed by the sight of a half-pound perch swinging high in air, a solid thump as he landed on the grass, and a

proud breakfast at which he was served to us with due pomp.

This unwilling leisure was not without its diversions. One angler, by slipping in bodily from a steep rock on to which he had clambered, discovered that these crystalline waters were not too cold for bathing. Clothes spread out in the sun and wind dried just enough to pass muster; and so unkind Fortune was flouted with some success till a surprise visit to the fishermen from the ladies of the house caught them—*flagrante delicto.*

Still more surprising was the result of the cautionary lecture which followed—the loan of the key of the boathouse. From that ramshackle boat, with a still more ramshackle gutta-percha minnow, was hooked a something which, after flashing awhile under the keel in silvery zigzags, was hoisted over the gunwale, and was recognized with joy as a pike. He was an ill-conditioned little weakling, hardly larger than the perch, but these two captures were the sum total of our boyish sport in the Tarn.

A good many years went by. Then one quiet Sunday afternoon the fell was climbed once more; the familiar rampart of grey rock was seen and surmounted, and—there was no disenchantment. The charm of the place was as strong as ever. The low hills all round; the pleasant sun and wind; the blue

lapping water; and the sense of great spaciousness—all were unchanged. Only the boat and boathouse had vanished, and were lying in fragments five or six feet below the rippling surface. The potent fascination of the spot infected my companion, and the desire to penetrate the secret of this deep secluded sheet of water held us both enthralled.

Over the doleful result of our ill-starred enthusiasm it is well to pass quickly. The boat being gone, we should have to fish from the bank. Minnows were the obvious bait, but in the prevalent bright weather they could never be brought alive three miles uphill from the lake. Another tarn, some two miles away along the fells, was the one alternative source of supply. There accordingly we spent a hot, laborious morning among the firwoods, catching our baits singly with rod and line, for want of a minnow-net; and housing them in a jam-jar, since shyness forbade the borrowing of a bait can.

Then began a memorable cross-country journey. Outside the narrow belt of firs, instead of easy open moor, a wilderness of close-set thorns and juniper bushes was discovered, grown breast high, either over deep clinging heather — made doubly discomforting by memories of the viper legend—or over black oozy morass, filled with clouds of blinding, stinging flies.

Foot by foot, in the stifling midday heat, rods and nets and the precious jam-jar, borne turn by turn, had

to be hastily forced through this tangle ; the minnows proving by their frantic jumps that they would soon die for want of fresh water. Their bearers, too, felt half-dead with stings, prickles, heat and weariness when at last the glitter of the Tarn was seen far off, the bushes thinned and a rush was made to the edge. Then came the final catastrophe. The jar upset, the minnows were spilled, and one—only one—was recovered by a despairing grab. With a care that amounted almost to reverence this solitary survivor was launched into the place which seemed most likely to harbour a monster—the bay with the water-lilies, just where the broad leaves edged the deeps. In less than a minute the line moved off with the familiar glide: a cautious strike, befitting the fine tackle, found the fish no giant, and he was soon in the net ; a long lean jack, less than two pounds in weight. The experience of the day was conclusive ; and we fished the Tarn no more.

Even if all the baits so miserably lost had been available, it may be doubted if we should have caught any notable fish. Though the Tarn contains plenty of pike, four pounds is the greatest weight remembered by its most consistent observer. There are large eels too, he informs me, presumably in the deeps, but I am stubbornly sceptical as to the numbers of the perch—at least in the days when we fished there. Never in that clear water, either from the boat or from the bank,

did we see a single perch on all the extent of smooth, green, grassy bottom which would be their natural feeding ground. Indeed, were it not for the single specimen secured by my brother, their very existence would have been open to question. Why these things should be so I did not then consider.

II

THE LAKE

THE Lake, too, was not devoid of charm. Though the general aspect of its shores was gentle and luxuriant, the effect of the great fell descending into the water at one end was impressive; there was a fine glimpse of tumbled mountains at the other; and there was one reedy bay in particular where a huge abrupt rock served as a reminder of the forces which ages ago had carved out this placid valley. The water, being a place of popular resort, was constantly fished both by residents and visitors. During the Mayfly season it yielded good baskets of trout, but in the summer its staple products were perch and pike. For two hungry undergraduates in lodgings, unable to vary a diet of eternal cold mutton, these and similar products of the chase rapidly assumed a very practical importance; especially since it was found exceedingly difficult at first to catch a supply for the table. A light handy boat, and minnows in any quantity were available, but the weather being dry and bright, the Lake was low and glassy clear. Even the local boatmen confessed to small takes, and we, as was natural, at first caught nothing at all.

But the stillness of the surface frequently enabled us to see that perch were there in plenty; although, in strange contrast to their traditional greed, they moved off quickly when our baits were dangled before their eyes. After a single brief experiment we discarded ordinary perch tackle, and fished with trout casts; yet even then we were only able to deceive an occasional small fish. In those transparent depths the fine gut we were using glittered like silver wire. A chance experiment with a scrap of cobbler's wax proved that a clear pale trout cast might be transmuted quite easily into a stiff brown strand, dark and ugly to the human eye, but possibly less visible to a fish. The trial was made by C—— and, on returning from a dismal day on a neighbouring river of some repute, I found him the proud possessor of six good perch. Thenceforth our sole task was to avoid the small fish and find the large ones.

Making use of every moment of calm weather we methodically explored the bottom of the Lake: one lying down over the bows of the boat while the other sculled softly in obedience to the watcher's directions. The contours of the underwater world for a mile or two soon became familiar. Here were great tumbled rocks fatal to leads and hooks; there were treacherous growths of long green weed: here a shallow unexpectedly ran out for a hundred yards or more; there one floated suddenly over a black chasm branching

from the great central abyss. The trout which rose occasionally along the stony beaches were left, after a few trial casts, to more experienced fishermen. Our concern was with an easier if less delicate prey—the perch and the pike.

Of the two, the perch, as the more consistent in appetite and considerable in number, had the first place in our affections. On their favourite feeding grounds the bottom was covered with a carpet of short green weed, as smooth and trim as the lawns in a well-kept garden. Where this sward was unbroken, and the depth no more than six or seven feet, the perch usually ran small; but where boulders lay strewn about below, and the grassy carpet sloped gradually into the twilight of some twelve feet or more of water, the chance of good fish increased. And where to these favourable conditions was added the proximity of a reedy bay we had perfection—for there a pike might be looked for at any moment.

We caught no very large perch—the best might weigh three-quarters of a pound—but half-pounders were fairly numerous, and our table was usually well supplied with them, after the knack of locating the shoals was once acquired. The pike were by comparison creatures of mood and caprice, but when once hooked on our light tackle they gave splendid sport; though fish of two or three pounds seemed to be the average, and if we hooked anything larger we lost it. These well-

fed youngsters, which the regular pike fisherman would have hauled out headlong with his stout gimp, fought like tigers : diving under our keel, fouling our anchor line, and providing a thousand excitements before they were secured and knocked on the head. They were excellent eating, too, and cold pike became for our simple household a staple side dish of which the memory still is pleasant.

Twice in the next few years the place was revisited, and the conditions of the fishing seemed unchanged, though little time was given to the pike and still less to the perch. Now the aim was to catch great trout by trolling with baits of home design and manufacture. While discussing the trout question with the old boatman, who had known the Lake and fished it for more than half-a-century, I heard that proposals were on foot for improving the trout-fishing by netting the pike. In the Mayfly season baskets of ten or even twelve pounds weight of trout were not uncommon; if only the pike were netted the trout season would be much longer and the catches much larger. Not without some regrets for my old friends the pike, I determined to take my annual holiday at the end of May in some future year, and share in the good time that was in store for trout fishers.

Several years elapsed before this intention could be carried out, but at last I was by the Lake again. The boats and the old boatman were still there, but the

boats looked shabbier and the boatman had aged with them. There seemed to be little or no business doing, and in the course of conversation the following facts emerged.

The reedy bays had been raided by the Fishery Conservators with so much thoroughness that the pike had been practically exterminated. Well, had not the trout-fishing improved? Yes. If the weather was mild at the very beginning of the season there might be some good takes; but as soon as the little perch moved from the deep water to the shallows, they hustled the trout, the trout retired to the deeps, and the fishing was over for the year. The perch, then, had benefited by the change? No. They had become innumerable, but were so small as not to be worth catching, even by casual tourists. Nobody, in fact, was doing any fishing at all.

I took a boat to test the matter for myself. On the old fishing grounds it was impossible to avoid catching perch, but they were all of the same size, not one exceeding four ounces in weight. I tried at all depths, and in all manner of places—everywhere these useless, irritating dwarfs rushed blindly at the bait. When I had caught between forty and fifty it became clear that Old K—— had said no more than the truth, and that the perch-fishing, which in the past had been a steady source of revenue to him and of pleasure to hundreds of visitors, had ceased to exist. The pike were evidently

gone, or the perch, their ordinary food, would not have swarmed, as I could see them swarming, in the shallow reedy bays. The trout, too, it was said, had deserted the shores, and through one long morning I had certainly seen no sign of a rise. The deeper water still might be explored. If that failed, there was other fishing in the neighbourhood to which a visitor could resort.

Having brought no spinning tackle with me, I had to turn to old K—— for help, but all that he could produce from his sadly dilapidated stores was a single "Thames" flight, too large to spin a minnow. So frail and frayed was the gut that it would have been fatal to test it except very gently. It would anyhow make but little show in the water, and in a day of blazing sunshine that was something to the good. Running the boat ashore on a well-remembered shoal, I trespassed, as of old, in a meadow; and, as of old, in five hasty minutes flicked out a couple of little brook trout. Bending one of them lovingly in a curve that gave an enticing spin, I let out some thirty yards of line and set myself to follow the shelving shore, keeping so far as possible to a depth of at least eighteen or twenty feet, well beyond the limit of the feeding-ground of the perch. For more than an hour nothing happened, though all the likely places were carefully tried: then there was a sudden stoppage. The evident weakness of my tackle had suggested the use of a twelve-foot fly rod, so the shock passed safely.

Reeling in, I gradually pulled from quite deep water the largest pike I have ever seen alive. He allowed himself to be drawn right up to the boat, supine, unresisting: and I had already got the net into the water ready for him (how was a twelve-inch net to hold three feet of fish ?) when he took alarm and made a violent plunge vertically under the boat. Down and down he went, the rod bending almost double, the line screaming from the reel, till at last the pace became too much for that unlucky trace,—the strain suddenly ceased and the fish was gone. Fired by this misfortune I spent several more days on the water, but not one single run rewarded either my own efforts or those of a hotel acquaintance who, having given up fishing in despair of sport, resumed it in my company. It was evident that the large pike I had lost was a solitary cruiser, which, having escaped the nets in the shallows, was living on the trout in the deep water—an exception which proved the truth of the boatman's statement that the fishing in the Lake was ruined, and that the place was no longer worth a visit.

The trivial experiences I have ventured to chronicle were fading into vague memories when they were unexpectedly and vividly recalled to mind in connection with a very different matter.

III

THE PREDATORY FORCES

No one, I think, can have studied the history of the Renaissance in Italy without noticing how its splendours and its gaieties are incessantly marred or extinguished by the shadow of death. Death in this world, and worse than death in the next for those whom he does not love, are the motive and the burden of Dante's song: Boccaccio's gay company jest in a moment of respite from the plague of 1348; two centuries later in the "Lives" of Vasari and the Autobiography of Cellini, we meet the same tragic refrain. Not only was every man's life continually at the mercy of private animosity or avarice; but the tumults of faction against faction, the feuds of city against city, the wars of princes and states and nations exacted a constant toll. The political history of the time is one long record of marching and counter-marching, of sieges, battles and expeditions, in which the great *Condottieri* won power and immortality at the expense of the non-militant Italians. Add to this the ravages of disease, not only of the recurring periods of pestilence, but the fevers and the like which the habits of the time would aggra-

vate, but which the available medical knowledge was powerless to avert or cure, and it will seem still more wonderful that one of the greatest of the harvests of human genius should have been reaped from this stricken field. Moreover, when these various depredations upon human life are modified with time and circumstance, and Italy sinks into repose for the century which preceded the French Revolution, there is a notable falling off in Italian painting, sculpture and literature. Some of the native talent, no doubt, had been diverted to music, and Tiepolo, for his own age, was perhaps as important a master as any of his predecessors had been for theirs; but the epoch of truly creative energy was gone with the uncertainty of life which accompanied it.

I cannot help feeling that there is a certain analogy between Italy, when she seemed to be at the mercy of these predatory forces, and the Lake of which I have spoken. It must not be forgotten that for the most part, those forces preyed upon the less able and agile members of the community, as the prey of the pike was usually the slow-moving perch rather than the swift, watchful trout; indeed, the perch were so generally recognized as the staple food of the pike that a small perch, all over the district, is the recognized trolling bait for them.

Before the pike were netted, the nobler fish no doubt came to an untimely end now and then; but

after the pike were gone, the conditions of a trout's existence, if less precarious than before, were in other respects less favourable. Once the trout had reasonable access to their feeding grounds; now they found them occupied by illimitable shoals of small, prickly, hungry fish, quite useless to them as food, feeding greedily on the young trout, and impossible to drive away. Had they thoughts, and trout have long memories, they must often have sighed for the good old days and the pike.

And if this was the condition of the patricians of the Lake, the plebeians were in no better case. They had immensely increased in numbers, but were become a puny breed, *fruges consumere nati*, good for nothing but to eat up the whole under-water food supply of the Lake and prevent their betters from getting it. Once their community had its great personages; now each was as small and useless as his fellow.

IV

THE SUPPORT OF WEALTH

BUT, the reader may ask, if the removal of the predatory fish was so disastrous to the communities of the Lake, how is it that in the Tarn, where the pike remain in undiminished numbers, the fishing is no better? The answer, I think, must be that it is a question of food supply. The Tarn lies some five hundred feet higher than the Lake: it has thus a shorter, colder summer, and a far more severe winter. The Lake is fed by two or three good-sized streams, and by a number of smaller becks and rills which harbour minnows and other fish food; while its warmer waters encourage all manner of larvae and minute crustaceans. Larvae, too, there must be in the Tarn, for the flies around it can be a veritable plague, but there are no feeding streams to give minnows safe cover, and the little beck that runs from it makes too steep a descent to give trout access to the place. The Tarn depends on springs for its water supply, a marsh provides tadpoles, and, in their season, presumably frogs. There are also water shrimps. The pike and the perch are thus largely dependent upon their own

and each other's younger relations for their meal. Of the two, the pike seem to have the advantage in the matter of breeding grounds, so their numbers make the food question even more acute than it would otherwise be. No wonder that they remain small and lean!

If, then, the Lake suggests some analogy with a fertile country, the Tarn will suggest a comparison with a rocky and mountainous district; beautiful perhaps as most mountain districts are; peopled with a spare and hungry race, robbers and raiders if you will, trained to fighting and inured to hardships; but very rarely producing conspicuous or generous talent, unless transferred to some more kindly soil. As in history these ruder races have often laid the foundations of empire by conquering the softer folk of the plains, so these little mountain fish grow and expand when removed to waters where the conditions of life are easier.

There is a small lake in South Wales, deep and remote, which contains no fish, except possibly minnows. The owner's son, when a boy, was fishing in a neighbouring pool swarming with small perch. Having caught forty of these he transferred them to the empty water. Eight years afterwards, wishing to see what had happened he drove over to the lake with a supply of minnows. After a while he struck a shoal of fish and took thirty-nine perch, all of the same size, just under two pounds in weight. Fired by this pheno-

menal catch he visited the place again and again, but was never rewarded by a single bite. Apparently something in the conditions of the water had prevented the perch from breeding, and the original fish, having the whole food supply of the place to themselves, had increased enormously in size.

When estimating the conditions in which genius has most frequently been found, we attach immense importance to Race. And we do so quite rightly, for nowhere does national temper show itself more clearly than in the Arts. But the condition of material prosperity—corresponding to the food-supply of the fish—is not always given sufficient prominence. As there are ponds and lakes where an ample food supply goes to fatten some dull and lumpish breed of fish, so there may have been periods when wealth has been associated with vulgarity, when patronage has been misdirected and treasure lavished on empty display. But no poverty-stricken age or country has produced any considerable group of artists or men of letters. Even in the Spain of Velasquez and Cervantes and Calderon, though the mass of the people was miserably poor, the Court and the Church had still the tradition, and some of the fruits, of the conquests of Cortes and Pizarro.

And there was immense wealth in the Italy of the Renaissance. To Rome there flowed an annual tribute from almost the whole civilized world. Florence was the seat of those great financiers, the Medici. Venice,

Genoa, Pisa were among the chief trading centres of Europe. And all this wealth, being in the hands of comparatively few families and corporations, each competing in splendour with its neighbours, was available to reward those who by their talents could enhance the power or the reputation of its possessors. The common folk might lead a hard life, but the exceptional man had every stimulus which his ambition could need. The materials and the rewards for the artist were, in fact, as plentiful in Italy as ever they were in despotic Egypt, Assyria, Persia or China, or in democratic Athens, enriched by the payments of allies and tributaries, and supported by slave labour.

In modern states wealth is usually more widely distributed, and held to carry larger social responsibilities, so that, in Europe at least, the active patronage of the arts has, to its manifold disadvantage, passed from the hands of individuals, and become official. In America, however, immense fortunes are still owned by individuals, and spent in accordance with their personal tastes. Up to the present, as was perhaps natural in a new country, this expenditure has commonly taken the form of collecting works of ancient art from the old world, to serve as standards and examples for native talent in days to come; also a certain amount of valuable critical work has been done in connection with these imports. The national bent towards commerce with the men, and towards amusement with the women,

has proved, on the whole, no favourable soil for literature: but the rapid expansion of the country's wealth and trade, and the concurrent demands of a public education worthy of the nation's place in the world, have given a very practical stimulus to architecture. In forms of art less definitely bound up with her national requirements, America may at present be rarely more than clever and ingenious, but in the designing of buildings for commercial, official and educational purposes, especially, perhaps, in museums and public libraries, she has not only managed to avoid the besetting faults of similar structures in Europe, but has displayed real creative genius.

V

THE VANTAGE GROUND OF RACE

A CONSIDERABLE section, then, of any people must really need art before it can come into being except as a sporadic product. America has begun with architecture; possibly decorative painting and sculpture will follow in due course. But how are we to account for the condition of Germany? In Germany also there is wealth, and with it a far more general enthusiasm for culture in all its forms. Yet the results, so far as the Fine Arts are concerned, are in no wise commensurate with this enthusiasm.

In a work which has justly attained considerable reputation, Mr. Houston Stewart Chamberlain has drawn attention to the capacities and achievements of the Teutonic race; and so far as these relate to speculative thought, to detailed research, to poetry, and, above all, to music, his high estimates are fully justified. The long-continued enthusiasm of the Teuton for the Fine Arts has been far more sparingly rewarded. If in Dürer's amazing manipulative power we recognise the supreme development of that patient accuracy of hand and eye which many of the German

craftsmen of the time possessed, the intense imaginative insight which accompanies it may well be derived from his Hungarian ancestry; for no parallel to it appears in other Teutonic work. Thus of genuinely German art Holbein is perhaps the greatest manifestation, and the gap which separates Holbein from Rethel and Menzel, the most considerable figures in German art of modern times, is filled with names that survive only as synonyms for misdirected effort.

The pure Teutonic race, then, seems to inherit with its many abilities a certain disability towards the Fine Arts. But this disability vanishes when it forms an alliance with other races. Teutonic blood is claimed for the northern invaders of Greece, with whose coming the Mediterranean civilizations take on a new lease of life and produce in due course the unrivalled art of Hellas. In more recent times the part it has played in the development of the nations of North-Western Europe—nations by no means lacking in artistic power—hardly needs demonstration.

When Italy was finally occupied by her northern invaders the inhabitants of the Peninsular had long ceased to be a pure race. The extension of the Roman franchise, and the needs and reputation of the mother country, had led to a steady influx to Rome of natives from all parts of the Empire, and these in the course of four or five centuries had almost overwhelmed the old Italian Stock. Greece, Asia and Africa were all

represented in the mixed race which the Goths ultimately subdued, and this race retained some of the traditions of the arts and crafts which had flourished around the Mediterranean from time immemorial. To the clever fingers, the hereditary ingenuity, of these so-called Latins, the Teutonic alliance brought a new seriousness, persistence and idealism. Centuries, indeed, had to elapse before the fusion was complete enough to produce definite results: but when the hour and the opportunity came the art of the Renaissance was born.

The resemblance of the people in the Italian Quattrocento paintings to the men of our own time and country, and their unlikeness to the modern Italian, is often a subject for popular comment. When we consider the origin of the Renaissance Italians, the frequent occurrence of fair hair and blue eyes among them ceases to be a marvel. These blonde persons, usually it would seem of the upper classes, represent the survival of the Teutonic stock—a survival which, unluckily for the country, did not last long. The internecine warfare in which some part of the country was always involved, called for the services of the stoutest and bravest men available. These naturally came in a large measure from those with Gothic blood in their veins. Civic life, too, had begun to play an all-important part in Italy; and it is, I believe, a recognised physiological fact that fair-haired peoples die out when confined to towns,

whereas dark-haired peoples stand confinement well. The golden age of the Italian Renaissance is thus the moment when the Teutonic element had fused with the other inhabitants of the country, but had not yet succumbed to the forces which wrought its decay.

It would be unjust to assume that the other elements in the people of Renaissance Italy had no good qualities other than the power of surviving in conditions fatal to the Teutonic stock. Africa, for example, in the days of Imperial Rome, had had her famous men: Apuleius, Augustine and Origen are names which readily come to mind. A curious instance of this non-Latin element was recently brought to my notice in the shape of a death-mask of Dante Gabriel Rossetti. I had been often struck by something which I could only vaguely set down as Oriental in the face of his sister Christina. In the presence of the death-mask all hesitation vanished: the remote ancestry of these great children of Modern Italy was beyond all doubt North African. It is only perhaps from such an intricate racial compound that the extraordinary diversity of genius which the Renaissance exhibits could have proceeded; and in virtue of that diversity the art and literature of this enchanted age in Italy has continued for some four hundred years to unfold new delights for each succeeding generation of men all over the civilised world.

VI

THE SPUR OF ADVENTURE

Our friends the fish had no place in the last few paragraphs, because hybrids among them, if not absolutely unknown, are at least so uncommon as to make any analogy with man quite impossible. But we have still to consider whether the predatory fish exercise any influence over their neighbours, other than that of increasing their food supply and their feeding grounds by decreasing their number.

It was my good fortune once to light upon certain trout in a state, not quite of innocence, but of apparent security. A sluggish current moving under boughs that met almost everywhere not far above the water, rendered some two hundred yards of one little stream unapproachable to ordinary fly-fishing. Stealthy experiment proved that in certain places, not by any means in all, it was possible to crouch by the clear water, even with bright sunshine overhead, and watch unseen every movement of the fish. Also that a rod could be manœuvred through the bushes here and there, and a fly with two or three feet of line lowered gently on to the surface.

For the first two days almost any small floating fly, so long as there was no suspicious "drag" from the current, attracted the fish; but the tiny hooks, the difficulty of striking slowly enough with so short a line, complicated by countless entanglements among the boughs, prevented more than ten per cent. of the rises resulting in capture. Two of the larger fish, each over a pound in weight, alone showed suspicion from the first; and with the exception of one momentary but not, alas! fatal aberration, avoided every kind of artificial lure. After the third day the angler began to master the secret of striking, and could generally make sure of one in each five or six rises. But the fish, pricked, alarmed or disappointed, were beginning to realize their danger. It was no longer a case of using any small fly. Pattern after pattern came to be recognized as fraudulent; until at last there was only one single frayed black midge with a faded brown body, which was evidently indistinguishable from some real living delicacy. So woefully suspicious had the fish become that, time after time, the angler saw natural flies, fallen and struggling upon the water, examined all round by the cautious fish, and then regretfully rejected as impostures.

One disastrous day the precious black midge got caught in a clump of sorrel, was twitched off, and could not be found again. A letter to a friend in London brought half a dozen more, while for two days

the trout had a rest. Yet the brand new midges, far from attracting the trout, drove them away in terror (a single hasty glance was enough), just as if they had been any of the other flies which the fish had learned to know and to dread. Hours of experiment were needed before the new purchases could be trimmed to pass muster at all, and even then they could be used with success only when other circumstances, such as the light, the place, and the current, were entirely favourable.

It would seem then that trout, when past the stage of infancy, learn very quickly where to look for danger. These fish found out in two days that there was something wrong with the flies on which they were accustomed to feed; in a few days more they had learned to reject all imitations except the little midge, and to suspect even living struggling insects. When that artificial midge was lost, they were able to see that the copies of it, made of the same size and the same materials by the same maker, were frauds—and all this in the space of some three or four weeks. It is not then unreasonable to suppose that these same powers of watchfulness and observation would be still more highly developed in trout brought up from babyhood in company with predatory fish like the pike of the Lake.

And if this be so, I cannot help feeling that the perch who survive in such dangerous society, if sur-

viving in part by accident, survive also in virtue of wits and sinews quickened by hourly contact with peril. Our first experience of the Lake proved that the larger perch were no simpletons: they could be circumvented only by the very finest tackle. Perhaps we should have caught more perch in the Tarn had we taken the same precautions. But the little perch who occupied the Lake after the pike were netted had had no such strenuous education—had developed no such acute intelligence. They rushed on their doom so blindly that catching them was tedious.

We know that the perceptions of fish are acutely stimulated by experience of peril from man; we may fairly assume that they are stimulated no less acutely by peril from their fellows. Is it conceivable that the infinitely more sensitive and capacious intellect of man in similar circumstances can remain unaffected? Is not our confidence, such as it now is, in the destiny of Great Britain, based, in a large measure, on the memory that in the past we have, time after time, been just so much stimulated by our difficulties as to overcome them? Habitually careless of precaution, we settle down in indolence the moment a danger is past; and the next emergency finds us, as usual, unprepared. Our wars open with failure, and we seem on the brink of catastrophe. But under the lash of adversity, the lesson of the failure is learned: our latent energy and practical sense are stirred into activity, and our fortune

has, so far, been retrieved. *Merses profundo, pulchrior evenit.*

Upon the more generous and receptive spirits of the Italian Renaissance, the prevalent mutations of life and fortune had a similar effect. Had Dante lived in Florence, at ease and undisturbed, we might indeed have inherited from him other exquisite essays in the manner of the *Vita Nuova:* but had he not tasted the bitterness of defeat and exile he could have given us no *Commedia.* If Raphael seems to move serenely for his few brief years among prelates and princes; if Angelico and others live and work in safety behind their convent walls, as the Venetian masters did behind the then impassable rampart of the Lagoons, these are fortunate exceptions to the general rule. Almost all the painters of whom Vasari speaks are tossed this way and that by political upheavals, even where they are not forced to take part in them. So we find Pisanello described in one of the few known documents which mention him as *rebello;* Botticelli has to fly before the persecution of the *Piagnoni;* Leonardo goes on campaign as military engineer to Cæsar Borgia; Michelangelo works on the Medicean tombs in intervals of service on the bastions of San Miniato against the Imperialists. Even the reader of Cellini is compelled to recognize that, if one-half the man's troubles were due to his quarrelsome self, the other half may fairly be ascribed to the violence and disorder all about him.

Living, as these men did, among the drums and tramplings of incessant conflict, the sudden onslaughts of uncomprehended disease, or strange episodes like that of Savonarola, was it not natural that, though their labours might often be cut short, their sense of the contrast of life and death, of pleasure and sorrow, of good and evil fortune, was immeasurably quickened? And though there was endless tumult and change, there was no such universal desolation as that which followed in the track of the Thirty Years' War in Germany; no such wholesale destruction of noble or princely persons as that which occurred during the Wars of the Roses in England. The *Condottieri*, who did most of the Italian fighting, fought with an eye to business, and therefore with a certain discretion. Next year they might be hired by the opposite side. The sack of Rome by the Imperialists was regarded at the time as a supreme atrocity; but the treatment of the place and its people was merciful compared with that of Magdeburg after its capture by Tilly. If the ruling family in any town was overthrown, exiled, or murdered, another family was always at hand to take over the vacant palaces and patronage.

To the stimulus of heightened perception must be added the stimulus of variety. The essence of creation is the production of something new. The creative artist is the man whose work, in addition to its other qualities, surprises us by its novelty, by containing

something which we did not expect. We recognize the value of this element of novelty in the distinction we draw between the artists who are varied in accomplishment, and those who always harp on the same theme in the same way. We assign, quite rightly, a lower rank to the man of one idea, to the writer of a number of books in precisely the same vein, to the painter who turns out year after year precisely the same kind of picture; while the poet who, like Shakespeare, seems to embrace all humanity, who is equally at home with the prince and the clown, equally felicitous when at play or in dreadful earnest, equally musical in solemn tragedy or airy lyric; the sculptor who, like Donatello or Michelangelo, touches in turn all sides of his art, is necessarily placed among the great ones of the earth.

This variety, so pleasurable to the cultivated audience, is but the echo of a corresponding variety in the artist's mind: and in many forms of art is more or less directly affected by his environment. If he lives a peaceful life in the same place, surrounded by the same scenes and the same people, he may, if his genius be great, acquire with time a more intense insight into the things about him, as Wordsworth did; but he will have to depend upon himself for diversity of sensation. A man of letters may get this diversity from books; an artist by collecting works of art. Yet the stimulus of such things will for most men be faint compared with the stimulus once derived from life itself—from such a

life as the variegated, richly coloured life of the Renaissance, with its passions, tragedies and pleasures, its pageants and its perils, its sharp transitions, its grief, its glory. Even the custom of journeying from city to city in search of employment, journeys not unattended with incident or danger, must in itself have been a constant spur to laggard inspiration.

In Cellini, perhaps, we see the other side of the picture; the record of work interrupted, or actually destroyed by passion, adventure, disease or warfare, so that what he has left us is far smaller in amount—making due allowance for the fact that his materials were usually the precious metals, and so constantly in danger of coming to the melting-pot by the greed of a thief or the need of their owners—than it might have been in less troubled times. The custom of early apprenticeship, however, gave all craftsmen so sound a training that interruptions to their work diminished their skill but little, if at all. The chief dangers of change, instability and amateurishness, were thus averted.

The influence of classical literature and art upon the period was enhanced by the manner in which they became public property. As each new manuscript was found or translated, as each new statue was dug up, it came to men as a novelty and a wonder; giving far more pleasure and attracting far more attention than it could ever do with future generations, when it had

become a well-known feature in some library or museum. Too much familiarity with great works of art does not breed contempt, but it may breed a certain acquiescence in their merits. When seen for the first time, or only at long intervals, they have for us the enchantment also of a delightful surprise.

VII

MACHIAVELLI

THESE random thoughts on the conditions of life in the Italian Renaissance certainly seem to indicate that intellectual vitality, far from being dependent upon or associated with those views of universal human happiness which are generally accepted to-day, is essentially alien to them.

Like the conservators of the Lake, we are all in favour of netting the pike—of blotting out, effacing, or at least decreasing the wants, the diseases, and the hazards which appeared to menace the health and contentment of the humbler members of the community—of enabling the masses to live and multiply in security and freedom. And when we come to think of it, our Conservators have got rid of a good many pike in the last hundred years. Where it has not been extinguished, the autocratic power of kings and princes has everywhere been reduced. The resources of the old nobility, the landed classes and the Church are fast being curtailed in similar fashion. Even the great financial and commercial magnates, who are taking the place of monarchs and nobles, have to move with circumspec-

tion among the nets that are now laid for them by the politicians; the one class whose authority is not, as yet, openly challenged.

An ingenious novelist, whose speculations upon the future of civilized man have the unusual merit of making some allowance for human frailty, even though the result is contrary to his evident sympathies, has pictured a world state, in which, some centuries hence, the whole population, for the most part sheepishly content, is employed by a gigantic political and commercial Trust. I confess to seeing some likeness between the innumerable bustling myriads of helpless uniformed toilers whom he so vividly forecasts, and the vast shoals of little perch which now form the chief population of the Lake; while the Trust, for the nonce, may be represented by the big solitary pike which broke my tackle.

The parallel is not so fantastic as it may seem at first sight. When the Conservators netted the pike, they forgot one all-important fact. The trout, whom they wished to encourage, could not reproduce their kind faster than their breeding grounds admitted: and those breeding grounds were limited in extent. The streams which feed the Lake are few in number and small in proportion to its extent, being blocked in several instances by insurmountable waterfalls. There are few extensive gravelly shallows to take their place. On one side the shore is rocky and slopes abruptly to very deep water;

along the other side lie thick belts of long green weed; useless to the trout, but ideal breeding ground for perch.

In the Lake this weed is so plentiful that the perch had every inducement to increase and multiply, the moment that the pike, the sole checks upon their fertility, were removed. With their multiplication the breeding grounds of the trout were still more closely hedged in, while the fate of any small trout who chanced upon these voracious hordes can be imagined.

Of recent years it has been noted, sometimes with a little alarm, that civilization tends to sterility—that the intellectual and governing classes, like the trout in the Lake, reproduce their kind far less rapidly than those below them. So far, indeed, this tendency has had no quite disastrous results in this country, since the sterile upper class is constantly being recruited from its more fertile inferiors. That recruiting process, however, was made possible because those inferiors were themselves capable of growing to greatness under the pressure and the stimulus of an exacting life; as the perch grew large and strong so long as the pike were there to harry them. If that pressure and that stimulus are removed, can we expect the same reaction? Is the recruiting process, on which our civilization ultimately depends, to slacken and gradually cease? Shall we indeed, become approximately equal; but, like the perch, shall we also become very small, and possibly very very

hungry, so that, far from acting as a recruiting ground for all that is best in humanity, we may be an encumbrance and a peril to such remnants of noble tradition as have the misfortune then to survive?

The problem is no new one. It is essentially the same as that which confronted Demosthenes when he denounced the corruption of the Athenian democracy, and Machiavelli when he composed the *Prıncipe*. Machiavelli's name has often been used as a synonym for all that was cruel, cunning and dishonest in Renaissance politics. The stigma might be applied with far more justice to the cold, venal Guicciardini, in comparison with whom Machiavelli, as modern students have recognized, is a humane and genuine patriot.

Though Machiavelli's immediate purpose was to find a practical remedy for the disorders of his own time, to bring union to Italy out of hopeless discord, his vision was not limited to this momentary horizon. He sought at the same time to define the relation between the local and temporary causes which impelled him to write, and such universal principles of government as might be deduced from the world's past history. If, for him, the solution of the Italian problem of his day was the coming of a strong military autocrat, some more successful Cæsar Borgia—and to such despotism, as in Napoleon's case, even republicans and democrats may sometimes turn for relief—he did not for a

moment imagine that the solution was either perfect or permanent.

For one of the cardinal points of Machiavelli's faith is the conviction that all forms of government are mortal: that each bears within it the seed of its own decay. Thus the political world might be viewed as a cycle in which monarchy, oligarchy, democracy, anarchy rise, flourish, and are in turn corrupted. In this cycle any imagined Utopia of equality would have its place with the rest, and be subject in due course to the same decay and death.

In the first onset of this Utopia, Machiavelli would have seen an illustration of another of his convictions, that men in the mass are essentially imitative, and ready to conform to any government that happens to exist, rather than to risk the experiment of a new one. He would thus have regarded it as quite possible for a democracy to become gradually petrified into an undiscerning monotonous communism, were it not for one other factor in human nature, no less important than the tendency to submissive mimicry.

To his belief in the essential depravity of man's character Machiavelli owes much of the odium which is sometimes even now attached to his name. Yet when we read the history of his age, we must admit that he had some justification for his faith. Even in our own day, when the general standard of morality is undoubtedly higher, when crimes of violence are

certainly much less common, and when conspicuous examples of unselfish honesty are seen all around us, we cannot still wholly deny that, taken in the lump, men do right chiefly because they are obliged. Ambition and competition are still the moving springs of much that on the surface appears to be disinterested effort: the fear of publicity, if not of the law courts, is responsible for much that passes for honourable or generous dealing.

Yet Machiavelli, though himself a Pagan with most of the advanced thinkers of his age, was not blind to the usefulness of religion in others. He saw clearly enough that in any state religion made for order and reverence, and in some degree, perhaps, for morality; and his ideal prince was therefore to be careful in preserving the outward observances of religion as one of the buttresses of his throne. He might well argue, therefore, that if modern education was doing much to cultivate the intelligence, and perhaps the morality, of civilised man, the decreasing hold of religion upon men's minds, which has been one of the most marked and disquieting features of the last decade, must be taken into account on the opposite side.

And there are other reasons for thinking that the competitive instinct in man is not likely to be eradicated all at once. Though the personal enmity or jealousy of princes may no longer set armies on the march; though religion is more and more rarely invoked as the sole

pretext for bloodshed; the racial, political, and economic differences which have almost always co-existed with these ancient excuses for competitive effort still remain with us.

Nor is it likely that they will soon be dissipated or suppressed. New engineering feats provide new trade routes; new discoveries create new wants and new values. What a few years ago was worthless desert or jungle becomes a rich and precious territory. Old mines in consequence have to shut down; old plantations to be abandoned. Thus the channels of the world's food supply, or of the commodities which may be used to purchase a share of it, keep rapidly shifting. To meet these changes, which it is impossible to forecast, the machinery which provides for the needs of the great nations has constantly to be readjusted. Readjustment in the future, as in the past, must sometimes involve jarring or friction; and friction will lead a democracy, no less quickly than a monarchy, to open war.

In spite of the stimulus of these inevitable oscillations and differences, representative government will still tend to degenerate into oligarchy or despotism from sheer unwieldiness; as co-operation on a large scale will degenerate into monopoly. The monopolist of the future is usually represented as the direct, if inflated, descendant of the employer of to-day. It is just as likely that he will be the nursling of trade unionism. Machinery has taught men one thing very thoroughly:

that profitable results can only be obtained where the machine-users are well organized. These last are now turning this organization upon their employers, as a weapon for securing better wages now, and complete control of the industry in the near future. Yet, as the workers during their hours of employment have to be directed by overseers and managers, so their corporate action has to be taken through the officials of their union. When the capitalist employers are gone, these new masters will remain; and if they do not reap the usual rewards of power they will indeed be more than human.

In the new co-operative and democratic Utopia we should thus have on the commercial side the trust magnates, or "bosses," with their staff of well-paid trade union officials, and below these their armies of submissive trade union members: while on the political side there will be the professional demagogues, raised to power, on the strength of the patronage and plunder they can distribute, by an all-embracing party machine, and through that machine controlling the votes of a host of helpless electors in the name of Universal Suffrage. In the past these forces may sometimes have come into conflict. With more experience they now recognize that their true interest is to join hands and share the spoils.

Our eyes are so persistently diverted to the contrast between Capital and Labour, that the financial magnate

is held by common opinion to be the great danger of the future. There is no doubt that Machiavelli would have regarded the professional politician as the more formidable foe to reasonable liberty.

In the first place. When men of position and character have, by the common arts of the demagogue, been ousted from political life, nothing is easier than for the heads of all parties to come to a private arrangement among themselves for sharing the emoluments of office; to amuse the electorate by a succession of Pyrrhic contests; to resign and be re-elected in turn; but never to deviate from their common purpose of extracting every penny they can from the helpless public—a method which has already been adopted in certain so-called "Latin" states with excellent results.

In the law-courts, too, the politician has an advantage over the financial magnate. If the law may sometimes be evaded by wealth, the evasion is usually an expensive and delicate business. But the politician need not evade the law. He can alter it in his own interest, and that with such a show of constitutional form as to make the act appear blameless, nay, almost creditable.

For these corruptions of an over-grown democracy Machiavelli would no doubt have sought the remedy (as he did for their opposite, the chaos of disunion) in a despotism, the one resource of men whose condition of life is made intolerable. Such a remedy he knew could be no more than temporary. Where men had

dreamed of political freedom, a despotism could only be the prelude to a new constitutional government.

Recognising that the decay was brought about by an unwieldy centralisation; by popular assemblies grown too large and too busied with trifles for serious debate; by a bureaucracy swollen with its own intricacies to thrice its natural bulk; he would make a beginning by breaking up the stagnant mass into a few states of manageable size, on the lines of our modern idea of Devolution. Political faction, with its attendant evils, would thus at once be limited to local affairs. The discussion of national interests might be confined to a council made up of single representatives of each state: each free to act on his own responsibility, and chosen with as much care as an ambassador.

Aided by this small council of picked independent minds, in the place of a cumbrous horde of servile partizans, Machiavelli's *deus ex machinâ* would be in a position to clear away the remaining obstructions to healthy constitutional life. The general record of political oratory, for example, might seem to him sufficiently mischievous in its effect upon the emotions of the crowd, to justify the suppression of all political speaking in public—with a time limit even for parliamentary speeches—so that the conduct of affairs might pass from professional rhetoricians to business men. Public opinion would still have outlet enough in the absolute freedom of the Press; for, as Disraeli has

pointed out, the representation of the people by the Press is now far more complete than its representation by Parliament.

Nor would Machiavelli have hesitated long over the case of the criminal, the feeble-minded and the fanatic. Whether by segregation or otherwise, these hindrances to the efficiency and economy of the State would be summarily dealt with, as hydrophobia was extinguished by the Muzzling Order. His treatise on *The Art of War* shows that the citizen who shirked military service would have found equally little favour at his hand. On the sex question, unluckily, he has left us no such definite utterance. Yet we might guess that he would have preferred polygamy to infanticide, on the ground that this last, though offering a complete protection against the evil, was less in accord with Western sentiment.

Freed thus from its chief incumbrances the corporate sense of the component states might gradually be cultivated, and that inter-civic rivalry which is bound up with so many of man's highest achievements sensibly promoted.

For Machiavelli's Italy is not the only country where the lively competition of small communities did more for the permanent good of humanity than the peace which has often descended, somewhat drowsily, upon great empires. In respect of the arts even Italy must

yield the first place to Greece, and the arts, as we all know, were cultivated by the Greek States in the midst, and often on the proceeds, of continual warfare. So we notice the rise of Dutch painting during and after the struggle with Spain: the re-birth of French art and letters with the Revolution; and the perfecting of Japanese craftsmanship in the midst of incessant calls to arms.

But it is perhaps, after all, to the contemplative rather than to the active life that the thoughts of men turn most regretfully in such doubtful, changeful times. In his lighter writings Machiavelli has left evidence enough that he could sympathise with this feeling. Yet he would have argued that the contemplative life must always be dependent upon the maintenance of social order, and therefore secondary to it; and would doubtless have noticed also that the contemplative life is commonly found in its highest perfection where it comes as a sort of reaction from excessive energy. Turbulent Greece has left us Plato; turbulent Italy Fra Angelico and a host of other serene workers and scholars; the Saints of the East—the very home of contemplation—meditate in a society where the sword is seldom in the sheath. While the mediæval robber-barons fought and forayed, monastic life in Europe reached its climax.

Viewed in this light it would seem as if the strenuous interplay of contrary forces, with all its apparent wastefulness, which we note in the Golden Age of

Greek art as plainly as we do in Renaissance Italy, was a condition of the highest human perfection: just as—*magnis componere parva*—the last state of the perch in the Lake may serve as a symbol of the degeneracy which overtakes men and fish alike, when all the natural incentives to healthy exertion are too carefully removed.

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