

creeds in Germany,—to take this project more affectionately into their consideration than the policy, said to be more than tolerated by them, of a final partition of Germany into a Catholic and a Protestant half, to be effected by a main-divisor leaving nothing politically over, save Austria and Prussia.

In any case may the immediate object of these hints have been so far attained, that the representatives of Churchly interests, even should they not deem good to second with friendly earnestness our efforts toward ennobling the spirit of public art in Germany, at least will not allow them to be cried down with hostile jests—as, alas! has become so common in the public organs that serve their party.* With this pious wish, and surely no extravagant one, we believe we must for this time turn away from School and Church; not, however, as though we feared our further plan would ever lead us to a region where we should find ourselves compelled to leave out of count, not to say wantonly sacrifice, the highest and weightiest interests of these most saving powers for culture of the human mind and heart.

XIII.

To want to bring the *State* directly into play for Art, as has already occurred to many a well-meaning mind, reposes on an error which takes the faults in organisation of the modern State for its truest and intrinsic essence. The State is the representative of absolute expedience †; it

* For the Ultramontane newspapers of Munich were as hostile to Wagner and his friends, as was the Jewish press; he stood between the two opposing fires.—TR.

† “Zweckmässigkeit”; this word—derived from “Zweck,” an “end, aim, or object”—is not fully covered by “expedience,” but implies the principle upon which a thing is done for some purely temporal or mechanical end, something akin to “utilitarianism”; the latter term, however, being likewise employed by our author—either actually or in the more strictly German form of “Nützlichkeit”—I have found it necessary to observe a distinction between the two.—TR.

knows nothing but expedience; and therefore, with the utmost propriety, it flatly declines to concern itself with anything that cannot plead a directly useful end. The blunder, against which indeed the whole newer development of the State is labouring either consciously or unconsciously, consists in the organisation of the Expedient having issued from above, thereby completely reversing the poles of the State. Frederick the Great was the conscious founder of this State, and the Prussian State is his handiwork, down to our own day of misunderstandings. After the dissolution of the Estates of the Realm * nothing was left but the Patriarchal State, established on the basis of territorial possession: to administer the country in such a fashion that it should yield the utmost revenue as a mere inhabited territory, was the task of his Government. The more exactingly high that end was pitched, the more carefully must the doctrine of expedience be instilled into the administration. We certainly should underrate this Frederick's importance, if we took the definition of his policy solely from a chance remark of his, that he wanted nothing from the State but money and soldiers; yet it is quite certain that we cannot attribute any very lofty grandeur of aim to the exclusively French-cultured prince, with his rooted contempt for the German spirit, without falling into gross contradictions in our estimate of his actions. The consequences of his conception of the State, and the success of his State-organisations, come out the sharpest in the modern French Imperial State. In German, and particularly in South-German States, on the contrary, the Prussian State-idea has refused to work out either profitably or purely: sufficient remnants of the older *Reichsstand*-constitution had survived, though only just sufficient, to hinder any pure development of the Prussian State-idea, and thus to help its intrinsic impurity quite plainly into light of day.

* "Reichsstände"—the *immediate* members of the old Reich, who had the right of sitting in the Reichstag; they comprised the Reichs-towns, Free-towns, and various spiritual and temporal powers, down even to a few *Freiherrs*, or Barons.—TR.

The most terrible result of an organisation founded on expedience, must undeniably be its proving inexpedient ; for then the State, and all that lives and moves therein, must be involved in an eternally *bootless* struggle for the satisfaction of vulgar life-needs, can never even reach the glimmer of a knowledge of the essential aim of all Expedience, and thus must sink into a state unworthy of the human being. Moreover in the State the most purely constructed on the principle of expedience, and just because its organisation proceeded from above, and from above to below one prided oneself on nothing but the Expedient, it was inevitable that the officials entrusted with the execution of its measures of expedience should be regarded both by Throne and Folk as the State itself, the only State with which one had to do. In the mechanism of this officialdom the State was bound to grow so rigid, that its only object seemed comprised in these official establishments and the posts they offered ; so that the right to such appointments—and hence to sustenance by the State—became in turn the only aim of efforts from below, the preferment thereto the only end-of-State considered from above.

It warrants great hopes for the future, that in wellnigh every German land alike, from below as from above, the need has recently been felt of ennobling the tendence of the State, and weighty changes in this sense have already been commenced. For our present object it is sufficient to say that we prefer to interpret the different social edicts, in their various stages of maturity, as attempts to raise the State's expediency-tendence, starting from satisfaction of the commonest need, to a knowledge and assuagement of the most universal, the highest need ; and thus through an ascending series of the most expedient, i.e. the most natural organisations, to reach at last its veritable goal. For Bavaria itself the wisest step towards this goal we hold to be the completion of the Maximilianeum, that school for higher State-officials where an education directed purely to the ends of usefulness would reach its hand already

to the only truly humanistic, i.e. the ideal education, an end unto itself. And the State which builds itself from below upwards, in this project, will also shew us finally the ideal meaning of the *Kingship*; an office as to whose expediency so strong a doubt has been engendered in the minds of many political theorists by the ill-success of the expediency-tendence when conducted from above, that the constitution of the American United States has already been discussed and recommended, with much the same regardless volubility as bandies questions of the Church, for adoption by the German States.—At the hand of our guiding principle, derived in turn from our full conviction of the sterling value of the German spirit, we venture to briefly state our thoughts anent the destination of the German Kingship, that Kingship which must set the ideal crown upon the new true Folk-State now in course of building.

The true meaning of Kinghood is expressed in the prerogative of *pardon* (Begnadigung). The exercise of grace (*Gnade*) is the only act of positive freedom conceivable within the State, whereas in every other State-relation freedom can take effect in none but its original negative sense: for the etymologic meaning of the word is a "being freed from," a "being rid of"; which, again, is only thinkable as the negation of a constraint or pressure, either antecedent or presupposed. To free oneself as much as thinkable from the constraint and pressure of natural Want, as also of Want arising from the conflict of individual and social interests—this is the principle of Expediency that lies at bottom of every organisation of the State: in the happy event of all these organisations working together in peace and harmony, we reach the point where each unit has the least to sacrifice in order to reap the utmost profit from the whole; but there always remains the relation of sacrifice and gain; and absolute freedom, i.e. emancipation from all constraint, is quite beyond our thinking: its name were Death.—Only from quite another sphere of being, a sphere which the thoroughly realistic State must deem exclusively pertaining to an ideal order of the world, can a

law of truly ideal expedience come into effect, as the exercise of positive, i.e. of active freedom, determined by no ordinary constraint, a freedom truly free; and thus, at the very point we have termed impassable, it decks the work of the State with the crown which is that law itself. This crowning of its edifice the State-organisation attains through the King's being loosed, from first to last, from the principle of expedience that binds the entire State, and thus completely freed from every Want (*Noth*) engendered by that general principle. He consequently represents the attained ideal of negative freedom, the sole ideal within the knowledge and purview of the State and all its tendencies; but this freedom, ensured to him by every available means, has the further object for the State, of raining down the ideal law of purest freedom, both blessing and ennobling it.

As said above, this ideal law shews out the plainest, and comes within the range of every man's perception, in the exercise of Grace. Here Kingly freedom steps into immediate contact with the weightiest basis of all Civil organisation: with Justice. In this latter is embodied the general law-of-expedience of the whole State, which strives through it for equity. Were Justice altogether sure that, while complying with the most cogent of Expedience's laws, she had perfectly fulfilled withal the idea of purely-human equity, then she would not feel obliged to lay her verdict first before the King: but even in pure democracies it has been thought necessary to establish a surrogate, however scanty and inadequate, for the King's prerogative of pardon; and where this was not the case, as at the height of Athenian democracy, but the Demos exercised its power of ostracism according to the common reading of expediency—as in the best event it could not but do—there the State itself was already half-way toward the reign of pure Caprice. Now, to the verdict of Justice the King in any case accords a full validity *per se*, as answering to the expedience of the State's control in matters of right; but of pure freedom he resolves on pardon, where it seems good to him to let

Grace prevail before Right; and in that he has to give a reason to no one, he testifies to that state of freedom, attainable by none besides, in which he is supported by the will of all. As no human resolves, not even the seemingly freest, are formed without a motive, so the King must here be guided by some aimful reason (*Zweckmässigkeitsgrund*): but this reason itself resides in that quite other sphere, averted from the organisation of the State, that sphere which, in distinction from the latter's tendencies, we can only term the ideal; it remains unspoken, because unutterable, and only lets itself be seen within its work, the act of Grace,—just as the motives of the idealistic artist spring no less from a law-of-aim, yet from a law which likewise cannot be expressed, but only gathered from the fully fashioned artwork.*—It is obvious, be it said in passing, that this lofty freedom can dwell in none but a legitimate Prince: whereas the prince to whom there hangs a shade of usurpation, has fallen beneath the law of vulgar expedience, and in each resolve he must ever keep a watch upon his personal hard-fought interests; wherefore he resembles an artist who fain would pass for something other than he is, and thus must see himself compelled to employ the Expedient for all his fashionings—a means which neither can produce an artwork, nor a work of Grace.

The right of Grace, as characterised above, is the type of every normal function of the King within the State, and he is every inch a King only when in all his acts he shews himself controlled by that unwritten law of Grace; wherefore his each decision, too, is rightly announced as flowing from his "most gracious motion" (*"allergnädigster Bewegung"*), and even the term "his pleasure" † very aptly designates the frame in which the King resolves: a tyrant

* That our professors of æsthetics fain would undertake this, notwithstanding, merely proves how far they stand from even the bare perception of the problem; a sufficient explanation of the muddle in which they jog along from book to book.—R. WAGNER.

† "*Geruhung*," derived from "*Ruhe*," "rest," or "tranquillity"; it is in this sense that Wagner says the term cannot apply to the "tyrant," who must always be "uneasy."—TR.

cannot "please."—Just as Grace is the highest expression of benignity, here carried even to compassion for the evildoer, so it preserves this character in face of all the decisions of the civil power, which can never deal with anything beyond the publicly-useful; where these latter own themselves entirely impotent, the King goes on before them with his example of compassionateness, to draw the moral movement of the burgher-world directly into his sphere of Grace. In like manner he draws into his sphere the public merits of the burgher, so soon as ever they amount to purely-human virtue, either transcending the immediate object of the State, or no longer to be requisitioned for its service. The bestowal of an *order* does not mean the rewarding of an official's normal merit, but the recognition, and the bringing to the recognition of others, of services that exceed the imperative claims of the mere law of utility. The order conferred on military men sets a mark upon the virtue of valour, with its accompanying higher grade of discretion and personal sacrifice: the soldier who has thoroughly fulfilled his duty, in and for itself, merely attracts the attention of the military authorities, and they take note of the fact for his further employment, in accordance with their only guiding precept of expedience. The ideal import of this bestowal of an order may be very plainly perceived in the frequent instance of whole regiments having earned the highest meed of valour by their joint and free-willed sacrifice, when one must accord to every individual an equal claim to highest recognition: in this case the entire regiment has been ennobled by the simple expedient of decorating one member with the order, a member whom the regiment itself has singled in accordance with the unspeakable law of Grace.

Analogously, the favour of the King exalts from every sphere of civic and social organisations those persons whose achievements or capacities surpass the common standard of requirements erected for mere utilitarian ends, those persons who thereby enter of themselves the sphere of Grace, i.e. of active freedom, and makes them in a true

and noble sense his peers.—But the idea, at any rate originally inherent in the institution of Orders, would never come to operative life in all its purity until these orders ceased to mean a mere symbolic decoration, but consisted in truly active fellowships, as at their first inception. The idea indeed is still extant, and is expressed herein :—as the King is the foremost bearer of the highest grade of orders, so is he considered the Grand Master of an actual lodge (*Ordenskörper*). In the case of certain higher and exclusive orders, in fact, all the usages and functions of a closer fellowship are still preserved : but no one who reflects will have much difficulty in doubting that any true and active vital spirit is here expressed, either in the relations of the members to one another, or in their relations to the order's Master or the remaining organisations of the State. In any case, the plurality and the graduated rank of orders bear witness to the mistake into which the whole ordinal system has fallen, owing undoubtedly to the confusion of history itself. To her Revolution, which swept away all orders, France has to thank the establishment of one single, all-embracing order, the “*légion d'honneur*” : with the State's progressive evolution, every country will be obliged at last to follow the very proper example of France, in this point of the consolidation of its orders.* For if a Prince chose even now to found an order with the significance of a league conferring active rights in return for active duties, must not all the special orders—sprung from times and tendencies quite other, and merely lingering on as lifeless, often senseless baubles—so lose in meaning, ay, in estimation, as soon to dwindle clean away ?—As Grand Master of the order we suppose, already existing *in potentia* and needing only to be woken to a life of actual fellowship,—an order whereto, exactly as in the earliest of such communities, even the greatest services should entitle to admission upon nothing but a vow of continued devotion to

* The example of France could scarcely be appealed to nowadays, with its shower of “legions of honour” upon successful tradesmen, after the Exhibition of 1889, and its still more recent “decoration-scandals.”—TR.

higher and the highest ends,—the King would be the living link between his ideal tendency and the realistic tendency of the State, and have won the atmosphere essential for his motion, a body of like-minded men, *emeriti* (*eximirten*), i.e. set free by their self-sacrifice from the common law of expedience, banded to serve him sans reserve, pledged fulfillers of his gracious will.

For our time and the times to come, this Order would take the meaning once possessed by the *German peerage* at the flower of its prime and toward another age's claims. One might inquire, indeed, whether the surviving German nobility—which has been obliged to abandon most of its privileges as a civic class already, but still retains a standing involuntarily acknowledged by the burgher-world as socially exempt (*eximirte*)—would not form the very fittest basis of the Order imagined by us, and thus, while furnishing the monarch with the willing initiative for that creation, rejuvenate itself for its own honour and the common weal?

As it would lead us too far afield, to devote a more minute inquiry to the point itself, we should merely wish to have given some qualified person a sufficient incitation to pursue it; and from this sketch of the general character of a fellowship exempted from the common law of utility by the pledge of joint self-sacrifice—a body whose members, supported by material wealth, may even now be found sporadically strewn in every station—we will now proceed to draw our conclusion as to the share which such a fellowship might take in raising the desolated spirit of German public art.

XIV.

It was impossible for us to indicate the degeneration into which German theatric art has fallen, in particular, without exposing the pernicious tendencies and promptings whose influence had brought about that ill result: to clear the Theatre from the assumption of an absolutely vicious tendency indwelling in itself, it was indispensable to prove