

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

that mischievous result to be a consequence of the suppression, or at least the neglect, of the good qualities inherent in it [the Theatre]. Even for the exercise of this injurious influence we have assigned no wilfully evil motive, but simply, a misunderstanding of the German Spirit, in the very sphere which should have been the most active to protect it. In all our censure of the sad result we have never laid the blame on human wickedness, but purely on human error: to tell the truth, this error's one effect has been to keep inflamed the evil side of the human passions here coming into play, albeit we have not suggested any lucid consciousness thereof, but rather superficiality and slothful love of pleasure. We have also found it possible to discuss a relation so important, involving every section of society and undeniably developed by our history itself, without in any way employing the showy catchwords of a party, or the ideas that lie beneath them: we have appealed to neither aristocratic nor democratic, to neither liberal nor conservative, neither monarchical nor republican, to neither catholic nor protestant interests; but in each demand of ours we have relied on nothing but the character of the *German Spirit*, which we have already had occasion to define. Though this may have remained unrecognised or been misunderstood by those who have completely alienated themselves from that spirit, yet in the eyes of every well-intentioned person we hold ourselves assured of the advantage of being able to proceed in like fashion now that we undertake, in conclusion, to shew the possibility of a thorough reform of the evil relation investigated; when, as that side has stirred up the hurtful qualities, so we attempt to rouse the good and beneficial qualities of the social elements concerned. Moreover we shall profit by the advantage of supposing every extant element to retain its natural attributes, albeit capable of evolution and reform; and this will allow us, as touching the social basis of the State, to take that absolutely-conservative standpoint which we will call the idealistic, in opposition to the formally realistic—which latter is no less a senseless error,

than formally-realistic Radicalism itself. Yet again, we shall enjoy the noblest and most charitable of all advantages, that of henceforth being able to keep entirely out of sight the evil aspects of existing social elements ; for we now shall most expediently assail them by drawing forth their good sides only, and trying to set them in a state of action which needs must make their evil harmless.—

The ancient German nobleman by birth, in spite of all the reduction in his political privileges, as already noted, still retains a social standing undisputed by the Feeling of the burgher ; a remark confirmed by the obvious fact that the bestowal of a patent of nobility, little as it can transform the recipient into a compeer of the old nobility by birth, is yet a cherished goal of the burgher's ambition, especially when he has made his money. The rich financier who no longer needs to carry on his business, but makes for sheer enjoyment of the leisure bought him by his wealth, seeks in the patent of nobility, so to say, a binding authorisation. One takes for granted that a lord will ply no trade. And even though the partial impoverishment of the real hereditary peerage has given things an opposite appearance, yet here again we may mark a special token of the noble : the nobleman who decides to pursue a business reckoned for sheer profit, entirely lays aside his title ; or if he enters the public service, it is with the distinct and honourable assumption that he has chosen this career because it leads to heights where attainments directed to mere utilitarian ends will be of less advantage to the State, than an independent personal character. However much these lines may cross and blend with one another, in any case the tendence of the preservation of the old nobility is plain enough : it ensures the continuance of a whole class of persons who account themselves raised by nature above the need of making for the merely useful. Now, the right-minded nobleman can find employment for his energy, in keeping with his natural bent, only when he directs it to ends so lofty as to lie far beyond the tendence of the burgher, or even of the State-official. Through this tend-

ence, ingrained as if by a Nature-necessity, he enters of himself the sphere we have termed the virtual sphere of royal Grace. Hence the Nobility surviving to the German Folk, together with its Princes, would only have of its own free-will to raise this tendency to a law incumbent on its station, and to give that law the outspoken force of binding rules, such as pledged the oldest orders of Knights,—when Germany would have won from a class now deemed superfluous, nay, wellnigh harmful, a boundlessly beneficent and active spiritual league of character. Then its already-forced abandonment of civic privileges must be held by this class for the sacrifice attaching to every vow of ordination; but a sacrifice whereby it would have secured the right of exemption from the common law of utility, to devote its energies to none but higher ends, ungoverned by that law. The constant renovation of this order through the accession of fresh members raised by royal Grace, in accordance with the principle defined above, would set it in a beneficial relation, at once a human link and balance, with the social and official organisations non-exempt by nature; and its example would serve to spur the exempt in virtue of mere riches, encouraging him to give to his enjoyment of freedom from common utilitarian interests, simply based upon material possessions, a higher meaning and a nobler trend.

Let one imagine the general utilitarian objects of the State never so perfectly attained, on the path of a progressive development of its organisation, yet an ample field will always remain open to the energy of these Emeriti [or “exempt”—*Eximirten*], for never will there lack occasion for special sacrifice. Let us suppose, however, that the efforts of the best-organised State-forces, strained and stimulated by a proper burgher-pride, must at last succeed in removing all occasion for self-sacrifice to general and purely-human ends in even matters of the moral order of the world: to the Emeriti there would still remain a field whereon they must feel the more committed to meditative, to sacrificial energy, as it is a field on which they

have been accorded an advantage that in itself first stamped their station as a sphere of Grace; for this advantage consists in an 'object'-less interest, possible to them alone, the pure enjoyment of Art and Science in themselves. For those who rightly know its pleasures, this advantage is so unique and blessed, that its maintenance must seem worth any sacrifice. In the past century it was pre-eminently members of the peerage, who knew to prize it actively. The history of the German land may plume itself on instances. 'Twas a Saxon Count Büнау, under whose protection our great Winckelmann enjoyed his earliest freedom from the common cares of life, and leisure to push his free researches in the region of artistic learning. But only in a grand, wide-reaching sense, could this noblest and most enviable advantage be turned to account for the ennoblement and blessing of the Folk and Burgher world. We will explain our meaning, with a perhaps audacious tack to our immediate object, by adducing a warning example from history. Assuredly the world is indebted to the free leisure of the Roman nobles, after the extinction of the Republic had cut them off from all strictly political activity, for the origin and nurture of a valuable and instructive literature, notwithstanding that it cannot compare with the creative works of the Greek spirit—without whose incitation it is not so much as thinkable, and to which, in a measure, it bears the mere relation of a commentary: those works had issued from a living communion of great spirits with the spirit of the Folk, particularly in the case of the Lyric and the Tragedy. This communion the finely-cultured Roman nobles did not seek, presumably since they despaired of finding it: indifferent, they left the scene of popular pleasures to gladiators, to battlers with wild beasts; the attempt to concern themselves with jesters they proudly left to their emancipated slaves. History knows the foundering of these nobles, of this people, in growing demoralisation and materialistic mud.—At the time of the great revival of the German nation, heralded and stimulated by the undreamt successes of the

German spirit on the realm of Drama and Music, it was all the more incumbent upon the German nobles to holdfast these successes for the ennobling of the Folk-spirit, as the contemporary development of German Constitutional-government was progressively depriving them of their former political privileges. To-day, when this political power is even more pronouncedly crippled than then, it might perhaps be not too late for them to make a strenuous effort to regain lost opportunities. It would secure them a field of action of boundless benefit ; for that same German Spirit which alone can yield a beauteous import to their being, is in so great straits by now—we have seen it—that we cannot but wellnigh despair of getting our lament so much as understood.

Without any beating of the bush, we will name the point where the cultured art-taste of the Emeriti, imagined and described above, would encounter that need which drives the Folk and Burgher-world to seek a transitory pleasure, a distracting entertainment : it is the Theatre. The daily tax upon his mental forces, for the direct utilitarian ends of life, allows the burgher no purposeless preoccupation with Literature and Art : all the more need has he of recreation through a diverting entertainment, distracting in a good sense, which must cost him little or no personal preparation. This is the need. To answer it, the Mime at once steps in ; the public's need supplies him with a means of livelihood, as hunger helps the baker. He knocks up his platform : behold ! the Theatre. The whole concern is naïve and honest : the mime proffers his art, the public pays him for its entertainment. Everything in this relation is direct : the spectator holds by what he sees and hears ; the story, or the history, here becomes for him an agreeably exciting fact : he laughs with the merry, weeps with the sad, and, suddenly aware of the deception put upon him, he claps his hands in pleased approval of the clever trick. Upon this relation, and its using for the highest ideal ends, are based the sublimest artworks of the greatest poets of all time.—It has a defect, which escapes attention in its

earliest, naïve state: its subjection to the utilitarian law of burgher traffic prevents this relation from expressing itself purely; the public pays and demands, demands without judgment or knowledge; the mime-takes his pay, and, observing with swift and accurate instinct the public's lack of judgment, for profit's sake he gives it—not what is wholesome for it, but, like the pampered child, what tempts its palate. Hence that confusion which, given an evil tendency, may lead the Theatre to the ruin of the Folk's best moral qualities, of the best artistic qualities of Art itself. We see that ruin almost reached. But upheave this root-defect, or at least reduce it to the smallest possible power of harm, and that relation—in whose naïvest form the æsthetic instinct of the Folk-spirit speaks out as a genuine social need—will offer the unique, the incomparable starting-point, replaceable by none besides, for the highest conjoint operation of the spiritual and moral forces of a people's soul and of its leading minds.—After all the evidence from our prior inquiries into the ethical, as the æsthetic import of this relation, we may now conclude by taking in eye the possibility of a remedy for that root-defect, which we have just exposed, in the organisation of the modern Theatre itself.

XV.

The principle of our imagined reform of the German Theatre, in the sense of the German spirit, we will found upon one and the same relation, repeating itself in divers spheres: it is that which we have discussed at length in the relation of poet to mime, which proves itself identical in that of the cultured Emeritus to the public proper, and in its grandest aspect as that of the King to his Folk. Here the realistic force of Need, there the ideal power of supplying that which is unreachable by the highest demands of Need. The greatest relation, that of King to Folk, embraces all the relations like it; wherefore, when