

CHAPTER V.

"But art,--science! You repudiate art and science; that is, you repudiate that by which mankind lives!" People are constantly making this--it is not a reply--to me, and they employ this mode of reception in order to reject my deductions without examining into them. "He repudiates science and art, he wants to send people back again into a savage state; so what is the use of listening to him and of talking to him?" But this is unjust. I not only do not repudiate art and science, but, in the name of that which is true art and true science, I say that which I do say; merely in order that mankind may emerge from that savage state into which it will speedily fall, thanks to the erroneous teaching of our time,--only for this purpose do I say that which I say.

Art and science are as indispensable as food and drink and clothing,--more indispensable even; but they become so, not because we decide that what we designate as art and science are indispensable, but simply because they really are indispensable to people.

Surely, if hay is prepared for the bodily nourishment of men, the fact that we are convinced that hay is the proper food for man will not make hay the food of man. Surely I cannot say, "Why do not you eat hay, when it is the indispensable food?" Food is indispensable, but it may happen that that which I offer is not food at all. This same thing has occurred with our art and science. It seems to us, that if we add to a Greek word

the word "logy," and call that a science, it will be a science; and, if we call any abominable thing--like the dancing of nude females--by a Greek word, choreography, that that is art, and that it will be art. But no matter how much we may say this, the business with which we occupy ourselves when we count beetles, and investigate the chemical constituents of the stars in the Milky Way, when we paint nymphs and compose novels and symphonies,--our business will not become either art or science until such time as it is accepted by those people for whom it is wrought.

If it were decided that only certain people should produce food, and if all the rest were forbidden to do this, or if they were rendered incapable of producing food, I suppose that the quality of food would be lowered. If the people who enjoyed the monopoly of producing food were Russian peasants, there would be no other food than black bread and cabbage-soup, and so on, and kvas,--nothing except what they like, and what is agreeable to them. The same thing would happen in the case of that loftiest human pursuit, of arts and sciences, if one caste were to arrogate to itself a monopoly of them: but with this sole difference, that, in the matter of bodily food, there can be no great departure from nature, and bread and cabbage-soup, although not very savory viands, are fit for consumption; but in spiritual food, there may exist the very greatest departures from nature, and some people may feed themselves for a long time on poisonous spiritual nourishment, which is directly unsuitable for, or injurious to, them; they may slowly kill themselves with spiritual opium or liquors, and they may offer this same food to the

masses.

It is this very thing that is going on among us. And it has come about because the position of men of science and art is a privileged one, because art and science (in our day), in our world, are not at all a rational occupation of all mankind without exception, exerting their best powers for the service of art and science, but an occupation of a restricted circle of people holding a monopoly of these industries, and entitling themselves men of art and science, and who have, therefore, perverted the very idea of art and science, and have lost all the meaning of their vocation, and who are only concerned in amusing and rescuing from crushing ennui their tiny circle of idle mouths.

Ever since men have existed, they have always had science and art in the simplest and broadest sense of the term. Science, in the sense of the whole of knowledge acquired by mankind, exists and always has existed, and life without it is not conceivable; and there is no possibility of either attacking or defending science, taken in this sense.

But the point lies here,--that the scope of the knowledge of all mankind as a whole is so multifarious, ranging from the knowledge of how to extract iron to the knowledge of the movements of the planets, that man loses himself in this multitude of existing knowledge,--knowledge capable of endless possibilities, if he have no guiding thread, by the aid of which he can classify this knowledge, and arrange the branches according to the degrees of their significance and importance.

Before a man undertakes to learn any thing whatever, he must make up his mind that that branch of knowledge is of weight to him, and of more weight and importance than the countless other objects of study with which he is surrounded. Before undertaking the study of any thing, a man decides for what purpose he is studying this subject, and not the others. But to study every thing, as the men of scientific science in our day preach, without any idea of what is to come out of such study, is downright impossible, because the number of subjects of study is endless; and hence, no matter how many branches we may acquire, their acquisition can possess no significance or reason. And, therefore, in ancient times, down to even a very recent date, until the appearance of scientific science, man's highest wisdom consisted in finding that guiding thread, according to which the knowledge of men should be classified as being of primary or of secondary importance. And this knowledge, which forms the guide to all other branches of knowledge, men have always called science in the strictest acceptation of the word. And such science there has always been, even down to our own day, in all human communities which have emerged from their primal state of savagery.

Ever since mankind has existed, teachers have always arisen among peoples, who have enunciated science in this restricted sense,--the science of what it is most useful for man to know. This science has always had for its object the knowledge of what is the true ground of the well-being of each individual man, and of all men, and why. Such was the science of Confucius, of Buddha, of Socrates, of Mahomet, and of others;

such is this science as they understood it, and as all men--with the exception of our little circle of so-called cultured people--understand it. This science has not only always occupied the highest place, but has been the only and sole science, from which the standing of the rest has been determined. And this was the case, not in the least because, as the so-called scientific people of our day think, cunning priestly teachers of this science attributed to it such significance, but because in reality, as every one knows, both by personal experience and by reflection, there can be no science except the science of that in which the destiny and welfare of man consist. For the objects of science are incalculable in number,--I undermine the word "incalculable" in the exact sense in which I understand it,--and without the knowledge of that in which the destiny and welfare of all men consist, there is no possibility of making a choice amid this interminable multitude of subjects; and therefore, without this knowledge, all other arts and branches of learning will become, as they have become among us, an idle and hurtful diversion.

Mankind has existed and existed, and never has it existed without the science of that in which the destiny and the welfare of men consist. It is true that the science of the welfare of men appears different on superficial observation, among the Buddhists, the Brahmins, the Hebrews, the Confucians, the Tauists; but nevertheless, wherever we hear of men who have emerged from a state of savagery, we find this science. And all of a sudden it appears that the men of our day have decided that this same science, which has hitherto served as the guiding thread of all

human knowledge, is the very thing which hinders every thing. Men erect buildings; and one architect has made one estimate of cost, a second has made another, and a third yet another. The estimates differ somewhat; but they are correct, so that any one can see, that, if the whole is carried out in accordance with the calculations, the building will be erected. Along come people, and assert that the chief point lies in having no estimates, and that it should be built thus--by the eye. And this "thus," men call the most accurate of scientific science. Men repudiate every science, the very substance of science,--the definition of the destiny and the welfare of men,--and this repudiation they designate as science.

Ever since men have existed, great minds have been born into their midst, which, in the conflict with reason and conscience, have put to themselves questions as to "what constitutes welfare,--the destiny and welfare, not of myself alone, but of every man?" What does that power which has created and which leads me, demand of me and of every man? And what is it necessary for me to do, in order to comply with the requirements imposed upon me by the demands of individual and universal welfare? They have asked themselves: "I am a whole, and also a part of something infinite, eternal; what, then, are my relations to other parts similar to myself, to men and to the whole--to the world?"

And from the voices of conscience and of reason, and from a comparison of what their contemporaries and men who had lived before them, and who had propounded to themselves the same questions, had said, these great

teachers have deduced their doctrines, which were simple, clear, intelligible to all men, and always such as were susceptible of fulfilment. Such men have existed of the first, second, third, and lowest ranks. The world is full of such men. Every living man propounds the question to himself, how to reconcile the demands of welfare, and of his personal existence, with conscience and reason; and from this universal labor, slowly but uninterruptedly, new forms of life, which are more in accord with the requirements of reason and of conscience, are worked out.

All at once, a new caste of people makes its appearance, and they say, "All this is nonsense; all this must be abandoned." This is the deductive method of ratiocination (wherein lies the difference between the deductive and the inductive method, no one can understand); these are the dogmas of the technological and metaphysical period. Every thing that these men discover by inward experience, and which they communicate to one another, concerning their knowledge of the law of their existence (of their functional activity, according to their own jargon), every thing that the grandest minds of mankind have accomplished in this direction, since the beginning of the world,--all this is nonsense, and has no weight whatever. According to this new doctrine, it appears that you are cells: and that you, as a cell, have a very definite functional activity, which you not only fulfil, but which you infallibly feel within you; and that you are a thinking, talking, understanding cell, and that you, for this reason, can ask another similar talking cell whether it is just the same, and in this way verify your own experience; that you can

take advantage of the fact that speaking cells, which have lived before you, have written on the same subject, and that you have millions of cells which confirm your observations by their agreement with the cells which have written down their thoughts,--all this signifies nothing; all this is an evil and an erroneous method.

The true scientific method is this: If you wish to know in what the destiny and the welfare of all mankind and of all the world consists, you must, first of all, cease to listen to the voices of your conscience and of your reason, which present themselves in you and in others like you; you must cease to believe all that the great teachers of mankind have said with regard to your conscience and reason, and you must consider all this as nonsense, and begin all over again. And, in order to understand every thing from the beginning, you must look through microscopes at the movements of amoebae, and cells in worms, or, with still greater composure, believe in every thing that men with a diploma of infallibility shall say to you about them. And as you gaze at the movements of these cells, or read about what others have seen, you must attribute to these cells your own human sensations and calculations as to what they desire, whither they are directing themselves, how they compare and discuss, and to what they have become accustomed; and from these observations (in which there is not a word about an error of thought or of expression) you must deduce a conclusion by analogy as to what you are, what is your destiny, wherein lies the welfare of yourself and of other cells like you. In order to understand yourself, you must study not only the worms which you see, but microscopic creatures which you can

barely see, and transformations from one set of creatures into others, which no one has ever beheld, and which you, most assuredly, will never behold. And the same with art. Where there has been true science, art has always been its exponent.

Ever since men have been in existence, they have been in the habit of deducing, from all pursuits, the expressions of various branches of learning concerning the destiny and the welfare of man, and the expression of this knowledge has been art in the strict sense of the word.

Ever since men have existed, there have been those who were peculiarly sensitive and responsive to the doctrine regarding the destiny and welfare of man; who have given expression to their own and the popular conflict, to the delusions which lead them astray from their destinies, their sufferings in this conflict, their hopes in the triumph of good, their despair over the triumph of evil, and their raptures in the consciousness of the approaching bliss of man, on viol and tabret, in images and words. Always, down to the most recent times, art has served science and life,--only then was it what has been so highly esteemed of men. But art, in its capacity of an important human activity, disappeared simultaneously with the substitution for the genuine science of destiny and welfare, of the science of any thing you choose to fancy. Art has existed among all peoples, and will exist until that which among us is scornfully called religion has come to be considered the only science.

In our European world, so long as there existed a Church, as the doctrine of destiny and welfare, and so long as the Church was regarded as the only true science, art served the Church, and remained true art: but as soon as art abandoned the Church, and began to serve science, while science served whatever came to hand, art lost its significance. And notwithstanding the rights claimed on the score of ancient memories, and of the clumsy assertion which only proves its loss of its calling, that art serves art, it has become a trade, providing men with something agreeable; and as such, it inevitably comes into the category of choreographic, culinary, hair-dressing, and cosmetic arts, whose practitioners designate themselves as artists, with the same right as the poets, printers, and musicians of our day.

Glance backward into the past, and you will see that in the course of thousands of years, out of millions of people, only half a score of Confucius', Buddhas, Solomons, Socrates, Solons, and Homers have been produced. Evidently, they are rarely met with among men, in spite of the fact that these men have not been selected from a single caste, but from mankind at large. Evidently, these true teachers and artists and learned men, the purveyors of spiritual nourishment, are rare. And it is not without reason that mankind has valued and still values them so highly.

But it now appears, that all these great factors in the science and art of the past are no longer of use to us. Nowadays, scientific and artistic authorities can, in accordance with the law of division of

labor, be turned out by factory methods; and, in one decade, more great men have been manufactured in art and science, than have ever been born of such among all nations, since the foundation of the world. Nowadays there is a guild of learned men and artists, and they prepare, by perfected methods, all that spiritual food which man requires. And they have prepared so much of it, that it is no longer necessary to refer to the elder authorities, who have preceded them,--not only to the ancients, but to those much nearer to us. All that was the activity of the theological and metaphysical period,--all that must be wiped out: but the true, the rational activity began, say, fifty years ago, and in the course of those fifty years we have made so many great men, that there are about ten great men to every branch of science. And there have come to be so many sciences, that, fortunately, it is easy to make them. All that is required is to add the Greek word "logy" to the name, and force them to conform to a set rubric, and the science is all complete. They have created so many sciences, that not only can no one man know them all, but not a single individual can remember all the titles of all the existing sciences; the titles alone form a thick lexicon, and new sciences are manufactured every day. They have been manufactured on the pattern of that Finnish teacher who taught the landed proprietor's children Finnish instead of French. Every thing has been excellently inculcated; but there is one objection,--that no one except ourselves can understand any thing of it, and all this is reckoned as utterly useless nonsense. However, there is an explanation even for this. People do not appreciate the full value of scientific science, because they are under the influence of the theological period, that profound period when all

the people, both among the Hebrews, and the Chinese, and the Indians, and the Greeks, understood every thing that their great teachers said to them.

But, from whatever cause this has come about, the fact remains, that sciences and arts have always existed among mankind, and, when they really did exist, they were useful and intelligible to all the people.

But we practise something which we call science and art, but it appears that what we do is unnecessary and unintelligible to man. And hence, however beautiful may be the things that we accomplish, we have no right to call them arts and sciences.