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THE SUPERMAN FORMULA.

In one of his lectures on poetry John Keble says that the study of the more abstruse regions of philosophy always seems to have included an element not very much removed from a species of insanity. The student first grappling with Plato or Kant can echo those words with feeling, and the proposition can find a support, for another reason, in the ranks of Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche's critics. In his age there was a particular company, including quite a number of his own countrymen, that scorned the teaching of the way to the Superman, not because they could not comprehend it but because they imagined that thought so fantastic could have no philosophical sincerity behind it and could, in fact, be no more than a manifestation of incipient insanity.

That is the tragedy of Nietzsche's work and the reason for the refusal to believe in his earnestness. Undoubtedly such a conclusion was pardonable, or at least understandable, in the circumstances—when a man who had vigorously repudiated the Christian faith and the moral code was overtaken by complete insanity and lingered on in such condition until his death. But bold thinkers must create opponents, and if Nietzsche to some extent spoilt his case by extravagant assertions of his self-regard such as, for example, his explanations, "Why I am So Wise" and "Why I Am So Clever," there have been few philosophers who have decried themselves. The plea for new values, however revolutionary it may be, can never be dismissed with certainty as a mark of mental instability. We are always being told that genius is a divine insanity, and nowhere in Nietzsche's work is there any evidence that he was other than a man of exceptional capacity in mind and method.

Nietzsche was an optimist. He saw a divine seed in life. "Every truth that does not bring with it at least one laugh seems to me false," he said, and again "I could only believe in a God who knew how to dance; and when I see the devil I find him grave, profound, and solemn. He is the spirit of heaviness . . . by him all things fall."

There was no such thing as absolute values, good or evil; everything was relative, he said. It was good for the lion or the eagle to seek for food, but bad for the prey they captured. Man was throttled by moral codes; they restrained his instincts and denied the rights of nature. Nietzsche therefore becomes an "immoralist," but he asks: "Do we immoralists injure virtue in any way? Just as little as the anarchists injure royalty. Only since they have been shot at do princes sit firmly on their thrones once more. Morality must be shot at."

Man must be given a new morality, one of ruthless self assertion. In place of our satisfaction with life we must live dangerously, energetically, and think only of ourselves in the struggle for existence. By continually thus struggling, without the sentimental impediments of existing morality, by jungle law, not justice, a race of supermen will be evolved. This was his superman formula—a denial of the Buddhist self-renunciation of Schopenhauer and an acclamation of Darwinism and red-blooded living. The Superman would be physical and intellectual perfection.

Zarathustra teaches the Superman. Man was something to be surpassed. All things hitherto had created something beyond themselves. "What is the ape to man? A laughing-stock, a thing of shame. And just the same shall man be to the Superman. Ye have made your way from the worm to man, and much within you is still worm. Once ye were apes, and even yet man is more of an ape than any of the apes. . . . Lo, I teach you the Superman! The Superman is the meaning of the earth. I conjure you, brethren, remain true to the earth, and believe not those who believe in super-earthly hopes. . . ."

As may be gathered from his doctrine of the Superman, Nietzsche was intensely an individualist. He hated the German worship of the State. Patriotic demonstration and political unity was unthinkable to the Superman who must obey only himself, trust only himself and improve only himself. The mass effect of this individualism made the new race. But there could never be equality, even there. "With these preachers of equality," he exclaims, "will I not be mixed up and confounded, for thus speaketh justice to me: 'Men are not equal!'" Elsewhere he goes further to explain that

where he goes further to explain that neither can there be any equality between man and woman. Women must become more and more womanly, men more and more manly. By attempting

to give women equality with men we run the risk of feminising men, to the jeopardy of the people's future as individuals.

What created much hostility to Nietzsche was his own hostility towards religion which he described as "the one immortal blemish of mankind." This attack was made to fit in with his teaching of the Superman, but it suffered from the fact that never in his adult life was he a Christian. It is stated by his advocates that he was not an iconoclast who destroyed wantonly or out of revenge and resentment, but rather one who destroyed to build better. Christianity, apparently, was at least to be suspended until the era of the Superman had arrived. That is well, but its fate after that, though not explained, is obvious.