

anthropomorphic God—all gone for ever, swept clean away—and a good thing too.”

“Religion, then, is rather like measles, a childish complaint?” I probed.

“That’s it, just that,” he continued; “and we’ve got rid not only of the Christian religion, but also of the morality as well. Of course, Christian morality was absolutely childish and contradictory: we had to get quit of it all.”

“But surely,” I insisted, “one of these days we shall have a scientific morality. The laws of health both of body and spirit will be ascertained and taught. And when once the canon is accepted and established, it will excite emotion and gradually become sacred, and so religion will again be brought back into life.”

“I see no need of it,” he retorted. “*On est sage en France*,” he went on: “we have the race morality of moderation in our bones: it’s rather an æsthetical than an ethical ideal, if you will; but we are moderate and prudent by nature, and that’s all one wants in life.”

“Men always need guidance,” I replied tentatively, “the example of the nobler spirits as to how far individual selfishness should go, and how it should be limited and restrained. In these matters the man of genius will always come to be regarded as sacred, if not divine. Humanity will always need teachers.”

“I don’t agree with you,” he retorted, smiling, “we’ll learn to walk by frequent fallings. We French have an ideal of wise and moderate living