

the fashion for subjectivity. When, however, I spoke of the good fortune of the Russian in not being obliged to take part in all these fashions, because he had already showed in his deep-hearted realism that it is possible to be true to reality, and yet be full of warmth and meaning, he again raised his hand to stop me, and blushed. I could not tell whether it was from modesty or whether he does not wish any longer to hear of the works of his "literary" period. I believe, however, that the noise of all this no longer reaches his ear. When I spoke with warm enthusiasm of the debt we all owe him, said that his art was a revelation to us, that through him we had first learned what poetic power lies in the simplest and deepest fidelity to nature, he stopped me in his gentle way. Only philanthropy is now a matter of any importance for him. Everything else is empty trifling. He said to me :

"You are still buried deep in materialism. You must see that you free yourself from that."

Nevertheless, he was good enough to recognise my honest purpose in seeking the truth, even though I do not succeed in finding it in all points as he believes he has found it.

I must certainly admit that in the late hour of the night, as he sat opposite me, his fine head leaning far back and resting on one hand, his glowing eyes making him seem, as it were, transparent, I had great difficulty in preserving a conventional bearing. Here was one of the greatest men of all times, who