

course, would have denied it with imprecations, but it is none the less true. Treitschke more or less consciously, and Nietzsche more or less unconsciously, gave articulate voice to the colossal swagger in stone and bronze with which the record of 1870 is written all over Germany.

Owing to the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine—as to which even Bismarck had misgivings—it became a political necessity to perpetuate and live up to the gospel of power. The present war is the logical outcome of the material and spiritual forces set in motion in 1871; and Nietzsche, more or less unconsciously I repeat, has provided for the average, intelligent, uncritical public—the Culture-Philistines as he himself called them—a philosophic justification of the spiritual development. That is where his direct influence is surely unmistakeable. The ruling caste troubles little about philosophic justification; but the average man hugs to his heart the philosopher's violently dogmatic asseverations, in semi-biblical rhythms, that force, rapacity, unscrupulousness, pitilessness, are indispensable parts of the higher ethics of the future. By proving that conscience, as a whole, is a despicable survival of 'slave morality', Nietzsche offers a potent anodyne to uneasy consciences. Is it to be doubted that millions of Germans<sup>1</sup> have recourse to this soothing drug when some trait of political or military 'master morality' affects them with a momentary qualm?

It may be argued that the Germans who enlist Nietzsche on the side of Prussian Imperialism flagrantly misread him. That is possible; but the trouble is that no human being can say how he is to be read aright.

<sup>1</sup> Nietzsche's works have had an enormous sale during the past twenty years, and the influence of his trenchant phrases of course extends far beyond the circle of those who have actually studied his works.