

bring about this combined energy, this unity of interests and of life in human society, is the task of the future and the ideal of Guyau. It is this which he sees realised in the future; it is this that gives him faith and hope. Inasmuch as his writings and speculations are inspired by this faith and hope, by the prophetic view of the future, his philosophy contains that element which existed in a high degree in German idealism in the beginning of the century, giving it a propelling force and animating it with life and vigour. It is interesting also to note that, as the German idealists attached themselves closely to the poetical and artistic creations of their age and drew inspiration from them, so likewise Guyau stands in immediate contact with the great literary forces of his country, notably with Victor Hugo, in whose poetical creations he finds many conscious or unconscious confirmations of his ideas, the poetical foreshadowing of his doctrine.

I shall have occasion to refer again to the fundamental conception which pervades all Guyau's writings. At present what interests us is, not so much his ethics and his religious philosophy, as his views on Art and the Beautiful. Next to Plato and the German idealists Guyau is the most important name in the philosophy of the Beautiful. His *Æsthetics* do not deal only with questions of taste, with psychological analysis and literary criticism, to which they have been confined in this country and latterly also in Germany; they deal also and pre-eminently with the larger question regarding the nature and essence of the Beautiful and the place which has to be assigned to the Beautiful and to Art in any