

EXCERPT

Joseph Déjacque: *The Future World (or, The Humanisphere)*
(1899)

Mutual liberty is the common law.
Émile de Girardin¹

*And the earth, which was dry, became green again,
and all were able to eat its fruits, and to come
and go without anyone saying to them:
Where are you going? You cannot go this way.
And the little children picked flowers, and brought
them to their mother, who smiled at them sweetly.
And there were neither poor nor rich, but everyone
had the things necessary to their needs in
abundance, because they all loved and aided
one another as brothers.*
(Words of a Believer)²

And right away, the Earth has changed its physiognomy. In place of the marshy wounds that devoured its cheeks shines an agricultural down, crops gilded by fertility. The mountains seem to aspire frenziedly the fresh air of liberty, and sway their fine plumage of foliage over their souls. The deserts of sand have given way to forests populated by oaks, cedars and palm trees, which spread underfoot a thick carpet of moss, a soft verdure speckled by all the flowers fond of cool shade and clear streams. The craters have been muzzled; their devastating eruptions have been silenced, and useful course has been given to those reservoirs of lava.

Air, fire and water, all the elements with destructive instincts, have been tamed, and, now captive under the gaze of humans, obey their slightest whim. The sky has been scaled. Electricity bears humans on wings and transports them in the clouds alongside aerial steamboats. It allows them to travel in a few seconds distances that would require entire months to cross on the backs of heavy marine vessels.

An immense network of irrigations covers the vast prairies, where the barriers have been thrown on the fire, and innumerable flocks destined for human alimentation are grazing placidly. Humans enthroned on machines of labor no longer fertilize the fields with the vapor of their bodies but with the sweat of locomotives.

Not only have the ruts in the fields been filled in, but the harrow has been passed over the frontiers of nations. Railways, bridges extended over straits, submarine tunnels, diving-boats and aerostats, moved by electricity, have made the entire globe a single city, of which one can make the tour in less than a day. The continents are the quarters of the districts of the universal city. Monumental habitations, disseminated in group in the midst of cultivated lands, are formed like squares. The globe is like a park of which the oceans are the water features; a child playing with a balloon can leap over them as easily a stream.

¹ The journalist and politician Émile Girardin (1802-1881), the pioneer of the French popular press, initially campaigned vigorously for the election of Louis-Napoléon as president of the Second Republic, but became a determined opponent after the coup. His opposition was, however, broadly tolerated, making him the most evident voice of protest, while more radical opponents were ruthlessly suppressed.

² *Paroles d'un croyant* (1834) was a collection of aphorisms by Hugues de Lammenais (1782-1854), which denounced the “conspiracy of kings and priests against the people”—a sentiment with which Déjacque agreed, although he had nothing else in common with the author, a conservative Catholic who believed that religion, not anarchism, was the only viable antidote to tyranny.

Human beings, now holding the scepter of science, have the power henceforth that was once attributed to the gods in the good old times of hallucinations and ignorance; they can make rain and good weather at will, commanding the seasons, which bow down before their master. Tropical plants bloom under uncovered skies in the polar regions; canals of boiling lava snake at their feet; the natural work of the globe and the artificial work of humans have transformed the temperature of the poles and unchained spring where perpetual winter once reigned.

All the cities and all the hamlets of the civilized world, its temples, its citadels, its palaces, its cottages, all of its luxuries and all of its miseries have been swept away from the soil like ordure from the public highway; nothing more remains of civilization but the historical cadaver, relegated to the Mont-Faucon of memory.³ A grandiose and elegant architecture, of which nothing that exists today can give a sketch, has replaced the meager proportions and stylistic poverties of civilized edifices.

On the site of Paris, a colossal construction rises up on foundations of granite and marble, its cast iron pillars of a prodigious thickness and height. Under its vast iron dome, outlined against the daylight, and posed like lace against a background of crustal, a million pedestrians can unite without being crowded. Circular galleries, stacked one atop another and planted with trees like boulevards, form an immense girdle around that immense circus, which is no less than twenty leagues in circumference.

In the middle of those galleries a railway transports people, in light and graceful carriages, from one point to another, picking them up and depositing them where they please. On each side of the railway is an avenue of moss, a lawn; and then a sandy avenue for riders; and then a flagstoned or wooden-tiled avenue; and then, finally, an avenue covered with a thick and soft carpet. All along those avenues, divans and rocking chairs with elastic mattresses, silken, velvet, woolen and Persian fabrics are lined up, and also benches and armchairs in varnished wood, marble or bronze, bare or garnished with seats, woven or leather-clad, in unified cloth or in spotted or striped fur.

On the edges of the avenues, flowers of all countries, blossoming on their stems, have long white marble troughs for beds. At intervals, light fountains stand out, some in white marble, in stucco, in agate and bronze, lead and solid silver, others in black marble, in violet breccia, in Sienna yellow, in malachite, in granite, in pebbles, in seashells and copper and gold and iron; the whole mixed together or divided with a perfect entente and harmony. Their form, infinitely varied, is cleverly animated. Sculptures, the work of skillful artists, animate the urns with ideal fantasies; in the evening the jets of clear water are mingled with jets and waves of light, like cascades of diamonds and lava that stream through the aquatic plants and flowers.

The pillars and the ceilings of the galleries are boldly and emphatically ornamented. It is neither Greek, Roman, Moorish, Gothic nor Renaissance but something recklessly beautiful, audaciously gracious, purity of profile combined with lasciviousness of contours; it is supple and sinewy. That ornamentation is to the ornamentation of our day as the majesty of the lion, that superb mane-bearer, is to the awkwardness and nudity of the rat. Stone, wood and metal concur in the decoration of those galleries, and are married harmoniously there. Against backgrounds of gold and silver, sculptures in oak-wood, maple and ebony are outlined. On fields of pastel color or in severe relief, there is scroll-work of galvanized iron and lead. Muscles of bronze and marble divide that rich flesh into a thousand compartments, and link it in unity.

Opulent draperies hang along arcades that, on the inner side, open over the circus and on the external side are sealed against seasonal bad weather by a crystal wall. In the interior, colonnades form verandas supporting at their summit a crenellated entablature, a platform or terrace, like a fortress or a dovecote, and give passage through those architectural openings to visitors who descend or rise up by means of a mobile balcony that travels up or down at the slightest pressure.

These circular galleries, regular with regard to the ensemble but different in detail, are interrupted at intervals by projecting constructions of an even more imposing character. In these pavilions, which are like the links of the chain of avenues, there are rooms providing refreshments and collations, rooms for

³ The reference is to the Gibbet of Montfaucon, the gallows and gibbet of the French kings prior to Louis XIII—a favorite symbolic motif of French historical novelists of the nineteenth century.

reading and conversation, games and repose, amusements and recreations, for adults as well as children. In these retreats, open to the variegated crowd of pedestrians, all the refinements of luxury that would be called aristocratic in our day seem to have been accumulated; everything there partakes of a magical richness and elegance.

Those pavilions, in their inner faces, have as many peristyles by which one enters the immense arena. That new Coliseum, of which we have just explored the steps, has its arena like the ancient coliseums; it is a park dotted with clumps of trees, lawns, flower-beds, rustic grottos and sumptuous kiosks. The Seine is an infinity of channels and basins of all forms, running water and still water, flowing slowly or rapidly, resting or snaking through the middle of all that.

Broad avenues of chestnut-trees and narrow pathways bordered by hedges, covered with honeysuckle and hawthorn, furrow it in all directions. Groups in bronze and marble, masterpieces of statuary, decorate those avenues, enthroned there at intervals, or are mirrored at the bend of some hidden pathway in the crystal of a solitary fountain.

In the evening, little globes of electric light project their timid radiance like stars over the shade of the verdure, and further away, above the most uncovered part, an enormous sphere of electric light pour torrents of solar clarity from its orb. Heaters, infernal braziers, and ventilators, Aeolian lungs, combine their efforts to produce a climate in the enclosure that is always temperate, a perpetual flourishing. It is something a thousand and one times more magical than the palaces and gardens of the Thousand-and-One Nights.

Aerostatic yawls and aerial canoes traverse that free human aviary like flying birds, coming and going, entering and exiting, pursuing one another or crossing paths in their capricious evolutions. Here are multicolored butterflies that flutter from flower to flower; there, birds from the equatorial zones that frolic in full liberty. Children amuse themselves on the lawns with roe deer and lions that have become domestic or “civilized” animals, and make use of them like horses to ride or harness to their wheelbarrows. Panthers domesticated like cats climb the columns or trees, or leap on to the rocky ledges of grottos, and in their superb bounds or capricious affectations design the most gracious curves around people, crawling at their feet, soliciting a gaze or a caress.

Subterranean organs activated by steam or electricity make their sonorous voices heard at times and, like a common concert, mingle their bass notes with the high-pitched chirping of birdsong. Almost in the center of that valley of harmony a labyrinth rises up, on top of which is a clump of palm trees. At the foot of the palm trees is an ivory and oak-wood podium, beautifully contoured.

Above the podium, backed up against the trunks of the palm trees, a large polished steel crown is suspended, surrounded by a blue satin toque proportionate to the crown. Drapery in velvet and grenadine silk, fringed with silver and supported by gold torsades, falls in waves behind. On the front of those tresses is a large diamond star surmounted by a crescent and a plume of bright flame. To either side are two bronze hands, similarly attached to the tresses, one to the right and the other to the left, serving as clasps, and also as wings to the bright flame.

It is to that podium that people who want to address the crowd go up on days of solemnity. It is understandable that, in order to dare to approach such a pulpit, it is necessary to be something more than our orators and parliamentarians. Those would be literally rushed beneath the moral weight of that crown; they would feel the floor underfoot quivering with shame and parting in order to swallow them. Thus, the people who come to take their place under that diadem and on those allegorical steps are only those who have to spread, from the height of that urn of intelligence, some great and fecund thought: a pearl framed in brilliant speech, which, emerging from the crowd, falls back upon the crowd like dew on flowers.

The podium is free; anyone who wants to can mount it—but only those who want to can. In this world, which is very different from ours, one has the sublime pride of only raising one’s voice in public to say something. Icarus would not have dared to try his wings; he would have been too certain of falling. It requires better than an intelligence of wax to attempt the ascension of speech before such an audience.

An ingenious acoustic mechanism permits the millions of listeners to hear all the orator’s words distinctly, no matter how far away from him they are. Admirably perfected optical instruments permit them to follow the movements, of both gesture and physiognomy, at a great distance.

Viewed by the eyes of the Past, that colossal carousel, with all its human waves, has the grandiose aspect of the Ocean. Viewed by the eyes of the Future, our academies of legislatures and our democratic councils, the Palais Bourbon and the Salle Martel, only appear to me in the form of a glass of water. That is because humans see things differently according to whether the panorama of the centuries rolls up or unrolls its perspectives. What was utopia for me was quite ordinary for them. They had dreams far more gigantic, which my petty imagination could not embrace. I heard mention of projects so far beyond the vulgar that I could scarcely grasp their meaning.

What a figure, I said to myself, a civilized individual from the Rue des Lombards would cut in the midst of these people. He could put his head in a mortar, crush it like a peach-stone and triturate the brain, but he would never be able to extract a gleam of intelligence capable of comprehending the slightest element of it.

The monument of which I have tried to provide a sketch is the palace—or, to put it better, the temple—of arts and sciences, something akin, in the ulterior society, to what the Capitol and the Forum were in anterior society. It is the central point at which all the radii of a circle terminate, and from which they spread out to all the points of the circumference. It is called the Cyclideon—which is to say, the place dedicated to the circulation of ideas, and, in consequence, everything that is the product of those ideas; it is the altar of the social religion, the anarchistic church of utopian humankind.

Among the children of this new world there is neither a divinity nor a papacy, neither royalty nor gods, neither kings nor priests. Not wanting to be slaves, they do not want masters. Being free, they have no religion but liberty, so they practice it from childhood and confess it at every moment until the last moments of their life. Their anarchist communion has no need of bibles or codes; everyone bears within himself his law and his prophet, his heart and his intelligence.

They do not do to others what they would not want others to do to them, and they do for others what they would want others to do for them. Wanting good for themselves, they want it for others. Not wanting anyone to infringe their free will, they do not infringe the free will of others. Loving and beloved, they want to grow in love and multiply by love. Human beings, they render a hundredfold to humanity that which, as children, they cost the care of humanity, and to their neighbor the sympathies due to their neighbor: gaze for gaze, smile for smile, kiss for kiss, and, if necessary, bite for bite. They know that they have but one common mother, Humanity, that they are all brothers, and that brotherhood has obligations.

They are conscious that harmony can only exist by virtue of the collaboration of individual wills; that the natural law of attractions is the law of the infinitely small as well as the infinitely large; that nothing that is sociable can move except of its own accord; that it is universal thought, the unity of unities, the sphere of spheres, that is immanent and permanent in the eternal movement; and they say to one another: “Outside of anarchy, there is no salvation!” And they add: “Happiness is of our world.”

And all of them are happy, and all of them encounter on their path the satisfactions that they seek. They knock, and all doors open; sympathy, love, pleasures and joys respond to the beating of their heart, the pulsations of their brain, the hammer-blows of their arms; and, standing on their thresholds, they salute the brother the lover, the worker; and Science, like a humble servant, introduces them further forward into the vestibule of the unknown.

And you would want a religion and laws among such a people? Get away! Either it would be a peril or it would be an *hors-d'oeuvre*. Laws and religions are made for slaves by masters who are also slaves. Free human beings bear neither spiritual bonds nor temporal chains. Human beings are their own sovereigns and their own gods.

Myself and my right: that is the motto.

On the sites of today's principal cities, Cyclideons have been constructed, not similar but analogous to the one I have described. That day, there was a universal exhibition in that one of the products of human genius. Sometimes there were only partial exhibitions on a district or continental level. It was on the occasion of that solemnity that three or four orators had made speeches.

In that cyclical of the poetic labors of the hand and intelligence, an entire museum of marvels was exposed. Agriculture had brought its sheaves, horticulture its flowers and fruits, industry its fabrics, its furniture and its decorations, science all its gears, its mechanisms, its statistics and its theories.

Architecture had brought its plans, painting its pictures, sculpture and statuary their ornaments and images, music and poetry the purest of their songs. The arts, like the sciences, had put their richest jewels into that casket.

It was not a competition like our competitions. There was no jury of admission and no jury of recompense, no triage by vote or scrutiny, no grand prizes awarded by official judges, no crowns, brevets, laurels or medals. The free and great public voice is the only sovereign judge. It is to please that authority of opinion that everyone comes to submit his work, and that is what, in passing before the various works, awards them, in accordance with their particular aptitudes, not toys of distinction but admiration of varying intensity, more or less attentive or disdainful examination.

Thus, its judgments are always equitable, always condemning the least worthy, always praising the most valiant, always encouraging emulation, for the weak as well as the strong. It is the great redresser of wrongs; it testifies to each individually whether they have followed their part of their vocation to a greater or lesser extent, or whether they have started therefrom—and the future takes charge of ratifying its maternal observations. And all children grow up desirous of that mutual instruction, for all of them have the ambition to distinguish themselves equally in their various works.

On emerging from that festival, I mounted an aerostat with my guide; we sailed through the air for a few minutes and soon disembarked on the perron of one of the squares of the universal city. It is something like a phalanstery, but without any hierarchy, where everything, on the contrary testified to liberty and equality, the most complete anarchy. Its form is almost that of a star, but its rectangular faces are not symmetrical; each has its particular type. The architecture seems to have modeled in the folds of its structural robe all the undulations of grace, all the curves of beauty. The interior decorations are elegantly sumptuous. It is a fortunate mixture of luxury and simplicity, a harmonious choice of contrasts. The population is between five and six thousand individuals.

Every man and every woman has their own separate apartment, which is composed of two bedrooms, a bathroom or dressing-room, a work-room or study, a small drawing room and a terrace or hothouse filled with flowers and verdure. The whole is aerated by ventilators and warmed by central heating—which does not prevent there also being fireplaces for the delight of the eye; in winter, for want of sunlight, one loves to see a blaze in the hearth. Every apartment also has water and light on tap. The furniture is of an artistic splendor that would put the ragged pretensions of our contemporary aristocracy to shame. And everyone can add to it or restrict it to their taste by simplifying or enriching the details; they only have to express the desire. If they want to occupy the apartment for a long time, they do; if they want to change frequently, they change. Nothing is easier; there are always vacant ones at their disposal.

By virtue of their situation, those apartments permit everyone to go in and out without being seen. On one side, the interior, there is a vast gallery giving access to the park, which serves as the main artery for the circulation of the inhabitants. On the other side, the exterior, there is a labyrinth of small intimate galleries where modesty and amour can glide unobserved.

In this anarchic society, the family and legal property are dead institutions, hieroglyphics that have lost their meaning. One and indivisible is the family, one and indivisible is property. In that fraternal community, labor is free and amour is free. Everything that is the work of the hand or intelligence, everything that is an object of production or consumption, common capital and collective property BELONGS TO ALL AND EVERYONE. Everything that is the work of the heart, everything that is of intimate essence, sensation and individual sentiment, individual capital, corporeal property, everything, in sum, that is human in the proper sense of the word, whatever one's age or sex BELONGS TO THE INDIVIDUAL.

Producers and consumers produce and consume as it pleases them, when it pleases them and where it pleases them. *Liberty is freedom.* No one asks them: Why this? why that?

The children of the rich, in the hour of recreation, taking from the toy basket a hoop or a racket, a ball or a bow, amuse themselves together or separately, and change their comrades or their playthings as the whim takes them, but always solicited to movement by the sight of others and the needs of their own turbulent nature; so too do the children of anarchy, men or women, choose in the community the tool and

the labor that suits them, work in isolation or in groups, and change tools or groups in accordance with their caprice, but always stimulated to production by the example of others and the charm they experience in the collective enjoyment of creation.

Again, at a dinner of friends, the guests drink and eat at the same table, taking as they choose a morsel from one dish or another, a glass of one wine or another, without any of them abusing with gluttony a delicacy or a rare wine; so too do the people of the future, at the banquet of the anarchic communion, consume in accordance with their taste everything that seems agreeable to them, without ever abusing a toothsome delicacy or a rare product. They are more likely only to take the smaller share.

In a restaurant, in civilized countries, the traveling salesman, the businessman, the bourgeois, is coarse and brutal; he is unknown and he is paying; that is legal morality. At a meal of selected individuals, the man of the world, the aristocrat, is decent and courteous; he wears his name blazoned on his visage, and the instinct of reciprocity commands him to civility. Who obliges others obliges himself. That is free morality. Like that victim of commerce, legal liberty is coarse and brutal; anarchic liberty has all the delicacies of good company.

Men and women make love when it pleases them, as it pleases them, and with whom they please: full and entire liberty on one part and the other. No convention or legal contract binds them. Attraction is their only chain, pleasure their only rule. Thus, amour is more durable and is surrounded by more modesty than among the civilized. The mystery with which they are pleased to envelop their free liaisons adds an ever-renewed charm to them. They regard it as an offense against the chastity of mores and a provocation to jealous infirmities to unveil to public view the intimacy of their sexual amours.

Everyone, in public, has affectionate gazes for one another, the gazes of brothers and sisters, the warm radiation of lively amity; the spark of passion only gleams in secret, like the stars, those chaste glimmers, in the somber azure of the night. Happy amours seek shadow and solitude. It is from those hidden springs that limpid joys are drawn. There are sacraments for hearts smitten with one another that ought to remain unknown to the profane.

In the civilized world, men and women pin up at the Mairie and the church the notification of their union, and display the nudity of their marriage to the light of a fancy dress ball, in the middle of a quadrille, with the accompaniment of the orchestra: all the glare and bacchanal desired. And, scandalous custom of the nuptial brothel, at the prescribed hour, the vine-leaf is snatched from the lips of the bride by the hands of matrons, and she is prepared ignobly for ignoble bestialities.

In the anarchic world, one would turn away, blushing and disgusted, from that prostitution and those obscenities. All those men and all those women sold, that commerce of cashmeres and notaries, of cotillons and feasting, that profanation of human flesh and thought, that crapularization of amour...if the people of the future could form a image of it, they would shiver with horror, as we shiver, in a dream, at the thought of a horrid reptile strangling us with its cold and deadly coils and inundating our face with its warm and venomous drool.

In the anarchic world, a man can have several lovers, and a woman several lovers, without any dubiousness. Temperaments are not all the same, and attractions are proportionate to our needs. A man might love one woman for one thing, and love another for something else, and reciprocally. Where is the harm, if they are obeying their destiny? The harm would be in violating it, not in satisfying it. Free love is like fire; it purifies everything.

What I can say is that in the anarchic world, inconstant amours are very small in number, and constant amours, exclusive amours, amours *à deux*, are very considerable in number. Vagabond amour is the search for amour, it is the voyage, the emotions and the fatigue, not the goal. Unique amour, the perpetual amour of two hearts confounded in a reciprocal attraction, is the supreme felicity of lovers, the apogee of sexual evolution; it is the blazing hearth to which all pilgrimages tend, the apotheosis of the human couple, happiness at its zenith.

At the moment when one loves, is not doubting the perpetuity of one's love crippling it? Either one doubts, in which case one does not love, or one loves, in which case one does not doubt.

In the old society, love was scarcely possible; it was never more than a momentary illusion; too many counter-natural prejudices and interests were there to dissipate it; it was a fire extinct as soon as it

was lit, and which evaporated in smoke. In the new society, love is too vivid a flame, and the breezes that surround it are too pure and gentle, such sweet and human poetry, for it not to be fortified in its ardor and not to be excited by contact with all those breaths. Far from impoverishing it, everything that it encounters serves as an aliment.

Here, the young man and the young woman have all the time needed to get to know one another. Equal in education as in social position, brother and sister in arts and sciences, in studies and professional labors, free in their steps, their gestures, their speech and their gazes, free in thought as in action, they have only to seek in order to find. Nothing is opposed to their meeting; nothing is opposed to the modesty of their first confessions, or to the sensuality of their first kisses. They love one another not because it is the will of their parents, the interests of trade, or by virtue of genital or cerebral debauchery, but because nature has disposed them toward one another, because it has made twin hearts of them, united by the same current of thoughts: a sympathetic fluid that reverberates all their pulsations and puts their two beings in communication.

Is the love of the civilized—the love of naked forms, public love, legal love—really love? There is a savagery in it, something like a coarse and brutal intuition. Love among the harmonized, love artistically veiled, caste and dignified love, although sensitive and passionate, anarchic love: that is natural and human love, the ideal realized, its scientification. The former is animal love, the latter hominal love. One is obscenity and venality, the sensation of the brute, the sentiment of the cretin; the other is decency and liberty, the sensation and sentiment of human being.

The principle of amour is one and the same, for the savage as for the hominal, for the humans of civilized times as for the humans of harmonic times: it is beauty. Except that beauty, for the anterior and inferior humans, for the fossils of humankind, was sanguine and replete with carnality, or deformed and variegated envelopment, a luxury of meat or crinoline, ribbons and ostrich or seabird plumes, the Hottentot Venus or the drawing-room doll. For the ulterior and superior humans, beauty is not only in the carnal fabric, but also in the purity of forms, the grace and majesty of manners, the elegance and choice of adornments, and above all in the luxury and magnificence of the heart and the brain.

Among the perfectibilized, beauty is not a privilege of birth or the reflection of a golden crown, as in savage and bourgeois societies; it is the daughter of its endeavors, the fruits of its own labor, a personal acquisition. What illuminates the visage is not the exterior reflection of an inert metal, so to speak—a vile thing—but the radiation of all that there is in human being of ideas in effervescence, of vaporized passions, of heat in motion, a familiar gravitation that, having arrived at the summit of the human body, the skull, filters through its pores, flowing in a stream of impalpable pearls, and, as a luminous essence, inundates all external forms and movements, consecrating the individual.

What is, in the final analysis, physical beauty? The stem of which mental beauty is the flower. All beauty comes from endeavor; it is by endeavor that it grows and blossoms on everyone's forehead, an intellectual and moral crown.

Essentially, carnal amour, the amour that is only instinct, is for the human race merely the indication, the root of love. It vegetates, opaque and devoid of perfume, buried in the filth of the soil and delivered to the embraces of that mud. Hominalized amour, the amour that is above all intelligence, is, in the corolla of transparent flesh, the corporeal enamel from which embalmed emanations escape, a free incense of invisible atoms that cover the fields and rise up to the clouds.

To Humanity in seed, filthy amour

To Humanity in flower, the flower of amour.