



INTRODUCTION

THOMAS HOBBES was born at Malmesbury on April 5, 1588. His father, vicar of Charlton and Westport, near Malmesbury, was, says Aubrey, "one of the ignorant Sir Johns of Queen Elizabeth's time; could only read the prayers of the Church and the homilies; and valued not learning, as not knowing the sweetness of it." A little after the birth of his son, he struck a man, "being provoked," and was forced to fly for it. The family were brought up by an uncle, Francis Hobbes, a glover of Malmesbury. Thomas was sent to school at Westport Church and thence went to Magdalen Hall at Oxford in 1603. His career at school was the more distinguished. At the University "he did not much care for logic yet he learned it, and thought himself a good disputant. He tooke great delight there to go to the bookbinders' and stationers' shops, and lye gaping on mappes." After he had taken his B.A. degree, the Principal of Magdalen Hall recommended him to the Cavendish family, who wanted a tutor for William Cavendish, afterwards second Earl of Devonshire. Hobbes stayed with him till 1628, first making the grand tour with his pupil and then living for some eighteen years as a member of the family. Aubrey tells us that "he was his lordship's page and rode a hunting and hawking with him and kept his privy purse. By this way of life he had almost forgott his Latin. He then bought him bookes of an Amsterdam print, that he might carry in his pocket (particularly Cæsar's Commentaries), which he did read in the lobby or antechamber, whilst his lord was making his visits:" also that "about these times Mr. Thomas Hobbes was much addicted to music and practised on the bass-viol." He knew Bacon and used to act as his secretary. "His Lordship (viz. Bacon) would often say that he better liked Mr. Hobbes's taking his thoughts than any of the others, because he understood what he wrote."

The second earl died in 1628, and Hobbes was thrown out of employment. He became travelling tutor to the son of Sir Gervase Clinton for eighteen months. It was at this time, according to Aubrey, that the first incident occurred which took him from the classics (he had already written though not

published his translation of Thucvdides) to science and pillosophy. "He was forty years old before he looked on geometry which happened accidentally; being in a gentleman's library Euclid's Elements lay open, and it was the 47th Proposition, Lib. I. So he reads the proposition. 'By God,' ays he, 'this is impossible.' So he reads the demonstration of it, which referred him back to another which he also read et sic deinceps, that at last he was demonstratively convinced of that truth. This made him in love with geometry." Probably somewhere about the same time occurred another incident which set the train of his thoughts. He was at a gathering of learned men when the question was asked. What is sensation? Hobbes, thinking over the question, came to the conclusion that the only differences in things could be differences in their motions, and that therefore sensation must be a kind of movement. This threw him back again to geometry. In 1631 he was invited to return from Paris, where he had been staying, to be tutor to the third Earl of Devonshire, then a boy of fourteen. He travelled with this youth in 1634 and met on this journey the famous scientists on the Continent. He saw Galileo and became acquainted with Mersenne, the friend of Descartes. Hobbes retained his connection with the Cavendish family to the end of his life. He returned to England in 1637. In 1640 the troubles which led to the summoning of the Short Parliament turned Hobbes' attention from mathematics to politics. He was prepared, as we shall see, to apply his mechanical principles to politics as to all other subjects. He "wrote a little treatise in English, wherein he did sett forth and demonstrate that the sayd power and rights were inseparably annexed to the sovereignty, which sovereignty they did not then deny to be in the King; but it seems understood not, or would not understand that inseparability. Of this treatise, though not printed, many gentlemen had copies, which occasioned much talk of the author; and had not his Majestie dissolved the Parliament, it had brought him in danger of his life." Bishop Mainwaring was put in the Tower for preaching absolutism. "Then, thought Mr. Hobbes, it is time now for me to shift for myself, and so went into France, and resided at Paris." There he stayed for eleven years. He took part in controversy with Descartes, little to the satisfaction of either disputant, but most of his time was devoted to politics. "For ten years together his thoughts were much, or almost altogether, un-

hinged from the mathematiques; but chiefly intent on his De Cive, and after that on his Leviathan, which was a great putt-back to his mathematicall improvement." The De Cive was the first elaboration of his political pamphlet, the Leviathan the second. Aubrev tells us how the latter book was written. "He walked much and contemplated, and he had in the head of his cane a pen and inkhorn, carried always a notebook in his pocket, and as soon as a thought darted, he presently entered it into his booke, or otherwise might have lost it. had drawne the designe of the book into chapters, and knew whereabout it would come in. Thus that booke was made." In the meantime Paris became the home of English refugees. Hobbes was appointed mathematical tutor to the young Prince of Wales. The Leviathan was published in London in 1651. When Charles returned to Paris after Worcester. Hobbes presented him with a manuscript copy of the Leviathan "engrossed in velume in a marvellous fair hand." For all that, the Leviathan got Hobbes into trouble. That is not surprising. The last part of the Leviathan consists of violent abuse of the Roman Catholic Church under the pleasing title of the "Kingdom of Darkness." The fantastic theology of the third part is, to say the least, not orthodox. Even the political doctrines were no longer so pleasing to the Royalist party as they had been in 1640, not because Hobbes had changed, but because the Royalists had been beaten. Hobbes' doctrine is a vindication of the absolute rights of whatever government happens to be in power, not one to suit with the divine right of kings under the Commonwealth. "All honest men here," says a Royalist in Paris at the time, "are very glad that the king has at length banished from his court that father of atheists, Mr. Hobbes, who, it is said, hath rendered all the queen's court and very many of the Duke of York's family atheists, and if he had been suffered, would have done his best to have likewise poisoned the king's court."

Hobbes fled to England and made his submission to the Council of State. He lived quietly in England for the rest of his life, making his peace with the king after the Restoration. He even came into favour at court. "His majesty's favours were redintegrated to him, and order was given that he should have free accesse to his majesty, who was always much delighted in his witt and smart repartees. The witts at court were wont to bayte him, but he would make his part good and feared none of them. The king would call him the Beare:

Here comes the Beare to be bayted." This honour did not last for long. After 1666 there were murmurings against his atheism. A committee of the parliament was instructed to receive information on the Leviathan. "There was a report," says Aubrey, "that some of the bishops made a motion to have the good old gentleman burned for a heretique." Nothing happened except that Hobbes burned some of his papers in a needless alarm, that the publication of Behemoth, his book on the causes of the Civil War, was forbidden, and that Pepysin 1688 had to pay twenty-four shillings for a second-hand copy of the Leviathan, as the bishops would not allow it to be reprinted.

Meanwhile Hobbes had been developing his scientific and philosophical doctrines. The *De Corpore*, the exposition of his scientific materialism, was published in 1655. Unfortunately it contained a rash mathematical adventure, Hobbes' claim to have squared the circle, which drew him into a long and fierce controversy with the Savilian professor of mathematics at Oxford—Wallis. Hobbes was wrong from the beginning, but he kept up the fight with pamphlet and counterpamphlet, giving himself away more and more hopelessly as he went on, till he was ninety years old. His love for geometry was greater than his knowledge.

In 1675 he left London for good, and spent the next four years, till his death, at Chatsworth and Hardwick.

His character is revealed in the Leviathan. "He had a sharp witte," says Aubrey. The Leviathan is full of pithy sayings, of a rather genial sarcasm. "Words are wise men's counters, they do but reckon by them; but they are the money of fooles, that value them by the authority of an Aristotle, a Cicero, or a Thomas, or any other doctor whatsoever if but a man." "Aristotle in the first booke of his Politiques, for a foundation of his doctrine, maketh men by Nature, some more worthy to command meaning the wiser sort (such as he thought himself to be for his philosophy); others to serve (meaning those that had strong bodies but were not philosophers as he)." "It is with the mysteries of our religion, as with wholesome pills for the sick, which swallowed whole have the virtue to cure, but chewed are for the most part cast up again without effect."

He was, as he himself says with a certain complacency, naturally timorous. The *Leviathan* is based on the assumption that the first law of man's nature is to seek peace and

that there is nothing for which it is worth while even to risk one's life. His main virtue, as also his supreme defect, is his realism, if we use that term of a capacity of seeing with great clearness and honesty everything in human behaviour which one without faith or emotion can see. He was almost overwhelmingly sensible. "Being mostly of a cheerful and pleasant humour, he affected not at all austerity and gravity and to look severe. He considered gravity and heavinesse of countenance not so good marks of assurance of God's favour as a cheerful, charitable, and upright behaviour, which are better signes of religion than the zealous maintaining of controverted doctrines." It was like Hobbes to remember of doctrines only that they were controverted. He was, as we have seen, in love with geometry and had a passion for reasoning, but for all that he wrote his autobiography in Latin elegaic verse he had not much poetry in him. "He had alwayes bookes of prick-song lying on his table—e.g. of H. Lawes' songs—which at night, when he was abed, and the doors made fast, and was sure nobody heard him, he sang aloud (not that he had a good voice) but for his health's sake: he did believe it did his lunges good, and conduced much to prolong his life." The only passages in the Leviathan that come near poetry are those inspired by fear. "Every man, especially those that are over-provident, are in an estate like to that of Prometheus. For as Prometheus (which interpreted is the prudent man) was bound to the hill Caucasus, a place of large prospect, where, an eagle feeding on his liver, devoured in the day as much as was repaired in the night; so that man, which looks too far before him, in the case of future time, hath his heart all the day long gnawed on by feare of death, poverty, or other calamity, and has no repose; nor pause of his anxiety, but in sleep." He had Meredith's Comic Spirit with the poetry out of it and fear "sitting crowned on the grave thereof."

The Leviathan has often been dismissed as a book written to justify a particular and temporal purpose. We are often told nowadays that it was written to defend Stuart absolutism. His enemies accused him of writing it "to flatter Oliver." Both accusations are unjust. Hobbes pleased neither party, for his purpose was to carry out what he calls "the first and fundamentall Law of Nature, which is to seek peace and follow it." There would have been no Civil War, he was sure, if men had known the truth of the doctrines he had

discovered. The Leviathan, indeed, was allowed to have an immediate occasion. Published in 1651, it justified those of the king's party who had given in to parliament after Worcester when the king's cause was hopeless, a thoroughly Hobbesian purpose. But whether that or the wider and nobler purpose of saving England from civil war in the future was uppermost in Hobbes' mind, he would never have allowed that the arguments of the Leviathan had been in any way wrested to suit a purpose. For his account of the state was meant to be essentially scientific. deduced from the eternal nature of man. depending on immutable laws of nature. principles were for urgent immediate application only because they had been so lamentably neglected. They were as true of the states of Greece and Rome as of the modern nation state of the seventeenth century. "For though in all places of the world," he says, "men should lay the foundation of their houses on the sand, it could not thence be inferred that it so ought to be. The skill of making and maintaining commonwealths consisteth in certain Rules, as doth Arithmetique and Geometry; not (as tennis play) on practise only; which Rules, neither poor men have the leisure, nor men that have had the leisure, have hitherto had the curiosity or the method to find out." Yet at the same time, if the main argument of the Leviathan is meant to be of universal application, its expression is determined largely by temporal circumstances and by Hobbes' opposition to contemporary doctrines, which, as he thought, were endangering the state. The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries saw the birth of the modern state. The Reformation had destroyed the basis of the mediæval. That had rested on a religious basis, on the common acceptance on the part of kings and people of one religion. Obedience to law was a part of men's obedience to God. The ruler had behind him the authority of God; but if he issued commands which were clearly against the law of God, he was clearly not acting as ruler, and might be disobeyed. The ruler was above his own laws but under God's or under the law of nature. Obviously the political importance of this doctrine will depend on who is to say what is and what is not according to the law of nature. The law of nature had found formulation in two ways: Firstly, in the principles of law enunciated and followed in the courts, and secondly, in the declarations of the Church. The political importance of the first was seen in the claims of common law to override statute law; the courts would not

recognise a command of the sovereign which was against the law of nature as formulated in common law; of the second in the claim of the Church to the right to dispense subjects of their duty of obedience to the sovereign. These checks were salutary so long as all inhabitants of the state recognised a common authority. After the Reformation, however, the state was threatened by the control of an alien Church. The changing times demanded new legislation and new powers for the government, which suited ill with the predominance of common over statute law. Further, the doctrine of the right of private judgment introduced by the Reformation gave rise to new and serious complications. For if it is the right of each and every individual to decide for himself what is and what is not according to the law of nature, he must decide for himself when he is and when he is not to obey the law of the state, and if the state is to respect his decisions, any perverse individual may hold up the government. We find Cromwell, for example, complaining to the Levellers that the doctrine of the law of nature may be carried too far.

Hobbes is well aware of all these dangers to the modern state. The great common lawyers like Coke had been on the parliament side. Hobbes is therefore earnest in his account of the laws of nature, in Chapters XIV., XV., and again in Chapter XXVI., to insist that the laws of nature are only binding when they are also commands of the sovereign. He first gave clear enunciation to the necessary supremacy of statute over common law, which is now a commonplace of government. is continually girding at the individuals who pretend that their conscience forbids them to obey the law. "If men were at liberty to take for God's commandements their own dreams and fancies, or the dreams and fancies of private men, scarce two men would agree upon what is God's commandement: and yet in respect of them, every man would despise the Commandements of the Commonwealth." "The Diseases of a Commonwealth proceed from the poison of seditious doctrines; whereof one is That every private man is Judge of Good and Evill actions. This is true in the condition of their Nature, when there are no Civill Lawes, and also under Civill government, in such cases as are not determined by the Law. But otherwise it is manifest, that the measure of Good and Evill actions, is the Civill Law; and the Judge the Legislator, who is alwayes Representative of the Commonwealth. From this false doctrine, men are disposed to debate with themselves and

dispute the commands of the Commonwealth: and afterwards to obey. or disobey them, as in their private judgements they shall think fit. Whereby the Commonwealth is distracted and Weakened. Another doctrine repugnant to Civill Society is that whatsoever a man does against his Conscience, is Sinne; and it dependeth on the presumption of making himself judge of Good and Evill." A third is, "That Faith and Sanctity are not to be attained by Study and Reason, but by supernatural Inspiration or Infusion," or again, "When Christian men take not their Christian sovereign for God's Prophet. they must either take their owne Dreames, for the Prophecy they mean to be governed by, and the tumour of their hearts for the Spirit of God; or they must suffer themselves to be lead by some strange Prince; or by some of their fellow subjects. that can be witch them by slaunder of the government, into rebellion, without other miracle to confirm their calling, than sometimes an extraordinary successe, and Impunity; and by this means destroying all laws, both divine and humane, reduce all Order, Government and Society, to the first Chaos of Violence and Civill Warre."

There must, therefore, be some authority to declare among the diversity of men's opinions what is right and what is wrong, what is and what is not in accordance with the law of nature. If that authority be other than the sovereign, there will be conflict between it and the sovereign. The claim to iurisdiction over spiritual matters is the head and front of the Church's offending. "There be also that think there may be more soules (that is more Soveraigns) than one in a Commonwealth: and set up a Supremacy against the Soveraignty; Canons against Lawes: and a Ghostly Authority against the Civill: working on men's minds, with words and distinctions, that of themselves signific nothing, but bravery (by their obscurity) that there walketh (as some think invisibly) another Kingdome, as it were a Kingdom of Fayries, in the dark. . . . For notwithstanding the insignificant distinction of Temporall and Ghostly, they are still two Kingdomes, and every Subject is subject to two Masters. For seeing the Ghostly Power challengeth the Right to declare what is Sinne, it challengeth by consequence the right to declare what is Law (Sinne being nothing but the transgression of the Law:) and again the Civill Power challenging to declare what is Law. every Subject must obey two Masters, who both will have their Commands be observed as Law; which is impossible.

Or, if it be but one Kingdome, either the Civill, which is the power of the Commonwealth, must be subordinate to the Ghostly and then there is no Soveraingty but the Ghostly: or the Ghostly must be subordinate to the Temporall, and then there is no Supremacy but the Temporall."

Hobbes is prepared to assert for the sovereign all the powers that the most extreme Papalist ever claimed for the Pope. He is therefore a thoroughgoing Erastian. The Church is to be controlled entirely and absolutely by the Sovereign in spite of all that Roman Catholics or Presbyterians may say. Against the claims of the Roman Catholic Church he makes unceasing war. It is "the Kingdome of Darknesse," "a Confederacy of Deceivers, that to obtain dominion over men in this present world, endeavour by dark and erroneous Doctrines, to extinguish in them the Light, both of Nature and of the Gospell; and so to disprepare them for the Kingdome of God to come."

"As often as there is any repugnancy between the Politicall designs of the Pope and other Christian Princes, as there is very often, there ariseth such a mist amongst their subjects, that they know not a stranger that thrusteth himself into the throne of their lawfull Prince, from him whom they had themselves placed there; and in this Darknesse of mind, are made to fight one against another, without discerning their enemies from their friends, under the conduct of another man's ambition."

All these dangerous doctrines rested on the accepted doctrine of the law of nature, and with this Hobbes deals in characteristic fashion. He gives a list of the laws of nature in Chapters XIV. and XV., adding two of his own, but with him the expression "laws of nature" has an entirely new implication. The doctrine depended on the unquestioned assumption that the moral law was binding on all men both as individuals and as state functionaries. It implied that law depends upon morality. Hobbes tries to show that morality rests on law. He was not prepared to allow that morality could be the ultimate basis of the state, for men differed so in their opinions that no secure basis could be found in their moral opinions and were yet so self-confident that they would trust no man to tell them what was right and wrong. But though men differ in their opinions and their respect for authority, they are all alike in their desires. They all desire self-preservation, and all agree that it is better to be alive than dead. To the ordinary list of the laws of nature. Hobbes

prefaces two of his own. "The first and fundamentall lawof nature is to seek peace and follow it. The Second the Summe of the Right of Nature is By all means we can to defend ourselves." Now these are obviously not laws in the sense of commands or of principles of how we ought to act. They purport to be rather what we should call scientific laws, statements of how human nature necessarily behaves. What are ordinarily called moral laws are, according to Hobbes, merely methods of achieving the end of self-preservation which is fundamental in man. "These dictates of Reason, men use to call by the name of Lawes, but improperly: for they are but Conclusions or Theoremes concerning what conduceth to the conservation and defence of themselves." "The Laws of Nature are Immutable and Eternall: For Injustice, Ingratitude, Arrogance, Pride, Iniquity, Acception of persons, and the rest can never be made lawfull. For it can never be that Warre shall preserve life and Peace destroy it." It is in fact a truth of nature that if you behave in certain ways to other people. they will resent it and the result will be disturbing to you, and for that reason such kinds of conduct are unreasonable and against the law of nature. The complementary doctrine holds that there is no point in a man's obeying the laws of nature, i.e. behaving in a friendly way to other people, unless they are going to do the same to him. "For he that should be modest, and tractable, and performe all he promises, in such time and place, when no man els should do so, should but make himself a prey to others, and procure his own certain ruine, contrary to the ground of all Lawes of Nature, which tend to Nature's preservation." Hobbes' doctrine, then, is that we should all desire to live at peace with our neighbours. "The Lawes of Nature oblige in foro interno, that is to say, they bind to a desire they should take place." But it would be reckless madness to bind oneself to actions according to the laws of nature without a guarantee that other men will also be bound. Where can we get a guarantee? Not in our trust of them. For it is man's nature, according to Hobbes, to be diffident and distrustful. We would act well, only we distrust them; they would act well, only they distrust us, or in language suited to the present day, "We, conscious of our peaceful intentions, would disarm, but we distrust the aggressive intentions of the Germans; while the Germans, conscious of their peaceable intentions, would disarm, but they are distrustful of the aggressive intentions of the English." From this vicious,

circle there is no escape, according to Hobbes, unless there be some third power which will impartially restrain us both. That power is the civil authority. I can act morally if I know that, if other people do not reciprocate, they will be punished by the law. The institution of a government, then, which punishes wrongdoing, makes morality possible. Without it morality is foolish recklessness: with it, it is the dictate of reason. Therefore, only those laws of nature are binding which the law will enforce, and hence it is the office of the sovereign to interpret the law of nature. "For though it is naturally reasonable, yet it is by the Soveraign Power that it is law." From all this it follows that if there is ever a conflict between a law of nature and the state's law, the state's law must be obeyed, for the only point of obeying the laws of nature is that they conduce to security, and the maintenance of the state is the first and most essential condition of security. If the king violates a law of nature, and Hobbes is quite prepared to admit that he probably will, we may not, therefore, disobey him. For though the king by so doing will diminish security, our disobedience will only make matters worse. It becomes, therefore, the very essence of the law of nature that we should not appeal to it against the sovereign. Was ever doctrine more completely turned inside out?

Hobbes would indignantly deny the accusation that he is immoral. He is prepared to give high honour to morality in its place. If only men will give up the notion that it can ever be their duty to disobey the sovereign, he will be the first to emphasise the advantages of moral behaviour. He is even ready to admit that the sovereign is bound by the laws of nature in the sense that if he acts against them, he is bound to pay for it. Only, he would have added, let not the subjects therefore think that he is responsible to them. Hobbes would agree with all that men say about the eternal consequences of good and evil behaviour both in men and states. His failure was that he thought that morality was nothing but a means of obtaining desirable consequences. "There are some." savs Nietzsche, "who think it virtuous to say, 'Virtue is necessary,' but in truth they only believe that police are necessary." If a man's supreme duty is to preserve his own life, as Hobbes and some more modern writers have held, then Hobbes is right. He quotes in favour of his interpretation of the Laws of Nature, "that Law of the Gospell: Whatsoever you require that others should do to you, that do ye to them' He would not

have dared to quote, "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it."

Hobbes' attack on the ordinary doctrine of the law of nature brings out part of his own distinctive theory. The rest is contained in his treatment of another contemporary political doctrine, that of the Social Contract. This was the other great theory besides that of the law of nature which men used to justify resistance to the state's authority. The theory was founded on feudal practice, reinforced by the part played by covenant in the Old Testament and by the importance of contract in Roman Law. The authority of the king was thought of as resting on a contract made between him and his people that they would obey and that he would perform the duties of his office. If the contract was broken by either party, the other was naturally absolved from fulfilling his share. If the king disregarded the fundamental laws of the realm in accordance with which he had promised to govern, his subjects were absolved from their obedience. Hobbes must obviously have regarded such a doctrine as dangerous. Milton, in his pamphlet on "The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates" uses the theory to defend the execution of Charles I. At the same time there was much in it that was congenial to Hobbes, for it represented the state as resting not on authority but on each man's doing what seemed reasonable to himself. He proceeded, therefore, to turn it to his own purposes. The Social Contract theory, as it had ordinarily been held, rested on a moral basis, on the assumption that if you had made a promise you were bound to keep it. It had also an obvious political defect. It provided no means of determining when the contract had been broken. Hobbes attacks both these points. No man would make a covenant or contract with another without some guarantee that the other man will keep his part of the bargain. It is the essence of a contract that the different parties fulfill their shares at different times, and therefore that it implies confidence. But what guarantee, Hobbes asks as before, have we for such trust. None, unless there is some impartial third party which will punish whichever of the contracting parties defaults. There can, therefore, be no contract between kings and people because there can be no third party to punish either king or people if they default. Similarly, there can be no third party to say when the king or the people have broken their contract. If there were, that third party would be set

over both king and people and would be really sovereign. The sovereign then cannot be a party to the contract? What then is left of the Social Contract theory? There is a contract, says Hobbes, between the individuals of a state to obey some one else, the sovereign, on whom they then devolve all their rights. Hobbes' account of the social contract is deduced from his view of human nature. Men naturally seek their own preservation, but being naturally apprehensive of danger from all sources and distrustful of each other, they are driven on to seek power and control over others. "All passions may be reduced to the Desire of Power." "The object of man's desire is not to enjoy once only and for one instant of time, but to assure for ever the way of his future desire. And therefore the voluntary actions and inclinations of all men tend, not only to the procuring, but also to the assuring of a contented life." From this arises "a general inclination of mankind, a perpetuall and restlesse desire of Power after power, that ceaseth only in death." All men acting in this way, the result is naturally war, a war "of every man against every man," "no Arts, no Letters; no Society; and which is worst of all. continuall feare, and danger of violent death; and the life of man, solitary, poore, nasty, brutish and short." The restless desire of every man for assurance has led to most complete insecurity. Their reason bids them seek some way out. It might seem at first sight that they might agree to live at peace, having found how disagreeable war is. That will not satisfy Hobbes. Men are too distrustful and competitive for that. General dislike of the increasing burden of armaments in Europe at the present day does not make men agree to disarm. Their distrust of one another prevents it. Men. therefore, according to Hobbes, realise that there is no use making an agreement "that a man be willing, when others are so too, as farre forth, as for Peace, and defence of himselfe, he shall think it necessary, to lay down his right to all things, and be contented with so much liberty against other men, as he would allow other men against himselfe" unless they at the same time set up some common power to punish breaches of the agreement. "Covenants, without the Sword, are but Words and of no strength to secure a man at all. Therefore notwithstanding the Lawes of Nature, if there be no Power erected, or not great enough for our security; every man will, and may lawfully rely on his own strength and act for caution against all other men."

There can then be no social contract unless it is one to set up a power excluded from the contract against whom, therefore, the contract gives no appeal. "The only way to erect such a Common Power, as may be able to defend them from the invasion of Forraigners, and the injuries of one another, and thereby to secure them in such sort, as that by their own industrie, and by the fruites of the Earth, they may nourish themselves and live contentedly: is to conferre all their power and strength upon one man or upon one Assembly of men, that may reduce all their wills, by plurality of voices, unto one Will. . . This done, the multitude so united in one Person, is called a Commonwealth, in Latine Civitas. This is the generation of that great Leviathan or rather (to speak more reverently) of that Mortall God, to which we owe under the Immortall God our peace and defence."

Thus is the second argument by which men sought to excuse rebellion turned against themselves.

Hobbes' treatment of both these arguments depends obviously on his view of human nature. That is the foundation of his doctrine. It might be thought that this needs no refutation. When we read the ingenious comparison between bees and ants and men in Chapter XVII., which is very much to the advantage of the insects, we may feel that it is not worth while arguing with such an old cynic. Hobbes, however, cannot be thus lightly disregarded. His account of human nature purports to be scientific, not an empirical judgment which we might think biassed by cynicism as he would think ours biassed by sentimentality. He can be refuted only if we can show that his account is plainly inconsistent with facts he himself acknowledges. Hobbes, as we have seen, was convinced that all things were to be explained by motion. He was a thorough-going exponent of a mechanical view of the universe and of man. All science, if properly worked out, will be seen to be mathematical, politics as much as physics. He is, therefore, a determinist. All men are actuated by the same principles. They have no control over their desires and their desires are not right or wrong, good or bad, any more than are the motions of the stars. But men. unlike the stars, are endowed with reason, which is nothing but seeking into Causes. It forces them to extend the scope of their desires and thus to come into conflict with one another. Hence is produced what Hobbes calls the state of nature. must notice that Hobbes' argument does not require that this

state of nature ever historically existed. It is an abstraction. It is what would exist at any moment if the sovereign power were removed.

Can such men form a society? Hobbes thinks that they can. They all have in common the desire for security. If they reason they will see that the only way to obtain it is to erect a common power to whom they give all their power and whose coercion holds the state together. This common power cannot be resisted: for resistance to the sovereign diminishes security, and no man can wish to do that. This is why the covenant which forms society cannot be broken, for to do so would be contradictory. If we reply that men obviously have resisted the sovereign, Hobbes' answer is that that is because, misled by various false doctrines, and as yet unilluminated by him, they did not know what they were doing. The only occasions on which men may rightly resist are occasions when they may reasonably resist, i.e. when the state of nature, bad as it is, is better than what threatens them from obedience. They may resist if the sovereign threatens to take their lives. even if he proposes to make them serve in the army: for such a life is as insecure as the state of nature. Further, of course, they may resist if the sovereign does not protect them, for then the covenant is dissolved. There is therefore a stage in every rebellion at which men are justified, indeed bound, to go over to the other side. "The obligation of subjects to the sovereign is understood to last as long and no longer than the power lasteth by which he is able to protect them."

This last admission, though it is one which Hobbes was bound to make, wrecks the theory. For, we may ask in Hobbes' own words, who is to say when the sovereign is maintaining order or not. Hobbes himself in Chapter XVIII. affirms that "men that are so remissely governed, that they dare take up Armes, to defend or introduce an Opinion, are still in Warre." In other words the Leviathan, that state in which the sovereign ensures perfect security against other men to all who obey him, has never existed, and the obligations incident to it do not exist either. Hobbes' theory depends on the assumption that men desire security above all things, that there is nothing for which men would think it worth while to risk their lives. He thinks that men would never rebel if they thought they would lose their lives in the process. Society is never in danger from such men. It is men who will die rather than tolerate what they hold to be