MEMOIR OF AXEL HÄGERSTRÖM

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Axel Anders Hägerström was born in 1868 at the parsonage of Vireda, near Jönköping, in the province of Småland, and died in 1939 (shortly before the outbreak of the Second World War) in Uppsala. A most interesting, and in places very moving, book of reminiscences, based largely on family letters, has been written by the younger of his two daughters, Mrs. Margit Waller, and was published in 1961 by the firm *Natur och Kultur*, under the title *Axel Hägerström, människan som få kände* ('Axel Hägerström, the man whom few knew'). In what follows I am immensely indebted to that book.

Hägerström's paternal ancestry had been clerical for several generations back. His father, Karl Frederik Theodor (1834–1906) was pastor in the Swedish state-church, first in Vireda, and later in Örberga, near Vadstena in the province of Östergötland. His paternal grandfather, Carl Peter (1798–1863) had been pastor in Östra Tollstad in the see of Linköping. Both of them had been students at Uppsala university. Hägerström's father married twice, and Axel Anders was the first child of the second marriage. The first wife died in 1865, shortly after the birth of her second child. The two children of the first marriage, Reinhold (b. 1863) and Gustaf (b. 1865), were treated by the second wife as her own children. Axel in his earlier years was intimate with and much influenced by his two slightly older half-brothers, of whom Reinhold became postmaster at Åtvidaberg in Östergötland, and Gustaf a lawyer in Jönköping.

Hägerström's mother, Augusta Maria Skarin (1840–1933), was the second of the children of Johan Skarin (1804–1864) and Charlotte Björk (1814–1903). The Björks were originally Swedish Finlanders, and Charlotte, Hägerström's maternal grandmother, was born in Finland. Her elder sisters, Marie and Emilie, were in their later days landowners, living on their estate of Spexhult, near Nässjö in Småland. Johan Skarin, Hägerström's maternal grandfather, had been *kronofogde*, an office, which no longer exists, concerned with the collection of taxes and crown-dues in an administrative district.

Karl Frederik Theodor Hägerström and Augusta Maria Skarin

had four more children in the ten years after Axel's birth: a son who died in infancy, then two daughters Emilia and Bertha, and finally a son David. So the family in which Axel grew up consisted of two slightly older half-brothers, two slightly younger sisters, and a brother younger by just ten years. Axel's home life, for his first twelve years at his father's parsonage at Vireda and thereafter in that of Örberga, was that of a typical Swedish 'son of the manse' at that period. For the parents it was a life of strenuous parochial duty, with much practical beneficence to the poor on an income which, with care and self-denial, provided a decent sufficiency but permitted of few, if any, luxuries. For the children it was one of strict discipline and unquestioning obedience in things temporal and spiritual; but tempered by parental affection, and with many opportunities for meeting neighbours and for acquiring health and hardihood by running, swimming, skating, etc., in beautiful rural surroundings.

Both Axel's parents were in their several ways striking personalities, and each had a profound influence on him. The father was an orthodox 'church-and-state' Lutheran, with no great interest in theological theory, but an unquestioning faith in the dogmas which he had been taught in early life. They included, as a prominent ingredient, the doctrine of hell-fire and of the eternal damnation of the impenitent sinner; and he was wont to enlarge on this theme in his sermons, and no doubt in the home. This aspect of Christian doctrine made a deep impression on Axel. One day, in his early childhood, as he sat with his mother beside the fireplace, he thrust his hand into the flames, in order to experience for a brief moment in this life a foretaste of what he might have to bear unendingly in the life to come. Luckily, his hand, though painfully burned, was not permanently injured.

Axel's mother was a deeply religious woman of a very different school. While living with her mother's sisters, Marie and Emilie Björk at Spexhult, she had come under the influence of an evangelical revivalist movement in the Swedish church, originating in the work of Carl Olof Rosenius, which laid great stress on conviction of sin, experience of conversion, and thereafter a confident trust in ultimate salvation through Christ. Christianity was for her a deep and abiding personal experience, which she evoked and sustained in her children, and particularly in Axel and his elder half-brother Reinhold.

Another member of the family who had much to do with Axel in his childhood and early manhood was his maternal grandmother, Charlotte Skarin (*née* Björk), a cultivated and spirited old lady who died in 1903 at the age of eighty-nine. She took up her abode in the Hägerströms' parsonage at Örberga when Axel was twenty years old and spent her last fifteen years there. But she had already begun to play an important part in his life considerably earlier. When he first left home at the age of eleven, to attend the high-school for boys at Jönköping, she was living in that town. Axel, together with his two half-brothers, lodged and boarded with her during term-time, and she mothered the young boy. Later, when she moved from Jönköping, Axel lodged with other elderly ladies who eked out their incomes by taking in high-school boys as paying-guests.

Axel was at school in Jönköping from 1879 to 1886. He was a boy of outstanding ability, he worked hard, and he gained a very thorough knowledge of Latin, Greek, and mathematics. He had set his mind on taking the 'student-examination' in 1885 at the age of seventeen, a year before the usual age. He had made all preparations for doing so, and there is no doubt that he would have succeeded, if he had sat for the examination. The story of how he came to give up this cherished ambition at the last moment is a moving one, and it throws great light on his character and on his state of mind at the time. It is told in contemporary letters to his half-brother Gustaf, then a student at Uppsala, and to his home. The essential facts are as follows.

Evangelical revivalism was very strongly represented in Jönköping in those days, and a prominent clergyman in the town, J. A. E. Sundelin, was its most notable clerical representative. He was a man of genuine piety, a most powerful and moving preacher, and he was in close touch with the High School in the capacity of its '*Inspektor*'. The Hägerström boys came from home with the seeds of Christian devotion already sown and nurtured by their mother, and, under Sundelin's influence, an intense and anxious evangelical piety grew up in Axel and in Reinhold, the elder of his two half-brothers. Reinhold, who had by then taken his 'student-examination' and left Jönköping, knew of Axel's intention to enter, a year before the normal age, for that examination. He disapproved on moral and religious grounds, holding that Axel was moved by un-Christian motives of personal ambition

and desire to show off his intellectual superiority. He wrote to his half-brother a strongly dissuasive letter, in which evidently there was no lack of plain speaking, and Axel received this just as he was about to make the final arrangements for entering for the examination.

Axel had set his heart on this; and, whether or not the personal ambition and the desire to figure as a youthful prodigy were sinful, these had certainly been among his strongest motives. He passed rapidly through a strong emotional crisis, in which very natural feelings of rebellious obstinacy and of anger with Reinhold were at first predominant. He managed to repress these initial reactions and to give himself time for reflection and self-examination. As a result he had to admit Reinhold's account of his motives, to agree that these should find no place in the heart of a converted Christian, to write to Reinhold without rancour, and (though with bitter disappointment) to forgo a project for which he had been preparing himself with intense application and in which he would almost certainly have been successful.

The ground-swell left by this emotional storm is very visible in the moving letter which Axel wrote at the end of March 1885 to his other half-brother, Gustaf, in Uppsala. He eventually took the examination, with complete success, at the then usual age of eighteen in May 1886. In the autumn of that year he entered Uppsala University as a freshman, becoming, like his father and his paternal grandfather, a member of Östgöta Nation. Gustaf was by then in his second year at Uppsala, studying law.

At that time Axel fully intended to study theology and to follow his father and his forefathers as a clergyman of the state-church. He had a taste for preaching, and he had already 'wagged his pow' in the paternal pulpit at Örberga in the vacation during the absence of the curate through illness. His parents took for granted that he would become a clergyman. In May 1887 he took and passed the so-called 'theologico-philosophical' examination, which was a necessary preliminary to admission to the theological faculty. His teacher in philosophy for this was Erik Olof Burman, at that time docent in Uppsala in what the Swedes call 'theoretical philosophy', and later professor there in what they call 'practical' (and we should call 'moral') philosophy.

Axel quickly became passionately interested in philosophy, and by the middle of 1887 had decided that he could not be a theologian

and would not be a clergyman. He wrote to his father, accordingly, a very frank and firm, though respectful and affectionate, letter. He states in it that he does not doubt Christianity; but he dislikes dogmatic theology, and he is not willing to take upon himself that function of *public representative* of Christian belief and practice which is an essential part of a clergyman's office.

This must have been an extremely hard decision to make, to announce, and to maintain. He knew that it would bitterly disappoint both his parents, whom he loved and respected, and who had made and were making considerable sacrifices for him and their other children. And both he and they were well aware that it must defer for years, and perhaps for ever, the attainment of a decently remunerated position in life. A painful situation arose, but Axel was adamant once he had made up his mind on what he ought to do. He felt that it was best for all parties that he should for a time not return home during the vacations. His mother fairly soon became reconciled to her son's choice, but it was not until Axel had taken his doctorate in philosophy that his father fully acquiesced in it.

Meanwhile Hägerström worked assiduously at philosophy. He passed his Fil. Kand. examination in December 1888, and on September 6, 1893, he was awarded his doctorate on a thesis on Aristotle's basic ethical concepts and their theoretical presuppositions. Shortly afterwards, at the express wish of C. Y. Sahlin, the then professor of practical philosophy in Uppsala, who had been one of his teachers and also one of his examiners, he was made docent in that subject. That carried no salary with it; but it gave him a certain academic status, entitled him to give lectures, and helped him to obtain private pupils.

Such coaching work was Hägerström's main source of livelihood at the time and for the next twenty-five years. He had had considerable teaching experience from very early in life. It began in his schooldays in Jönköping with informal and unpaid help to certain other boys in his then favourite subject of mathematics. During school holidays and university vacations he had on several occasions acted as resident tutor to the children of some of his maternal relatives who lived in the country. There are several accounts by distinguished former Uppsala students of their experiences with him as a coach in philosophy. From all these it is plain that he was a most stimulating, illuminating, and con-

scientious teacher, who took infinite pains with his pupils and evoked a corresponding effort in many of them. He was very shy at that period, and it is recorded that the tuitions would be conducted with Hägerström in an inner room, out of sight of his class in the adjoining room, communication being made between the two through the half-open door.

His own philosophical work had to be carried on in the vacations and in those times of the day or night in term-time not occupied by actual teaching or by his most conscientious preparations for it. He plainly overworked himself continuously for many years, taking the very minimum of sleep and of food, and living a most ascetic life. His only two indulgences were strong coffee and his pipe. He was a man of strong feeling, by nature readily aroused to anger by opposition, and he took himself, human life in general, and philosophy in particular with deadly earnestness. Life, under the conditions in which he was living in Uppsala, imposed great strains on him, and he must have exerted an iron discipline on himself. A rather serious crisis was developing throughout 1895 and culminated and subsided during 1896. The circumstances were as follows.

In 1895 the professorship of practical philosophy in Uppsala fell vacant through Sahlin's retirement. Hägerström decided to apply, and set to work to write two elaborate dissertations to submit to the experts who had been appointed to report on the qualifications of the candidates. One dissertation was an investigation of the possibility of an empiricist ethics, with special reference to the main contemporary forms of that doctrine. The other (which was a continuation of this) was on the notion, as occurring in the main contemporary forms of idealism, of moral feelings and impulses as rational. Hägerström, at the early age of twenty-eight and with Burman as a competitor, had no expectation of being the successful candidate. But the Swedish system of selection (which, whatever may be its merits, seems to an Englishman, accustomed to a very different system, to be ideally fitted to produce those heart-burnings and those unedifying public *post mortem* squabbles which it not infrequently does) includes the following feature among its other peculiarities. The board of experts appointed to review the claims of the rival candidates for a chair are expected, not only to recommend the one whom they think on the whole most suitable, but also to declare publicly which of the others they

consider to be 'competent' and which 'incompetent' for the office. Naturally, it is gratifying and useful to an unsuccessful candidate to be declared 'competent', and proportionately humiliating and detrimental to be declared 'incompetent' to hold the chair for which he has been applying.

Hägerström had hoped that his two dissertations would secure for him a public pronouncement of 'competence', in this technical sense, which would set the seal of expert approval on his philosophical work and might stand him in good stead in future applications for vacant professorships. But on January 1, 1896, he was privately advised to withdraw his candidature, because the committee of experts intended to declare him 'incompetent', if he should proceed with it. This advice he firmly refused to take; and early in March 1896 the committee made their public announcement, recommending Burman as successor to Sahlin and declaring Hägerström 'incompetent', in the technical sense.

The experts consisted of the retiring professor Sahlin, P. J. L. Leander (professor of practical philosophy in Lund), and Reinhold Geijer (professor of theoretical philosophy in Uppsala). None of them were unfriendly to, or unappreciative of, Hägerström. Indeed, it will be remembered that it had been on Sahlin's personal recommendation that Hägerström had been appointed docent soon after taking his doctor's degree. The only one of them who went into considerable detail in criticism of Hägerström's two dissertations was Leander. All recognized his philosophical ability and learning, but they were uncertain as to whether it would develop on what they regarded as sound lines.

As the background of all this was the fact that there was a certain system of philosophy which had for years been predominant in Swedish academic circles and had become a kind of accepted orthodoxy. This was the form of idealism developed by C. J. Boström, Sahlin's immediate predecessor in the chair of practical philosophy in Uppsala. This atmosphere of Boströmian orthodoxy seems to have been as pervasive in Sweden, and in the end as deadening, as the Absolute Idealism which was academically predominant in British and American universities at much the same period. Hägerström had already begun to react against it, and the three experts no doubt regarded him (much as Bosanquet might have regarded Moore and Russell when they first began to

write) as a clever and promising but uppish young man, who needed a rap on the knuckles to keep him in his place.

Hägerström was furiously angry. As his contemporary letters to his parents and his fiancée show, he was for a while in that dangerous emotional state where wounded self-esteem and a high-minded desire to vindicate a general principle mingle, in unknowable proportions, to make one desire to hit out in public, and where (to quote from *The Importance of being Earnest*) 'plain speaking ceases to be a duty and becomes a positive pleasure'. He seriously contemplated publishing an attack on the 'competence' of those who had pronounced him 'incompetent'; a course of action which would hardly have been decent, and would certainly have been extremely detrimental to all hopes of future academic preferment.

Most fortunately, he had no officious friends to aggravate the situation by rushing into print in the newspapers with attacks on the experts and the successful candidate—a by no means unknown sequel to professorial appointments in Sweden. He was fundamentally a wise, though passionate, man; accustomed to self-examination and capable of rigid self-control. His personal resentment gradually subsided, and he set about writing a purely impersonal reply to the detailed criticisms which Leander had published on his two theses. This was in print by the end of May 1896; but he delayed publication until the July of the following year, when it appeared as a pamphlet, the Swedish title of which may be translated: 'On Empirical Ethics and Moral Feeling—Answer to Criticisms'.

During this difficult period Hägerström was in frequent correspondence with the lady who later became his wife, and her understanding and loyalty must have been a great source of strength and consolation to him. She was Esther Nyander (1872–1957), daughter of a clergyman who was a contemporary and a friend of long standing of Hägerström's father. Axel had first met her in 1892, when he was at home, and she, with her parents and her younger brother, was on a visit there. Her father, Nils Johan Nyander (1840–1929) had been since 1889 vicar of Östra Harg, a parish in Östergötland. Like his friend, Axel's father, he was a churchman of the authoritative and active, rather than the meditative or devotional, kind. The Nyanders were better endowed than the Hägerströms with this world's goods. Nils Johan had

married Anna Sophia Rehnström, daughter and sole heiress of a landed proprietor of Sjutorp in Småland. The shrewdness with which he managed his worldly affairs, combined with the devotion with which he performed his priestly and parochial duties, furnish one more illustration of the truth of Samuel Butler's commentary on the text *You cannot serve God and Mammon:*—'It's difficult, no doubt; but so is everything that's worth doing'.

Esther paid a second visit to the parsonage at Örberga in the summer of 1894, and Axel and she came to know each other well. They parted with an understanding that they would marry, if and when Axel's circumstances should permit; but there was no formal engagement. In January 1896, at the height of the crisis about the declaration of 'incompetence', Axel wrote a most moving letter to Esther, stating his position and his irrevocable intention of replying publicly to the criticisms of the experts. He pointed out the probable economic consequences of such action, and gave her the choice of release from her tacit engagement to him. Esther then, as always, 'behaved like a brick'. She decided, on the day on which she received this letter, to stick to Axel through thick and thin, and she at once wrote to him accordingly.

In June 1896, at Esther's suggestion, the engagement was publicly announced. It had the full approval of the parents of both parties. The Hägerströms had already come to regard Esther as a daughter; and the Nyanders, whilst aware that Axel had his angularities and that his worldly prospects were not of the brightest, liked and respected him and knew that he was the right man for Esther.

By April 1899 Hägerström's financial circumstances had so far improved that he was able to announce to Esther that he had rented a small house, with three rooms and a kitchen at 450 kr. *per annum* (equivalent to about £22 10*s* 0*d*) at the then value of the £.

He thought this dear. Their wedding took place, with considerable rural pomp and ceremony, in Östra Harg church on June 28th; and the honeymoon was spent at Sjutorp, which had now come into possession of Esther's mother. They returned to Uppsala, and took up residence at this house (No. 6, *Skolgatan*). Early in 1900 Hägerström was allotted a stipend of 1500 kr. *per annum* as docent, and he had already in 1897 been awarded 500 kr. *per annum* out of an endowment administered by the university. So he now had the equivalent of about £100 a year, in the currency of those days, over

and above what he could earn by coaching. Two years later the Hägerström's moved to a larger house, No. 12, *Trädgårdsgatan*, which was to be their home for the next twenty-two years.

It was an extremely happy marriage, in which the storm-tossed spirit of Hägerström found understanding and a measure of tranquillity. He and his wife had two children, both daughters. The younger of them, Margit, who became Mrs. Waller, relates an amusing story of a professor of theology in Uppsala, who, whilst heartily disapproving of Hägerström's subversive theories of the nature of legal and of moral obligation and of theology, felt obliged in justice to concede: 'and yet, for all that, he is said to be kind to his wife and children!'

During his engagement and the first years of his married life Hägerström had been working on a critical and historical account of Kant's ethics. This occupied him for five years. It appeared in 1902. Like some others of his major works, it was in German, which of course secured for it a much wider circle of instructed readers than it would have had if written in Swedish. Hägerström lacked the gift of compression, and this work occupies 850 printed pages. The aim of it is to provide and to justify a version of Kant's ethical doctrines which shall be free from what Hägerström regarded as Boströmian misinterpretations current in Sweden.

He now began to occupy himself with what was to be one of the main tasks of his life, viz. the philosophy of law. In 1904 a vacancy occurred in the chair of practical philosophy at Lund. Hägerström applied for it, and submitted an essay on this topic entitled *Stat och rätt* ('State and Law'). It was highly commended by the appointed experts, both of whom were philosophical jurists; but the chair was eventually given to E. Liljeqvist, a Boströmian. Hägerström took this with equanimity. He was happy in Uppsala, and was beginning to be generally recognized there as an original and seminal thinker and teacher.

Burman, the successor to Sahlin in the chair of practical philosphy at Uppsala, suffered from frequent spells of serious ill-health, and Hägerström acted as his deputy when he was thus incapacitated. The first occasion was in 1903–4. When Burman finally retired in 1910 Hägerström had deputized for him for an aggregate period of eleven terms. He had thus become, *caeteris paribus*, the obvious successor to Burman. He had, moreover, greatly strengthened his claims to the chair of practical philosophy

by courses of lectures which he had been giving. These were at once topical in their subject-matter, and completely objective in their treatment of it.

The period was one of great political and social ferment in Sweden. In 1905, after years of growing tension which very nearly culminated in a fratricidal war, Norway broke away from the union with Sweden, which had been imposed under the Treaty of Kiel in 1814 as a reward to Bernadotte and as a consolation to Sweden for the loss of Finland to Russia under the Treaty of Frederikshamn five years earlier. In 1909 there occurred a long and bitter general strike in Sweden. Many who were to be the founders of the present highly successful Swedish 'welfare state' were then young and enthusiastic adherents of socialism in general and of Marxian theories in particular.

Hägerström viewed all this with understanding and with sympathy, but with a philosophic desire to analyse, to explain, and to 'know the causes of things', rather than to admonish or to take part in political controversy. In 1907 he gave a course of lectures in the university on 'The Driving Forces of the Social Movement', and in 1908–1909 he was lecturing on the history of socialistic ideas. The substance of the former course was published in 1909 under the title *Social teleologi i marxism*. The lectures in the latter course were first published posthumously in 1946. One can well imagine the interest, and the lively discussion among intelligent students, which these courses aroused at the time.

In November 1910, when it was known that Burman would be retiring, Geijer, his colleague in the chair of theoretical philosophy at Uppsala, proposed that Hägerström should be *invited* to succeed Burman. It will be remembered that Geijer had been one of the experts who had declared Hägerström 'incompetent' for the chair in 1896. So this action was not only a high compliment to Hägerström, but also a graceful burial of a now rusty hatchet. The question was referred to three experts, Geijer himself, Burman (the retiring professor), and Vitalis Norström (professor in Göteborg). They advised unanimously that Hägerström should be invited. He was installed on March 18, 1911. His inaugural lecture, *Om moraliska föreställningars sanning* ('On the Truth of Moral Ideas'), insisted on the point (which may seem obvious here and now, but was far from generally accepted there and then) that the business of moral philosophy is not to decide *what* is right or *what*

is wrong, still less to admonish us to do the former and eschew the latter, but is to *analyse* the notions of 'right' and 'wrong', 'morally good' and 'morally evil', and to ascertain the functions which they fulfil in human life.

Hägerström held the professorship from 1911 until his retirement in 1933 on reaching the pensionable age of sixty-five. These were years of intensely hard work in reading, thinking, writing, and teaching, and of ever-growing influence in philosophy and in jurisprudence in Sweden and the other Scandinavian lands. He was making an extremely thorough study of the history of Roman legal institutions and of their social and religious background, and was immersing himself in the vast literature, particularly in German, written by jurists and philosophers of law, on the concepts and principles of legal obligation. Outstanding products of this study, and of his reflexions upon it, were the following famous and highly influential published papers:— (1) *Är gällande rätt uttrych av vilja?* ('Is Positive Law an Expression of Will?'), which appeared in 1916 in a *Festschrift* for Vitalis Norström; (2) *Till frågan om den objektiva rättens begrepp* ('On the Question of the Nation of Objective Right'), published in 1917; and (3) *Das magistratische Ius*, written in German and published in 1929 in a *Festschrift* issued by the Law Faculty of Uppsala in celebration of the 300th anniversary of its first doctor's promotion.

All this while Hägerström was at work on his immense treatise (in German) entitled *Der römische Obligationsbegriff im Lichte der allgemeinen römischen Rechtsanschauung*. The first volume of this appeared in 1927. It seems, like Hume's *Treatise on Human Nature*, to have 'fallen still-born from the press'; though presumably with a heavier bump, since it runs to some 630 pages of close print. The second part, on which Hägerström continued to work for the rest of his life, was published posthumously in 1941. It is no less voluminous.

The immense influence which Hägerström has had on legal philosophy (and perhaps on legal practice) in Scandinavia has been exerted at least as much indirectly, through the outstanding converts whom he made and pupils whom he trained, as directly through his published writings. To confine oneself to those no longer living, one may mention Professor Vilhelm Lundstedt (1882–1955). Lundstedt had had a distinguished academic career in jurisprudence at his own university of Lund, when in 1914 he

became professor in Uppsala in Roman and Civil Law. He was not at that time specially sympathetic to Hägerström's views. The two men were introduced to each other by Arthur Engberg, a friend and former pupil of Hägerström's. They became firm friends, and in course of time Hägerström converted Lundstedt to his own views on the nature of law and of obligation. Lundstedt was a stimulating teacher, and a fertile and influential writer, and he did much to spread Hägerström's ideas among those who were to become prominent either as academic or as practising lawyers in Sweden. Shortly before his own death Lundstedt held a public lecture in Uppsala on Jurisprudence as a science, and in this he paid an eloquent tribute to Hägerström and his influence.

Another distinguished Swedish thinker, no longer living, who was greatly influenced by Hägerström (more especially by the latter's epistemological doctrines) was Adolf Phalén. He became Professor of Theoretical Philosophy in Uppsala in 1916 at the early age of thirty-two, and he died, still a comparatively young man, in 1931, leaving a deep impression on his contemporaries and his juniors.

As Hägerström's circumstances grew easier, and as recognition of himself and his work steadily spread, the inner tension in him relaxed. He mellowed, and became more 'human' and approachable in his relations with those outside the circle of his family, his intimate friends, and his pupils. As a young man he had been too poor, too shy, and too much engrossed in his work to take any part in the social life of Östgöta Nation. At the age of 57, however, he was invited to become its 'Inspektor', and he accepted. A Nation in Uppsala always has as its honorary chief officer one of its members who is a highly distinguished senior member of the university, generally (perhaps always) an eminent professor. He is entitled 'Inspektor', and, once appointed, he holds office continuously for a considerable period; whilst the elected officers, of whom the chief is 'First Kurator', being students, come and go.

Hägerström was Inspektor of Östgöta Nation for eight years on end. It is needless to say that he performed the administrative duties of his office efficiently and conscientiously. What is of more interest is that he entered into, and came thoroughly to enjoy, the social and festive life of the Nation; made excellent and witty speeches on appropriate occasions; and became highly popular with members of all ages. In this connection he once said of him-

self: 'I was old when I was young, so I may take leave to be young now that I am growing old'. A very interesting portrait in oils of Hägerström at the age of sixty, painted by another Östgöte, David Wallin, was presented to the Nation and unveiled at a dinner in 1929. It now hangs, along with the portraits of many other famous members of Östgöta Nation, in their nation-house at Uppsala.

After his retirement in 1933 Hägerström had a further six years of life, filled with vigorous philosophical activity. He managed to complete the second volume of *Der römische Obligationsbegriff* . . ., though this was not published until two years after his death.

From his school-days he had loved mathematics, and he was a quite competent non-professional mathematician. He now became deeply interested in Einstein's theory of relativity, which was much in the news at that time; and he devoted much critical thought to the philosophical incoherencies which, as it seemed to him, underlay the theory as expounded by its author and other eminent physicists who were writing popular expositions for the layman. In this, as in other instances, scientists wisely went on with their work, undeterred by the often annihilating criticisms of philosophers on the palpable nonsense which (if their statements were interpreted literally) they so often talked and wrote.

In the summer of 1939 Hägerström was stricken with a sudden heart-attack, from which he never recovered. Three weeks later, on July 7th of that year, he died, *felix opportuniate mortis*, before the then imminent catastrophe of the Second World War had been precipitated.

Hägerström's writings do not make easy reading, even for those who are familiar with the languages in which he wrote, whether they be in German or in that Germanized version of his native tongue which he was wont to use in expressing his philosophic thoughts. And, although decently educated English and American students of philosophy may fairly be expected to tackle works in German on their own subject, they are unlikely to be able to read even much simpler Swedish than Hägerström wrote. For this reason, in the main, the work of Hägerström and his disciples has remained almost without influence on Anglo-Saxon jurists, moral philosophers, and epistemologists. Conversely, though Hägerström (like every educated Swede) had an excellent working know-

ledge of English, he seems to have been very little influenced by contemporary English or American philosophers.

As a result, the damaging attacks upon a prevalent system of Absolute Idealism that had degenerated into an academic orthodoxy, which were launched almost simultaneously early in the present century by Hägerström and his followers in Uppsala and by Moore and Russell in Cambridge, occurred in complete isolation from each other. Again, the development of various forms of what I will call 'non-predicative' analysis of deontic and evaluatory sentences in the indicative, which began in England and the USA between the First and the Second World War and has been pursued with such energy by so many able writers ever since, was initiated and has continued in complete ignorance of Hägerström's somewhat earlier and extremely thorough version of the same type of theory. Lastly, the 'anti-metaphysical' evangelicism, which may perhaps now be described as the last word but two in much Anglo-Saxon philosophy, was anticipated, unknown to its English and American protagonists, by Hägerström in the slogan '*praeterea censeo metaphysicam delendam esse*'.

For these reasons it is most desirable that Hägerström's main writings should be available, as they now are, in translation to English-speaking readers. There remains another reason, which I will add by way of conclusion. Hägerström was throughout his life essentially a highly religious and a highly dutiful man. He arrived, indeed, at what many would regard as a 'nihilistic' analysis of morality and of religion. But, unlike many 'analytic' philosophers, he had at any rate first-hand religious experience and first-hand experience of moral conflict and of acting from a sense of duty in face of serious obstacles, as the factual basis for his analyses. And, in spite of his 'nihilistic' theories, he continued to the end to value genuine religion and genuine morality as springing from the deepest roots in human nature and bearing the finest flowers in human life.